

Joan Ferrante

AN INTRODUCTION

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Seeing Sociology

An Introduction

Joan Ferrante

Northern Kentucky University

With contributions from

Chris Caldeira

University of California, Davis



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Joan Ferrante is Professor of Sociology at Northern Kentucky University (NKU). She received her PhD from the University of Cincinnati in 1984. Joan decided early in her career that she wanted to focus her publishing efforts on introducing students to the discipline of sociology. She believes it is important that that introduction cultivate an appreciation for the methods of social research and for sociological theory beyond the three major perspectives. As a professor, she teaches sociology from an applied perspective so that students come to understand the various career options that the serious student of sociology can pursue. Joan is the author of “Careers in Sociology” (a Wadsworth sociology module), a guide to making the most of an undergraduate degree in sociology. She also

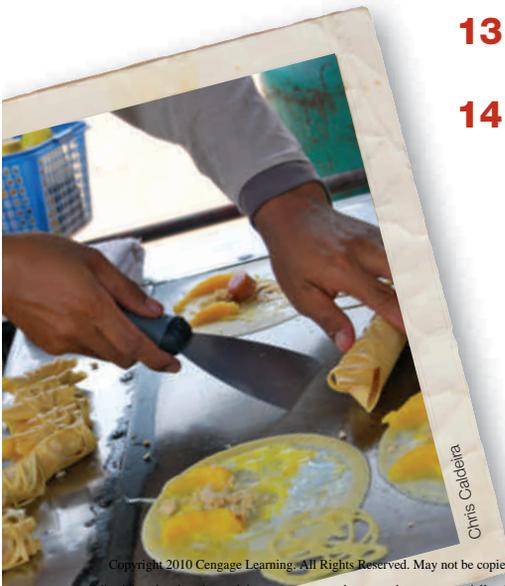
teaches sociology in a way that emphasizes the value and power of the sociological framework for making a difference in the world. With the support of the Mayerson Family Foundations, Joan designed the curriculum for a NKU student philanthropy project in which students, as part of their course work, must decide how to use \$4000 in a way that addresses some community need. That curriculum has now been adopted by dozens of universities across the United States. For the past decade she has also supported a study abroad scholarship called “Beyond the Classroom” for which any NKU student who has used her sociology texts (new or used) can apply. Joan’s university has twice recognized her as an outstanding professor with the Frank Milburn Sinton Outstanding Professor Award and the Outstanding Junior Faculty Award.



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Chris Caldeira



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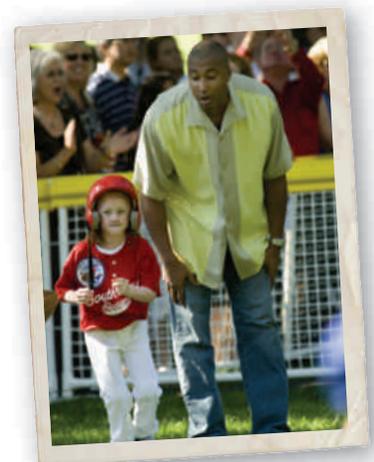
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PREFACE

In writing *Seeing Sociology*, I thought long and hard about the experience of reading sociology and about what I might do to make that experience productive and meaningful. Over my many years of teaching, I have tried to identify the circumstances under which my students *really* read something. It seems to me this happens when students come across language and ideas that they can use to articulate and make sense of a feeling, an observation, or a situation that is important to them. I know my students have really read something when they report sharing it with others or when they admit *not* sharing it because they believe doing so will disrupt, even threaten, their relationships in some way. With these thoughts in mind I have taken great care to clearly present the ideas of the many sociologists who over the centuries have contributed to what we call the sociological perspective. I have tried to write this book so that readers will feel compelled to read it and to share its ideas with others.

CREATING A MEANINGFUL TEXT

I collaborated closely with Chris Caldeira, the senior acquisitions editor who signed this book in 2007, to design a book that meaningfully conveys sociological concepts, theories, and methods. Together we conducted more than a dozen focus groups with colleagues and students across the country seeking to understand what we might do to make the introductory course a meaningful and integrated experience. We also read thoughtful reviews from sociologists who care deeply about the introduction to sociology course, and we talked to students in university settings and at regional and annual meetings who offered valuable insights about the first course experience. We synthesized these many conversations and reviews and concluded that the following features could enhance the reading experience:

- Work to create a readable book. That does not mean “dumbing down” the written material. In fact, doing so sends the message that the author believes students are intellectually ill-equipped to deal with serious material. Creating a readable book involves presenting sociology as a meaningful and useful way of seeing the world. To do this the author must demonstrate that the vocabulary of sociology not only has great relevance to student experiences but that the vocabulary opens their eyes to the experiences of others. In other words readers must come to see and believe that the language of sociology is worth learning.
- Capitalize on the instructional value of photographs so that readers see them as tools for provoking thought and applying abstract sociological concepts to real-world situations.
- Strive to facilitate an uninterrupted and coherent reading experience such that the reader is not jumping back and forth from text to boxes, charts, and tables placed on different pages. Quarantining or boxing off thematic applications such as global interdependence, cultural diversity, or the self in society sends the

unintended message that such themes don't matter. Integrating them into the flow of the text sends the message that they do, in fact, matter. Finally, overuse of maps and charts can result in information overload; it is better to have fewer but strategically placed maps and charts with clear value for illustrating key sociological ideas.

- Break chapters into five to seven pedagogically meaningful modules, or chunks, so that reading material appears, not easy, but as something that can be easily managed. Densely packaged chapters of 30 to 40 pages can feel overwhelming to even the most accomplished readers.

With these points of advice in mind, the questions guiding the writing of this textbook became: What is the best way to convey the importance of sociology? How might a book be written and designed to facilitate a meaningful reading experience? Answering these questions helped us to establish the book's approach and structure and to carefully plan its creation.

Integrated Visual Images

Seeing Sociology has many distinct features that shape the experience of reading—perhaps the most prominent feature is what we have chosen to call Soc-Scenes, all visual images and accompanying captions are integrated into the text to draw students deeper into the written words and the flow of the narrative. Visual images are not used to distract from reading, to dumb down the material, or to break up the text. Instead, the photographs allow readers to observe abstract sociological concepts.

We chose photographs that are integral to the sociological content. On first glance, many of the images included in this textbook appear quite ordinary. Our goal was not to make a glossy picture book, designed to browse through as one waits for dinner or to see a doctor. We refrained from selecting photographs that glamorize social life or human appearances, but rather aimed to provide visuals that depict everyday people in everyday situations. We avoided idealized images that reinforce popular representations of men, women, the elderly, and so on. Images were also not chosen for their shock value—to make the reader look or stare because their eyes are drawn to something that appears odd or unusual.

Modular Format

A second key feature is the modular format. Each chapter consists of five to eight self-contained modules, three to seven pages in length. The modular format allows instructors to assign all or specific topics within a chapter. Each module . . .

- is assigned a title (e.g., “The Early Sociologists,” “Defining Social Structure,” or “The Social Self”). Under the title is that module's basic objective in bold print so students' attention is focused as they begin their reading.
- opens with a key question asking students to reflect on something that aligns their thought processes with a specified objective.
- ends with a critical thinking question to encourage further reflection on key ideas covered.
- includes a summary titled “Putting It All Together” that shows connections among the sociological ideas presented across individual modules, for those instructors who assign all modules in a chapter.

Applying Theory Modules

In addition to a modular and visual format, each chapter (except the first and last) includes an Applying Theory module. These modules are written with the purpose of highlighting and applying broad theoretical traditions within sociology beyond just the three perspectives—functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interaction theories. Focus group discussions revealed that instructors hoped to expose students to more than the “big three,” including critical theory, global society theories, the feminist perspective, and so on. As one example, the Applying Theory module in the Deviance chapter considers the post-structural theory of Michel Foucault, who identifies a turning point or historical shift that made the society we live in today fundamentally different in structure from the society that preceded it. That turning point relates to the way society controls those who have violated its rules—from a “culture of spectacle” (one in which people are punished in a public setting for all to see) to a “carceral culture” (one in which surveillance technologies are used to control people’s activities and thoughts).

Research Question Modules (available online)

The *Research Question* modules are written with the purpose of demonstrating the various kinds of questions sociologists ask and the data gathering strategies they employ to answer questions like “How does a foreign practice take root?” “With whom do Americans talk about important matters?” “How does online dating shape intimate relationships?” “Do gangs have a purpose?” “Why do some people give inconsistent answers to questions asking their race?” “How do we document and explain global subordination of women?” For the most part the research question modules describe a study published in a major sociological journal within the past decade. Students who read them will come to understand how sociologists observe and document human behavior and activities with the purpose of making verifiable conclusions regarding causes and/or consequences.

“Sociology at the Forefront” Chapter

Seeing Sociology concludes with a “Sociology at the Forefront” chapter that contains six modules, each of which profiles the work of a sociologist who is opening doors to show us “that the first wisdom of sociology is this—things are not what they seem” (Berger 1963, p. 23). Opening closed doors is a metaphor for the sociologist’s urge to study any human activity and relationship, but especially those activities that are hidden from view, that are controversial, or that go largely unchallenged. Through these modules readers learn that it is not always easy to open doors because those on the other side are often reluctant to reveal hidden activities and thoughts. At first glance some module titles—such as “Human-Animal Relationships” or “Tattoos and Body Piercing”—may be dismissed as insignificant but a close read gives relevance and significance to what once seemed unimportant. The closing module “Stepping Outside Comfort Zones” encourages students to leave their comfort zones—to open doors that appear closed, to knock on doors that are bolted shut, and to find ways to gain access to those who hide behind them. Students who accept that challenge gain an opportunity to experience and test sociology’s relevance, and in that process learn for themselves that “things are not what they seem.”

Thematic Flexibility

We made the conscious decision to create a book that was flexible (e.g., modular) in format but linear in design. That is, the design is such that the reader need not jump back and forth from main text to often unrelated (or tangentially related) photographs, figures, charts, and thematic boxes. For that reason we decided not to box off material or separate relevant photographs, charts, and figures from the text they illustrate. Although this decision facilitates a coherent reading experience, there is no convenient way to point out key themes. However, a close look at module titles, photographs, and applications included in *Seeing Sociology* reveals that such themes have been seamlessly integrated into the text. On pages xxv-xxvi I have recommended six to eight related modules for each of four themes: Health Care, Diversity, Globalization, and the Environment.

Visually Oriented Assignments

Can You Top This Photo?

The *Can You Top This Photo?* exercise appears in the end-of-chapter summaries. Specifically, students are asked to review a photograph that was presented in one of the chapter modules to illustrate a particular sociological concept, then challenged to upload a more (or an equally) effective photograph of their own online and view other student submissions. The most effective photos will be considered for publication in the next edition.

Write-a-Caption

The *Write-a-Caption* exercise invites students to study a photograph and then use the language and concepts covered in that module to describe it. The opening module of each chapter includes a *Write-a-Caption* exercise that can also be found on the Sociology CourseMate site for *Seeing Sociology*. *Write-a-Caption* exercises for other modules are available online and on the PowerLecture CD as part of the Instructor PowerPoint slides.

Here is how to direct your students to the *Can You Top This Photo?* and *Write-a-Caption* exercises:

1. Go to www.cengagebrain.com and search for “Ferrante Seeing Sociology,” or go directly to www.cengagebrain.com/shop/ISBN/0495604852.
2. Click on CourseMate.
3. Click on the link for *Can You Top This Photo?* or *Write-a-Caption*.

Ancillary Materials

I believe that a textbook is only as good as its supplements. For this reason, I have written the Test Bank, Student Study Guide, and Instructor’s Manual to accompany *Seeing Sociology*. We have tried to create ancillary materials that support the flexible, coherent, and visual strengths of this textbook.

Instructor’s Manual

The Instructor’s Manual includes the standard offerings, such as Learning Objectives and a Key Terms glossary. It also includes several unique features:

- *Write-a-Caption*: A write-up of a possible caption for each *Write-a-Caption* exercise that appears at the end of the first module of each chapter and online—is

included in the Instructor's Manual. (The Write-a-Caption exercise is described in detail on page xvi of this preface under "Visually Oriented Assignments.")

- *Short film clips (1.5 – 10 minutes)*: For each chapter, a short film clip (usually a movie trailer or a key scene easily accessed online) that illustrates a core concept is recommended. The Instructor's Manual includes a description of the movie clip and talking points for introducing the film. As one example, the recommended film clip for the race chapter is a 8-minute scene from *Secrets and Lies*, in which a woman who appears white is reunited with a now grown daughter considered black whom the mother gave up for adoption at birth. The scene is sociologically significant in that it prepares students to think about the millions of secrets and lies that have made the U.S. system of racial classification seem a logical way to classify humanity.
- *Songs (with links to lyrics and/or music videos)*: For each chapter, a song with links to lyrics and a video of the artist performing the song or the music video is recommended to illustrate a core concept. The Instructor's Manual includes a brief description of the song and talking points. As one example, the recommended song for the Sociological Imagination chapter is "Video Phone" by Beyoncé Knowles. Students are asked to watch the music video and read song lyrics and then think about how the lyrics and images might inform a functionalist, conflict theorist, and symbolic interactionist's analysis of a cell phone's video application.
- *SocScenes*: This teaching tool features photographs (scenes) on PowerPoint slides that students draw upon to conduct a sociologically informed analysis related to a key concept. As one example, related to the culture chapter, there are four SocScenes depicting cultural diffusion. Specifically, the scenes show U.S. military personnel distributing items of material culture to local populations in foreign countries. The items include Barbie dolls to young girls in Ghana, cough medicine to Nicaraguan children, meals ready-to-eat (MRE) to Iraqi six-year-olds, and a school bus to Afghanistan. Students are asked to think about how the introduction of a particular item might affect people (for better or worse). A list of potential answers is provided. Notes and images for the SocScenes are included in the Instructor's Manual as well as on the PowerPoint slides, located on the PowerLecture CD.
- *Sample Answers to Critical Thinking Questions*: Each module ends with a critical thinking question, the purpose of which is to get students to reflect on key ideas, concepts, and theories covered. Typically the questions can be answered in 250 to 400 words. The Instructor's Manual includes a sample answer from an actual sociology student to each critical thinking question. The sample answer can serve as an example to share with the students as a way of stimulating thoughts about how to approach critical thinking essays. Or instructors may simply want to read sample answers as a way to prepare for questions students may have about them.

Test Bank

Like most textbooks the ancillary materials for instructors include a test bank with multiple choice and true-false questions. In addition to test questions about the textbook material, there are several multiple choice questions relating to the short film clips, songs, and SocScenes. These questions can be found at the end of the multiple choice questions for each chapter and are labeled by topic ("TOP").

Study Guide

The student study guide includes practice multiple choice and true-false questions, a glossary with key terms, learning objectives, and study questions.

PowerPoint Slides

These slides, created by my colleague Kristie Vise, highlight key ideas and points covered in each module. They are useful if instructors want to give students a quick overview of material covered or post online as a review. Included on the PowerPoint slides are Write-a-Caption and SocScenes activities, as described above.

PowerLecture with JoinIn Student Response System™ and ExamView.®

This easy-to-use, one-stop digital library and presentation tool includes preassembled Microsoft® PowerPoint® lecture slides with graphics from the text, making it easy for you to assemble, edit, publish, and present custom lectures for your course. The PowerLecture CD-ROM includes book-specific video-based polling and quiz questions that can be used with the JoinIn Student Response System™. PowerLecture also features ExamView® testing software, which includes all the test items from the printed Test Bank in electronic format, enabling you to create customized tests of up to 250 items that can be delivered in print or online. PowerLecture also includes an electronic version of the *Instructor's Resource Manual*.

CourseMate

Cengage Learning's Sociology CourseMate (www.cengagebrain.com) brings course concepts to life with interactive learning, study, and exam preparation tools that support the printed textbook. Watch student comprehension soar as your class works with the printed textbook and the textbook-specific website.

Sociology CourseMate includes:

- An interactive eBook, which allows you to take notes, highlight, bookmark, search the text, and use in-context glossary definitions.
- Interactive teaching and learning tools including:
 - Quizzes
 - Flashcards
 - Videos
 - Write-a-Caption exercises
 - Can You Top This Photo?
 - and more

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As mentioned earlier, the book implements a vision I share with my former and signing editor, Chris Caldeira, who is now a full-time graduate student in sociology at University of California, Davis. I was so drawn to Chris's love of the discipline, her desire to reach students, her need to take risks, her style of learning and experiencing the world, her unique perspective about what sociology is and can be, and her ability to inspire and empower that I told her early on that I wanted to incorporate all that she stood for in this textbook. I willingly sought her consultation, guidance, and viewpoints every step of the way. I can say without hesitation that I would never have successfully conceptualized this book's structure and approach, let alone written it in its final form, without Chris's direction and honest critique—a critique so straightforward, sincere, and respectful that I never became defensive (well, maybe in the beginning). It is for these reasons that I have formally acknowledged her intellectual and photographic contributions on the title page of this text.

Photographer Lisa Southwick posted 2530 photos (sometimes a dozen or more versions of a particular social setting or activity) taken especially for this book, from which I chose about 150. Many others are also used in the ancillary materials. Lisa took these photographs from December 2009 through April 2010. During that time we had weekly conversations about sociological concepts and the best ways of capturing those concepts through photographs. Lisa approached hundreds of people, seeing in each something that embodied one or more of the many social forces shaping their lives or the encounters of which they were a part. Before taking photographs Lisa always asked permission, explaining the purpose and inviting potential subjects to contribute to the learning process. I am impressed that, with few exceptions, everyone she asked expressed a willingness to share their lives—even sensitive aspects of their lives—with an anonymous body of students seeking to learn. Lisa secured this cooperation because she has a unique ability for making people feel comfortable about, and respected for, who they are and what they do. Lisa also has the ability to present the people photographed as larger than the social categories by which they are too often perceived and known.

There are, of course, many others who have also contributed in highly significant ways to this book's creation. At the risk of severely understating Missy Gish's monumental and indispensable role in this project, I will simply say that she kept everything in order—including the 100-plus modules, the 800-plus photographs, and the thousands of references over perhaps a dozen or more revisions. Plus she took 32 photographs for this book. In preparing to write about her role, I asked Missy how I might best describe the organizational skills and the years of intense focus and energy that she contributed to this project. We agreed that the best we could say it is that “no one could possibly comprehend or imagine what it took—let's not even try.”

I called on Kristie Vise, my colleague at NKU, to read and critique many modules, to recommend sociological research around which I could build some modules, and to draft the “Environmental Sociology” module. Kristie also created the PowerPoint slides for the instructor's manual that outline and highlight material in each module. Likewise another colleague, Molly Blenk, read dozens of modules and offered excellent suggestions about how to best express sociological ideas. I am fortunate that several other colleagues at NKU—Boni Li, Jaime

McCauley, and Ann Hamill—agreed to read one or more modules and provide feedback.

Behind the scenes at Cengage/Wadsworth is a team of people who made this book a reality. Many in academia do not realize the years of time, energy, intellect, and support that editorial, production, and marketing staff, working behind the scenes, contribute to a book's development and eventual production. As a result the collaborative effort by which knowledge is created and disseminated remains in the backstage and misrepresented as a feat largely accomplished by the author. While I cannot deny the central and indispensable role an author plays, the process is clearly a team effort. As an analogy we might equate the author's role with that of a quarterback. Anyone who follows football has observed how ineffective even the best quarterback can become if the front line breaks down or the other players do not follow through.

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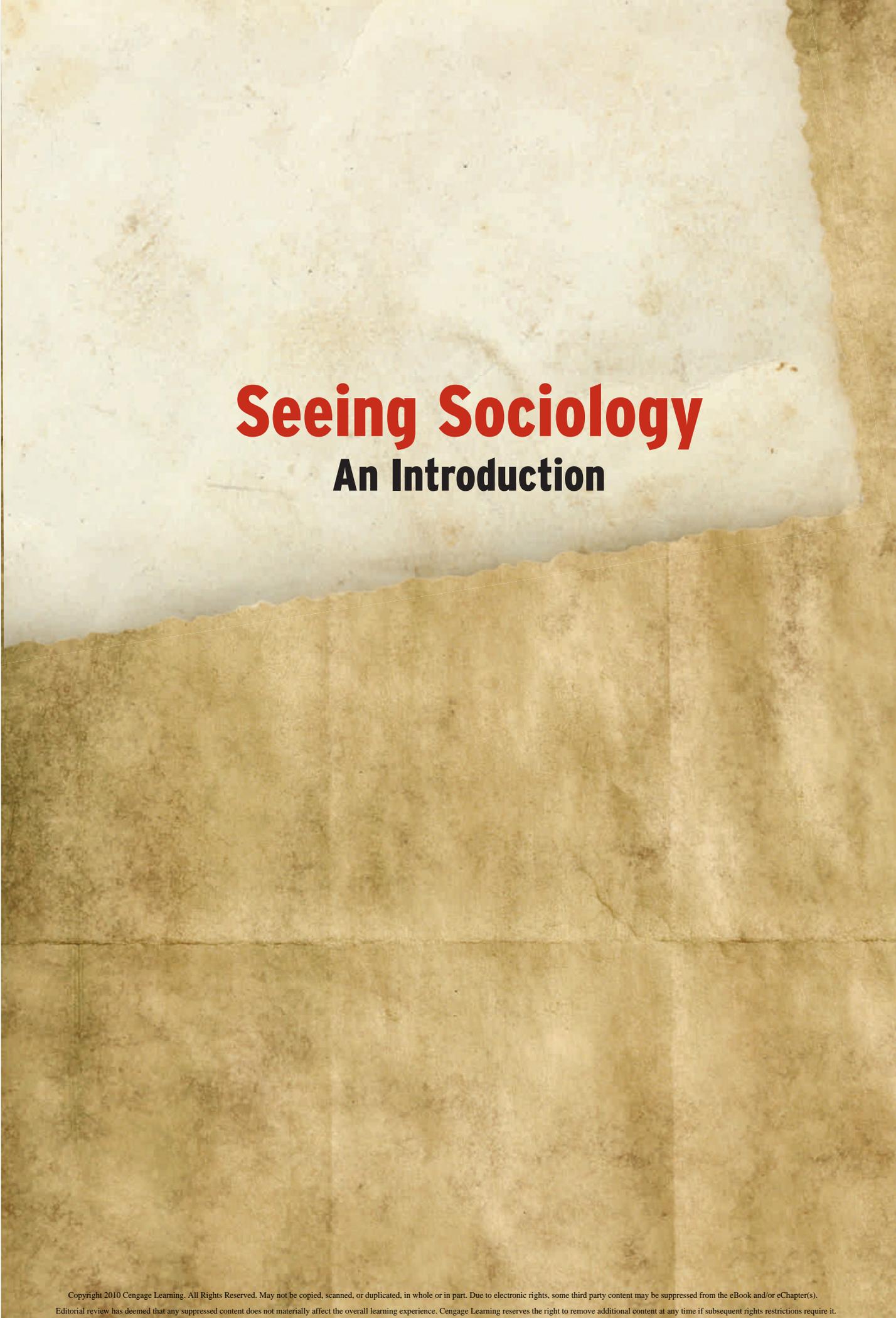
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Seeing Sociology

An Introduction



Chris Caldeira

1

CHAPTER

SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

- 1.1** What Is Sociology?
- 1.2** Social Facts
- 1.3** The Sociological Imagination
- 1.4** The Emergence of Sociology
- 1.5** The Early Sociologists
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- 1.7** Research Design
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This introduction to sociology takes you on a journey that will push you to see in new ways the world in which you live. That journey requires you to leave your comfort zones, to be curious about events taking place around you, and to wonder and care about those who live in places nearby and far away. By participating in this journey you will come to see how social experiences—the time in history you are born, the places you have lived, and the people you have encountered—profoundly shape what you do and think. By the journey’s end, you will understand that “things are not what they seem” (Berger 1963, p. 21). This understanding will put you in a better position to appreciate what were once largely invisible connections to people, places and times. You will also come to see that, for better or worse, what you think and do affects those around you and beyond. Knowing these things will help you to be a positive force in your own and others’ lives.

What Is Sociology?

Objective

You will learn that sociology is the scientific study of human activity in society.



Lisa Southwick

Do you text message?
Do you use OMG or
LOL when you write
text messages?

If you do, you are part of a 40-year-plus process of inventing an evolving “language.” That process can be traced back to 1969, when the first e-mail launched what is now known as the Internet.

Sociologists view text messaging as a *social force* that is having a tremendous impact on human relationships and activities. Worldwide trillions of text messages are sent each year. Some were no doubt sent while texters were driving, in class, in church, at a party, at a funeral, at work, at dinner, at a protest, during an emergency—times when in the not-so-distant past instant communication was simply not possible. Texting is just one example of the many social forces sociologists study.

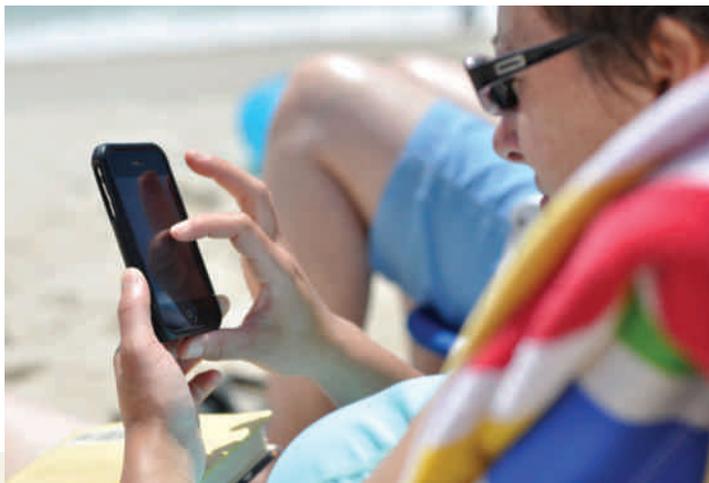
Sociology: A Definition

Sociology is the scientific study of human activity in society. More specifically, it is the study of the social forces that affect human behavior and thought, including the things people do with and to one another. The activities sociologists

study are age-old and too many to name, but they can include people searching for work, securing food, seeking the attention of another, adorning the body, celebrating, changing residences, listening to songs, traveling, burying the dead, and so on. These activities may involve just one or two people or billions of people.

Social forces are anything human or otherwise created that influence, pressure, or push people to interact, behave, or think in specified ways. People can embrace social forces, be swept along, be bypassed by them, or challenge them. Examples of the many social forces sociologists study include globalization, racial classification, technology, symbolic meanings, and institutions.

THE SOCIAL FORCE OF GLOBALIZATION. Globalization encompasses the ever-increasing flow of goods, services, money, people, technology, images, information, and other things that move across national borders. Globalization can be a largely invisible social force, but it affects our daily lives in countless ways.



Lisa Southwick

▲ Listening to songs is one of countless and age-old human activities that is now shaped by the social force of globalization. It took a global effort to create the iPod and the music on it. The feature that allows us to store and manage thousands of videos, songs, and photos is the result of a round-the-clock effort by programmers in India and the United States writing millions of lines of code. Workers in the Democratic Republic of Congo very likely mined the metal coltan, which allows the battery powering the iPod to store and regulate voltage. The device itself is manufactured in China and then carried by freighters to ports around the world, where truck drivers transport them to warehouses to be shipped to stores and homes (Leonard 2005). Finally, there is the labor of all those who worked to create the songs.

THE SOCIAL FORCE OF RACIAL CLASSIFICATION. Race is not a biological reality but a human-created way of categorizing people by assigning meaning to skin shades and other physical characteristics. As such it is a social force of immense significance. Simply consider that in the United States a parent and his or her biological offspring can be classified as different races.

► This mother and her baby daughter are classified as belonging to different races. As we will learn this practice of classifying biologically related people as distinct races speaks to the importance of racial categories in shaping identity and connections to other people.



Clive Brunskill/Getty Images

THE SOCIAL FORCE OF TECHNOLOGY. Technology includes any human inventions created to meet some need.

The microwave oven is a form of technology humans invented to prepare food. This technology has helped to lower the incentive for families to eat together. Before the microwave became commercially available in 1976, it was more efficient for one member of the household to cook for everyone because of the time required to cook a meal. Microwave technology makes it possible to cook already-prepared meals in minutes. The microwave has helped to expand individuality, in that people, including very young children, are no longer tied to a particular menu or time of eating (Visser 1986).

THE SOCIAL FORCE OF SYMBOLIC MEANINGS. Humans have assigned great symbolic meaning to diamonds—the stones are a sign of engagement, marriage, love, and wealth. These meanings are a social force that has helped to create an almost insatiable demand for the stones.

► As a result of the demand for diamonds, miners working for low wages in the war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere produce some 800 million gem- and industrial-quality diamonds per year. U.S. consumers—about 4.6 percent of the world’s population—buy almost 50 percent of these stones (Cockburn 2002). The ongoing wars in the DRC are fueled in part by factions seeking control over diamond mines and other resources.



Lisa Southwick

USAID

THE SOCIAL FORCE OF INSTITUTIONS. It seems like most of how we go about our day and live our lives has been planned out for us. This is because humans create institutions or relatively predictable arrangements that channel and coordinate human activity in ways to meet some need, such as the need to pass on accumulated knowledge to new generations.

► In the United States, almost 70 percent of high school graduates go on to college, without taking time off from academic pursuits. Many do so because they see no other options or they feel pressured by others to attend college (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009). Those 30 percent of graduates who decide not to go to college are often asked or feel the need to explain their decision.



Lisa Southwick

Why Study Sociology?

Sociology offers a framework to help us understand how social forces come to be and how they affect our sense of self, our relationships with and connections to others, the opportunities open to us, the barriers in life we encounter, and the relative ease or difficulty by which we can break through those barriers. Studying social forces is especially relevant today, if only because many people are questioning whether current ways of organizing human activities are sustainable. As we will see, sociology offers a perspective that allows us to ask questions that give focus to any assessment of human activities. Examples of such questions include:

- What are the disadvantages to a global production system that places so much geographical distance between those who produce and consume products, whether those products are iPods or tomatoes?
- What does it mean to divide family members into different racial categories?
- How do technologies such as the microwave oven, cell phone, and so on affect people's relationships and quality of life?
- In what ways does the American demand for diamonds and other resources fuel conflict and hardship in countries where they are mined?
- What are the consequences of so many pursuing a college degree? Will the value of the college degree decrease? Does it put pressure on people to pursue graduate degrees?

Before we can begin to change the way we do things, we must understand the social forces that shape and constrain human relationships and activities. Then we are better positioned to shape and react to those forces. Real change leaders understand these forces do not determine behavior; they are committed to finding better and more constructive ways of doing things; taking risks; thinking outside the box; and motivating and inspiring others to do things differently (Katzenbach et al. 1997).

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption that addresses a way in which the cell phone is a social force affecting human relationships.

Write a caption here



Hints: In writing this caption

- determine the type of social force a cell phone represents, and
- think about the age of the child and how the cell phone affects her relationships with others (e.g., do parents usually contact her directly or go through a third party, such as another parent who could verify her location?). What is lost or gained as a result of this direct connection?

Critical Thinking

Name a social force that has affected the way you relate to others. To date, how have you embraced, challenged, and/or resisted that force?

Key Terms

social forces

sociology

Social Facts

Objective

You will learn that how people think, appear, and behave is not always of their choosing.



Is this child who has just stepped out of a swimming pool a boy or a girl? Does it matter?

This child happens to be a boy. However, if this were a girl, do you think she should cover her chest? This question is the subject of a short 8-minute film titled *No Bikini*. Robin, the seven-year-old lead character, finds that bikini tops are uncomfortable, so she decides to wear trunks to swimming classes. She finds herself passing as a boy. Although from Robin's point of view, "I wasn't pretending, I just was." How was Robin able to pass as a boy simply by wearing swimming trunks?

The Power of Social Facts

From a sociological point of view, Robin's situation speaks to what sociologist Émile Durkheim called the power of **social facts**, collectively imposed ways of thinking, feeling, or behaving that have "the remarkable property of existing outside the consciousness of the individual" (1909, p. 51). That is, social facts are usually not the creations of the people experiencing them. They influence, pressure, or force people to behave and think in specified ways. Robin is able to pass as a boy because of this social fact: boys wear swim trunks and girls wear swimsuits. From the time we are born, the people around us seek to impose upon us ways of thinking, feeling, behaving, and expressing ourselves that we had no hand in creating. In their earliest years of life, caretakers oblige children to "eat, drink and sleep at regular hours . . . to be mindful of others, and to respect customs and conventions" (Durkheim 1909, p. 55).

► The expression on this boy's face speaks to the pressures to which children are subjected—to wear their hair a certain way, to speak a particular language, or to play with certain toys. According to Durkheim, society “seeks to shape a child in its own image” (1909, p. 54). Parents, teachers, and other caretakers act as the intermediaries, insisting on ways of being that even they did not invent.



Over time what was once imposed becomes habit. According to Durkheim (1909), habit disguises the pressure applied to turn a behavior into something people do without thinking, but it does not erase that pressure. Durkheim offers an analogy: “air does not cease to have weight,” even when we cannot feel that weight (p. 53).

Social facts have a life apart from the individuals who experience them. If a social fact is to remain in place, by definition it must also have some hold over people. That is, people must feel compelled to comply. Otherwise, a social fact would cease to exist. When people freely conform to a social fact, its power “is not felt or felt hardly at all.” Only when people resist do they come to know and experience its power (Durkheim 1909, p. 55). Groups enforce social facts in a variety of ways—casting looks of approval or disapproval, sending people to prison, offering money, giving detention, and so on.

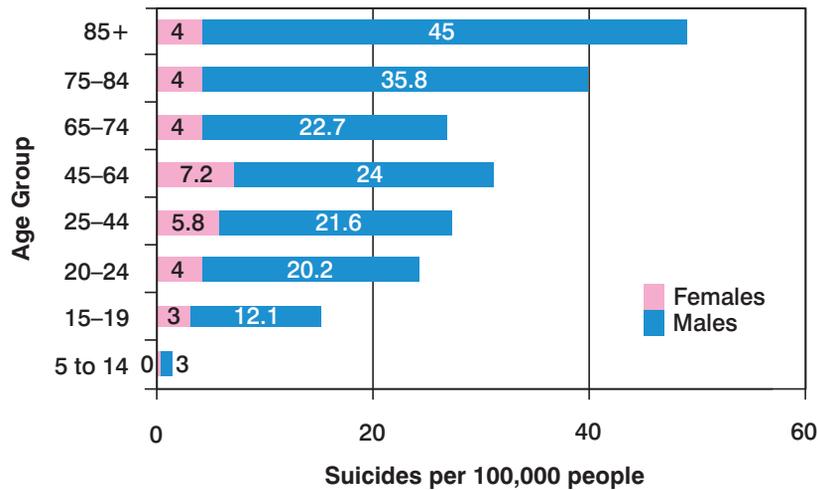
Social facts also include what Durkheim called currents of opinion or collective emotions/feelings/sentiments, the intensity of which varies according to group, time, and place. Those currents may relate to marriage, suicide, family size, or education. Durkheim argued that calculating rates offers one way of representing and comparing currents of opinions. For example, in the United States today 70 of every 100 high school students enroll in college following graduation. Twenty years ago 45 of every 100 did so (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009; Bozik and DeLuca 2005). Simply comparing these rates offers clues about the intensity of opinion regarding the importance of college.

Suicide Rates

Durkheim was particularly interested in suicide rates. He believed that these rates say something important about a group—in particular, something about the relationship of its members to the group. To grasp this point, consider what suicide rates suggest about men and women as a group (see Chart 1.2a).

Chart 1.2a Male-Female Differences in Suicide Rates (per 100,000), United States, 2005

Who has the highest suicide rates, males or females? Which age group has the highest and lowest suicide rate among males? Among females?



Source: Centers for Disease Control (2008a)

In reviewing these rates, it is important to point out that women attempt suicide about two to three times more often than men. In addition, the most common method of suicide among men involves firearms; among women the most common method is poisoning with drugs or other chemicals, a method that is more likely to fail (Centers for Disease Control 2008a and 2008b). Durkheim would maintain that the different suicide rates reflect the pressures the group places on men to succeed at suicide and not use it as a cry for help; and males' greater access to guns and knowledge of how to use them (guns are viewed as an expression of masculinity and something males and not females are expected to possess).

In *Suicide*, Durkheim (1897) takes the spotlight off the victim's motive and psychological state and points it outward toward the ties that bind (or fail to bind) the victim to the group. Ultimately, suicide involves severing relationships to the groups to which one belongs. Durkheim identified four types of social ties that bind the individual too strongly or weakly to the group: egoistic, altruistic, anomic, and fatalistic.

Egoistic describes a state in which the ties attaching the individual to the group are weak. When individuals are weakly attached to others, they encounter less resistance to suicide. Relative to men, society offers women more opportunities to attach themselves to the group; women are disproportionately assigned nurturing roles and men are disproportionately assigned roles that distance them from others. These differences in the ties that bind men and women to the group offer insights about why males have a much higher rate of suicide.

Altruistic describes a state in which the ties attaching the individual to the group are such that a person's sense of self cannot be separated from the group. When such people commit suicide, it is on behalf of the group they love more than themselves. The classic example is soldiers willing to sacrifice their life to advance the ideals and cause of their unit.

Anomic describes a state in which the ties attaching the individual to the group are disrupted due to dramatic changes in circumstances. Durkheim gave particular emphasis to economic circumstances, such as a recession, a depression, or an economic boom. In all cases, a reclassification occurs that suddenly casts individuals into lower or higher statuses. Those cast into a lower status must reduce their requirements, restrain their needs, and practice self-control. Those cast into a higher status must adjust to increased prosperity. Aspirations and desires may be unleashed, and a thirst to acquire goods and services may arise that cannot be satisfied.

Fatalistic describes a state in which the ties attaching the individual to the group are so oppressive there is no hope of release. Under such conditions, individuals see their futures as permanently blocked. Durkheim asked, “Do not the suicides of slaves, said to be frequent under certain conditions, belong to this type?” (1897, p. 276).

Critical Thinking

Identify a social fact that you or someone you know resisted. Describe the corresponding reaction from family, friends, or acquaintances.

Key Terms

altruistic

egoistic

social fact

anomic

fatalistic

The Sociological Imagination

Objective

You will learn that the sociological imagination allows us to see how the larger forces of time and place shape our personal lives and the society in which we live.



Chris Caldeira

What are the things in life over which you have no control? How about the country into which you were born?

This little boy was born in Sapa, Vietnam, sometime after the year 2000. How is his life different from, say, an American child born around the same time? Obviously, few American children are likely to have the chance to ride a water buffalo; but the chances are very high that they will have the opportunity to ride a pony. In addition, any American child who rides a pony is likely to be sitting in a saddle and there is likely to be an adult nearby.

Biography and Larger Social Forces

Sociologist C. Wright Mills (1963) wrote about the **sociological imagination**, a perspective that allows us to consider how outside forces, especially our time in history and the place we live, shape our life stories or biographies. A **biography** consists of all the events and day-to-day interactions from birth to death that make up a person's life, including the story of our name. Simply consider how the names parents give to their children are shaped by time and place. Clearly the place in which people are born influences the name they are given. Today, for example, the two most popular names given to female babies born in Japan are Sakura and Misaki. In the United States the two most popular girls' names are

Emily and Madison. Time also has an influence. One hundred years ago, Emily was the 101st most popular name and Madison was not even among the top 1,000 names given to baby girls (Social Security Administration 2009).



MSGT Scott Reed, USAF

◀ Sometimes it is easy to see how people's biographies are connected to time and place, as in the case of these evacuees staring in shock at destruction to their homes and property. Their lives are intertwined with Hurricane Katrina, a natural disaster amplified in its effects by systematic human error on many counts, which devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005. In fact, 1 million people were forced from this region to live in scattered locations across the United States, resulting in the largest mass dislocation of people in U.S. history.

Usually the connections between biography and the forces of time and place are not so obvious. But such forces affect even our most personal experiences. For example, how might the forces of place shape expressions of affection and closeness? It seems that the rules governing touch in the United States dictate that "one must be in a romantic relationship to get much touch, that touch has sexual connotations, and that daily interpersonal interaction tends not to involve touch" (Traina 2005).

➤ Many societies such as Papua New Guinea (left) allow men to walk arm-in-arm in public without questioning sexual motives. In contrast, the United States is a society that discourages such expressions of friendship.



Kaite Englert

Lisa Southwick

Sociologists believe that it pays to develop a sociological imagination, to know how biography is connected to larger social forces. Once we understand the extent to which even our most personal thoughts and actions are shaped by these forces, we are less likely to be victims of those forces because we know that things can be and are different. Such awareness is the first step toward making constructive changes in our lives and our society. Such awareness also allows us to distinguish between what sociologists call troubles and issues.

Distinguishing between Troubles and Issues

C. Wright Mills (1959) defines **troubles** as individual problems, or difficulties that are caused by personal shortcomings related to motivation, attitude, ability, character, or judgment. The resolution of a trouble, if it can indeed be resolved, lies in changing the person in some way. For example, Mills states that when

only one person is unemployed in a city of 100,000, that situation is a trouble. For its relief, we focus on that person's character, skills, and immediate opportunities—"She is lazy," "He has a bad attitude," "He didn't try very hard in school," or "She had the opportunity but didn't take it."

An **issue**, on the other hand, is a societal matter that affects many people and that can only be explained by larger social forces that transcend the individuals affected. When 24 million men and women are unemployed or underemployed in a nation with a workforce of 156 million, that situation is an issue. Clearly, we cannot hope to solve this kind of employment crisis by focusing on the character flaws of 24 million individuals. A constructive assessment of such an employment crisis requires us to think beyond personal shortcomings and to consider the underlying social forces that created it. For example, the economy is structured so that corporate success is measured by ever-increasing profit margins. Under such an arrangement, profits are increased by lowering labor costs, which can be achieved through laying off employees, downsizing, transferring jobs from high-wage to low-wage areas, and otherwise eliminating the amount of human labor needed to produce a product or deliver a service.

► After the great economic recession began in 2008, when you saw a foreclosure sign in front of a home, did you think the owners irresponsible? Or did you think about the lending practices many lenders followed that lured potential home owners into accepting loans with payments they could not afford, just so the banks could profit off bad loans that they sold to third-party investors who were left holding the bag? If you see the homeowner as irresponsible, you are framing the foreclosure as a trouble; if you place greater emphasis on lending practices in place at that time, then you are framing that economic crisis as an issue.



Lisa Southwick

Why is it important to distinguish between troubles and issues? The answer is obvious: those who are able to make that distinction are in a position to react constructively to significant issues of the day. Simply consider which response is likely to prevent future housing foreclosures—urging borrowers and bankers to change their ways, or changing lending practices so as to deter loan officers from making bad loans and consumers from accepting them?

Critical Thinking

Describe a way in which your life has been shaped by some larger social forces.

Key Terms

biography

sociological imagination

issues

troubles

The Emergence of Sociology

Objective

You will learn about two major historical events that triggered the birth of sociology.



Emilie Adnan



AP Photo/Richard Vogel

Have you heard the saying “You have to know the past to understand the present” (Sagan 1996)?

The Industrial Revolution—which started about 700 years ago but really took off around 1750 and continues today—is key to understanding the way we live today.

Industrial Revolution

The **Industrial Revolution** is the name given to the changes in manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, and mining that transformed virtually every aspect of society from the 1300s on. The defining feature of the Industrial Revolution was **mechanization**, the process of replacing human and animal muscle as a source of power with external sources of power derived from burning wood, coal, oil, and natural gas. The new energy sources eventually replaced hand tools with power tools, sailboats with freighters, and horse-drawn carriages with trains. Mechanization changed how goods were produced and how people worked. It turned workshops into factories, skilled workers into machine operators, and handmade goods into machine-made products.

➤ Consider the effort required to make bread before mechanization. Bakers plunged fists into gluey dough and massaged it with their fingers until their muscles hurt (Zuboff 1988).



Lewis W. Hine



Lewis W. Hine

◀ People took their dough to small local bakeries, where it was shaped and baked in wood- or coal-heated brick ovens. This baker and his apprentice used long-handled wooden shovels to move bread in and out of the oven (Advameg, Inc. 2007).

➤ With mechanization bakers no longer had to spend seven or more years as apprentices learning to make bread. Machines rendered such time-consuming skills obsolete. Now people with little or no skill could do the baker's work, and at a faster pace. Before mechanization, customers knew the person who baked their bread. With mechanization, they came to depend on "strangers" to sustain them.



Russell Lee

Changes to Society

Bread baking eventually moved out of the home and small bakery shops, and by the 1940s commercial bakeries were stocking grocery shelves. While this may seem unimportant, it is just one example of the way the Industrial Revolution weakened people's ties to their community, their workplace, and their home along with a series of other related innovations—the railroad, the steamship, running water, central heating, electricity, and the telegraph. Coal-powered trains, for example, turned month-long trips by stagecoach into day-long ones. These trains permitted people and goods to travel day and night—in rain, snow, or sleet—across smooth and rough terrain and to and from previously unconnected areas. As a result, the railroad caused people to believe they had annihilated time and space (Gordon 1989).

The railroad and other innovations in transportation facilitated economic interdependence, competition, and upheaval. Now people in one area could be priced out of a livelihood if people in another area could provide lower-cost labor, goods, and/or materials (Gordon 1989). In the case of bread, the innovations in transportation allowed bread to be made outside the community and then shipped long distances for sale to people the makers did not know. The nature of bread changed to accommodate this new reality; over time dozens of additives gave

commercial bread a standard texture, shape, taste, and most importantly, a shelf life that allowed it to be shipped long distances and then to sit on a store shelf for weeks.

The Industrial Revolution, centered in Europe and the United States, pulled together, often by force, people from even the most remote parts of the planet. The resulting division of labor meant that people who did not know one another were now interconnected.



Library of Congress

Frank and Frances Carpenter Collection

▲ The Industrial Revolution included the assembly line. To produce a car, these Ford workers depended on more than those working in the immediate assembly plant. They also depended on workers in remote corners of the world, such as this rubber tapper in Indonesia (a Dutch colony), to supply the material for tires. Now, a strike in the U.S. factory or a disease to the latex-producing rubber plants would affect workers in both countries. (Both photographs were taken in 1923.)

In sum, the Industrial Revolution changed everything—the ways in which goods were produced, the ways in which people negotiated time and space, the relationships between what were once geographically separated peoples, the ways in which people made their livings, the density of human populations (e.g., urbanization), the relative importance and influence of the home in people’s lives, access to formal education (the rise of compulsory and mass education), and the emergence of a consumption-oriented economy and culture. The accumulation of wealth became a valued and necessary pursuit. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith (1776) argued that the invisible hand of the free market (capitalism) embodied in private ownership and self-interested competition held the key to progress and prosperity. These unprecedented changes caught the attention of the early sociologists who wrote in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In fact, sociology emerged out of their efforts to document and to explain the effects of the Industrial Revolution on society. The emergence of sociology was also part of a larger intellectual and social revolution known as the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment was a 100-year-plus revolutionary intellectual and social movement that took place in Europe and the United States between 1680 and 1789. The social critics of the day argued that science and human reason could

be used to undermine the weight of tradition, ignorance, superstition, and tyranny. These social critics openly challenged the oppressive powers of the church and the hereditary aristocracy. It was also a time when the masses rose up to confront these powers through a series of conflicts that included the American and French Revolutions (Brians 2000).

What triggered these unprecedented challenges to and confrontations of authority? At the time of the Enlightenment, a great division existed between peasants who worked the land and the aristocratic landowners who monopolized food sources—flour mills, community ovens that baked the bread, and oil and wine presses. Although the peasants' situation varied by region, we know that they paid tithes to the church and taxes to the aristocracy, often as much as one-third or more the value of their crops. The peasants, who were poor and desperate, despised the aristocracy, who they saw as overbearing and excessively wealthy (Spielvogel 2006).

How did the masses come to believe that their fate did not have to be what was taught to them? The answer is complex, but we can say that industrialization and the rise of a global trading system helped create a new class of people—the merchant class. This class had not inherited their situation in life as had the aristocracy and peasant classes. In fact, the merchant class believed that they had *earned* their newfound wealth. The facts of individual merit and achievement challenged the longstanding belief that people inherited their lot in life and could do nothing to change it. People questioned the wisdom of paying taxes to support the lavish lifestyle of the aristocracy, which produced nothing of real value for the society. These various challenges to the existing order gave rise to a new and liberating belief—*society did not have to be organized as it was*. In fact, people and the societies in which they lived were things that could be studied scientifically and changed (Hooker 1996).

By 1822, a field of study named sociology, devoted to the scientific study of society, emerged. Among other things, it emphasized the need to understand and solve the many social problems generated by the Industrial Revolution.

Critical Thinking

Identify something in your life that depends on the labor of someone in another country.

Key Terms

Industrial Revolution

mechanization

The Early Sociologists

Objective

You will learn how the writings of the early sociologists shape our understanding of society today.



Missy Gish

Can you name at least one idea that has opened your eyes and made you see the world around you in a new way?

In this module we consider the transforming ideas of six early theorists. Three of the six—Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber—are nicknamed the “big three” because their writings form the heart of the discipline. We also consider three other central figures: Auguste Comte because he gave sociology its name, Jane Addams for her methods of applying knowledge, and W.E.B DuBois for his work on the color line.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857)

French philosopher and father of positivism Auguste Comte gave sociology its name in 1839. **Positivism** holds that valid knowledge about the world can be derived only from using the scientific method. Comte advanced the “Law of Three Stages,” which maintains that societies develop according to three stages: (1) theocratic, (2) metaphysical, and (3) positive. In the theocratic stage (stage 1), people explain the events going on in the world as the work of personified deities with supernatural qualities that allow them to exert their will upon the world. In the metaphysical stage (stage 2), people draw upon abstract and broad concepts to define features of reality that cannot be observed or known through observation. Metaphysics deals with big philosophical questions such as the meaning of life, and good versus evil. In the positive stage (stage 3)—the

conceptually superior stage according to Comte—people use scientific explanations to understand the world. Comte placed sociology in this third stage of thinking; he maintained that sociologists were scientists who studied the results of the human intellect (DeGrange 1939). What did he mean by this?

First, sociology is a science and only those sociologists who follow the scientific method can presume to have a voice in describing and guiding human affairs. Second, sociologists study the things humans have created and their effects on society. Comte recommended that sociologists study **social statics**, the forces that hold societies together and give them endurance over time, and **social dynamics**, the forces that cause societies to change. Comte’s preoccupation with order and change is not surprising, given that he was writing at a time when the Industrial Revolution was transforming society in unprecedented ways.

► To illustrate Comte’s thinking, he would be interested in the social forces that have held any city together over time even as new residents are born and as other residents move in and out and die. Comte would also focus on how the city has changed over time and on the social forces responsible, including changes triggered by global, national, and local events.



U.S. Air Force photo by Denise Gould/Released

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Karl Marx was born in Germany but spent much of his professional life in London working and writing in collaboration with Friedrich Engels. Arguably his most well-known writing is *The Communist Manifesto*, a 23-page pamphlet issued in 1848 and translated into more than 30 languages (Marcus 1998). Upon reading it today, one is “struck by the eerie way in which its 1848 description of capitalism resembles the restless, anxious and competitive world of today’s global economy” (Lewis 1998, p. A17).

According to Marx, the sociologist’s task is to analyze and explain **conflict**, the major force that drives social change. Specifically, Marx saw class conflict as the vehicle that propelled society from one historical epoch to another. He described **class conflict** as an antagonism growing out of the opposing interests held by exploiting and exploited classes. The nature of that conflict is shaped by the **means of production**, the resources such as land, tools, equipment, factories, transportation, and labor that are essential to the production and distribution of goods and services.

Marx viewed every historical period as characterized by a system of production that gave rise to specific types of class conflicts. The Industrial Revolution was accompanied by the rise of two distinct classes, creating a fundamental divide: the **bourgeoisie**, the owners of the means of production; and the **proletariat**, those individuals who must sell their labor to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie’s interest lies with making a profit and the proletariat’s with increasing wages. To maximize profit, the bourgeoisie search for labor-saving technologies, employ the lowest-cost workers, and find the cheapest materials to make products.

Marx believed that the pursuit of profit drove the explosion of technological innovation and the unprecedented levels of production during the Industrial Revolution. He believed that capitalism was the first economic system capable of maximizing human ingenuity and productive potential. He also believed that capitalism ignored too many human needs, that too many workers could not afford to buy the products of their labor, and that relentless efforts to reduce the costs of labor left the worker vulnerable and insecure. Marx called the drive for profit a “boundless thirst—a werewolf-like hunger—that takes no account of the health and the length of life of the worker unless society forces it to do so” (Marx 1887, p. 142). Marx believed that if this economic system were in the right hands—the hands of the workers, or the proletariat—public wealth would be abundant and distributed according to need.



▲ Although the workers in these photographs are separated by more than a hundred years, Marx would argue that they have something in common: they are among the proletariat because they own only their labor that they must sell to the bourgeoisie, who are always looking to cut labor costs.

Émile Durkheim (1858-1918)

To describe the Industrial Revolution and its effects, Frenchman Émile Durkheim focused on the division of labor and solidarity. The division of labor is the way a society divides up and assigns day-to-day tasks. Durkheim was interested in how the division of labor affected **solidarity**, the system of social ties that acts as a cement connecting people to one another and to the wider society. Durkheim observed that industrialization changed the division of labor and, by extension, the nature of solidarity from mechanical to organic solidarity.

Pre-industrial societies are characterized by **mechanical solidarity**, a system of social ties based on uniform thinking and behavior. Durkheim believed that uniformity is common in societies with a simple division of labor where, for the most part, everyone performs the same tasks needed to maintain their livelihood. This sameness gives rise to common experiences, skills, and beliefs. In pre-industrial societies, religion and family are extremely important. As a result, the social ties that bind are grounded in tradition, obligation, and duty. These societies do not have the technology or resources to mass-produce a variety of products that people can buy to distinguish themselves from others. While mechanical solidarity is associated with pre-industrial societies, we can find contemporary examples of this solidarity in groups that are isolated and

homogeneous, such as the Old Order Amish, and in groups that demand disciplined and coordinated action, such as military units.

The Industrial Revolution was fueled by a complex division of labor. The total human labor needed to create a product was divided into specialized tasks, each assigned to specially trained workers. The workers did not have to know or live near one another; in fact, they often lived in different parts of a country or in different parts of the world. In addition, the materials needed to make products came from many locations around the world.

Industrialization created differences among people, giving rise to **organic solidarity**, a system of social ties founded on interdependence, specialization, and cooperation. That is, for the most part people relate to others in terms of their specialized roles in the division of labor and as customers. Customers buy tires from a dealer three towns over; travel by airplane flown by a pilot they might never see; and pay a cashier they've never met for coffee. Customers do not need to know someone personally to interact with them. In industrial societies most day-to-day interactions are short-lived, impersonal, and instrumental (i.e., we interact with most people for a specific reason). In addition, few individuals possess the knowledge, skills, and resources to be self-sufficient. Consequently, social ties are strong, not because people know one another, but because strangers depend upon one another to survive.



Klenschmidt, Frank E.



1st Class William R. Goodwin

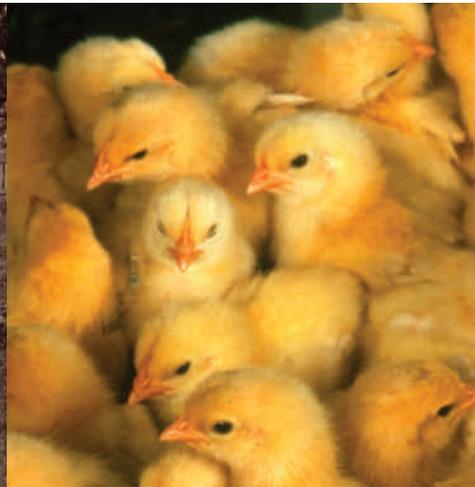
▲ It is likely that this Eskimo family (left) has the skills to make their clothes and construct housing. Thus they live in an environment characterized by mechanical solidarity. Durkheim argued that in such a society a person's "first duty is to resemble everybody else" (1933, p. 396). It is unlikely that the family on the right feels that duty. It is also unlikely that they possess the skills to survive on their own. That family's way of life depends on the labor of strangers, most of whom do not live in the immediate community.

Max Weber (1864-1920)

The German scholar Max Weber made it his task to analyze and explain how the Industrial Revolution affected **social action**—actions people take in response to others—with emphasis on what motivates people to act. Weber suggested that sociologists focus on the meanings guiding thought and action. He believed that social action is motivated in one of four ways. In reality, motives are not so clear-cut but involve some mixture of the four.

1. *Traditional*—a goal is pursued because it was pursued in the past (i.e., "that is the way it has always been").

2. *Affectional*—a goal is pursued in response to an emotion such as revenge, love, or loyalty (a soldier throws him- or herself on a grenade out of love and sense of duty for those in his or her unit).
3. *Value-rational*—a desired goal is pursued with a deep and abiding awareness that the ways in which people go about pursuing a goal are valued as much or more than achieving the desired goal. There are no compromises or cost-cutting. Instead, action is guided by a set of standards or codes of conduct (Weintraub and Soares 2005).
4. *Instrumental rational*—a valued goal is pursued by the most efficient means at any cost and irrespective of the consequences. In the context of the Industrial Revolution the desired goal is profit and the most efficient means are the most cost-effective ones, no matter the costs to workers, the society, or the environment. In contrast to value-rational action, there is no code of conduct governing the pursuit of goals. One might equate this type of action with that of an addict who will seek a drug at any cost to self or to others. There is an inevitable self-destructive quality to this form of action, as this “no holds barred” approach will eventually collapse on itself (Henrik 2000).



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Keith Weiler

▲ Weber maintained that with industrialization thought and behavior was more likely to be instrumental rational in orientation. Instrumental rational action drives the processing of these baby chicks (right), destined to live in a 7 × 7 inch space, never seeing the light of day. This treatment represents the most cost-efficient means to reach the valued goal of making a profit. It ignores the code of good animal husbandry (left), which involves an obligation to care for animals’ well-being by providing food, protection, and shelter (Scully 2002).

Weber believed that instrumental rational action could lead to **disenchantment**, a great spiritual void accompanied by a crisis of meaning. In the case of raising chickens, disenchantment results when the goal of profit outweighs any moral responsibility to treat the animals with kindness and when the means used to turn a profit are such that “we no longer recognize the animals in a factory farm as living creatures capable of feeling pain and fear” (Angier 2002, p. 9).

W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963)

A voice that was initially ignored but later “discovered” as important to sociology is that of American-born W.E.B. DuBois. In trying to describe the Industrial Revolution and its effects on society, DuBois offered the concept of the **color line**,

a barrier supported by customs and laws separating nonwhites from whites, especially with regard to their roles in the division of labor. DuBois (1919/1970) traced the color line's origin to the scramble for Africa's resources, beginning with the slave trade upon which the British Empire and American Republic were built, costing black Africa "no less than 100,000,000 souls" (p. 246). The end of slave trade was followed by the colonial expansion that accompanied the Industrial Revolution. That expansion involved rival European powers competing to secure labor and natural resources. By 1914 all of Africa had been divided into European colonies. DuBois maintained that the world was able "to endure this horrible tragedy by deliberately stopping its ears and changing the subject in conversation" (p. 246). He maintained that an honest review of Africa's history could only show that Western governments and corporations coveted Africa for its natural resources and for the cheap labor needed to extract them.

➤ The color line reflected the deep social divisions between Europeans and Africans. DuBois' observations are reflected in these scenes in which African labor (top) moved goods through the continent for export to Europe and the United States. If DuBois were alive today, he would emphasize that the West continues to exploit African labor and resources. One example of ongoing exploitation, diamond mining (bottom), was the subject of the 2006 film *Blood Diamond*.



Provided Courtesy of Urbain Ureel

AP Photo/Ben Curtis

Jane Addams (1860-1935)

In 1889 Jane Addams (with Ellen Gates Starr) cofounded one of the first settlement houses in the United States, the Hull House. Settlement houses, which originated in London, were community centers that served the poor and other marginalized populations. Wealthy donors supported them, and university faculty and college students lived with the clients, serving and learning from them. The Chicago Hull House was one of the largest and most influential settlements in the United States. At the time of its founding, immigrants constituted almost half of Chicago's population. In addition, the city was industrializing and experiencing unprecedented population growth. These dramatic changes were accompanied by a variety of social problems, including homelessness, substandard housing, and unemployment.

Hull House facilities contained a school, boys' and girls' clubs, recreation facilities, a library, and much more. The Hull House had strong ties with the University of Chicago School of Sociology. Jane Addams was the forerunner of what is today called public sociology. Addams worked to give her clients a voice and to address issues related to child labor, worker safety, women's and minority rights, and other areas (Deegan 1978; Hamington 2007).



▲ The left photo shows children playing in the community center modeled after the Hull House in 1900. Her ideas are alive today in any center (right) that serves the needs of a community.

Addams maintained that the settlements were equivalent to an applied university where knowledge about how to change the situation of people could be applied and tested. Addams advocated for **sympathetic knowledge**, firsthand knowledge gained by living and working among those being studied, because knowing others increases the “potential for caring and empathetic moral actions” (Addams 1912, p. 7). Addams made a point of never addressing an audience about the Hull House without bringing a member who knew its conditions more intimately than she “to act as an auditor” of her words (Addams 1910, p. 80).

Why do the ideas of the classic sociologists matter today? Why take the time to learn and think with them? The early sociologists gave us valuable frameworks for thinking about the world in which we live and the social issues we face. These frameworks allows us to consider (1) how the division of labor, the means of production, solidarity, and the color line connect us to and estrange us from others in our community and beyond; (2) the reasons we pursue goals, the means we use to achieve them, and their consequences; and (3) techniques for understanding the situation of others (sympathetic knowledge).

Critical Thinking

Which of the six theorists offers you the most useful concepts for thinking about the world in which you live? Explain.

Key Terms

bourgeoisie	means of production	social action
class conflict	mechanical solidarity	social dynamics
color line	organic solidarity	social statics
conflict	positivism	solidarity
disenchantment	proletariat	sympathetic knowledge

Sociological Theory

Objective

You will learn how sociological theories guide research and analysis.



Lisa Southwick

Think of a time you did research for a teacher-assigned essay, research paper, or speech. Did you struggle to focus your writing?

Imagine the chosen topic is cell phones. A search engine yields 270,000 hits for the term *cell phone*. As you browse through the titles, you wonder how to select and organize the information. This writing assignment can be less stressful if your research is informed by a sociological theory.

Sociological Theory

A **sociological theory** is a framework for thinking about and explaining how societies are organized and/or how people in them relate to one another and respond to their surroundings. There are hundreds of sociological theories. Some focus our attention on very specific aspects of society, others on more general aspects.

Within sociology there are two broad divisions: **macrosociology** and **micro-sociology**. Macrosociology focuses on large-scale conditions and processes such as industrialization, globalization, and urbanization. Microsociology, by contrast, focuses on small-scale interpersonal processes, including social

relationships and individual interactions. Macrosociology emphasizes processes like urbanization, a transformative process in which people migrate from rural to urban areas and change the way they use land, interact, and make a living. Microsociologists might study how urbanization shapes social interactions—for example, how do people on a subway train manage to disengage from people sitting next to them?

Within sociology there are three broad theoretical perspectives: functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interaction. Generally speaking, functionalist and conflict perspectives are considered macrosociology and symbolic interaction is considered microsociology. Each perspective offers a vision of society, a key question that guides analysis and a vocabulary to answer that question.

Functionalist Perspective

Functionalists ask: “How is social order in society maintained?” Their answer is that social order is possible because all the parts of society contribute to order. Functionalists see society as a system of interdependent parts. To illustrate, they use the human body as an analogy. The human body is composed of parts such as bones, ligaments, muscles, a brain, a spinal cord, a heart, and lungs, which all work together in impressive harmony. Society, like the human body, is made up of interdependent parts, such as schools, automobiles, sports teams, cell phones, funeral rites, laws, and languages. Like the various body parts, each of society’s parts performs a function.

A **function** is the contribution a part makes to maintain the stability of an existing social order. In the most controversial form of this perspective, functionalists argue that all parts of society—even something like poverty—contribute in some way to maintaining order and stability in society. They strive to identify how parts—even seemingly problematic ones—contribute to the existing order. Consider just one function of poverty: many poor people often “volunteer” for over-the-counter and prescription drug tests. Most new drugs, from AIDS vaccines to allergy medicines, must eventually be tried on healthy human subjects to determine their potential side effects (e.g., rashes, headaches, vomiting, constipation, and drowsiness) and appropriate dosages. The chance to earn money motivates people to volunteer for clinical trials. Because payment is relatively low and the risks are often high, however, the tests attract a disproportionate share of low-income, unemployed, or underemployed people as “volunteers.” Therefore, from a functionalist perspective, the pharmaceutical and medical systems would be seriously strained if poverty were eliminated.

Sociologist Robert K. Merton provided a framework for analyzing a part’s contribution to not only order and stability but also to disorder and instability. That framework seeks to identify how a part contributes to maintaining the current social order (functions) and also how that part can have disruptive effects to that order (dysfunctions). Those functions and dysfunctions can be anticipated or unanticipated.

MANIFEST AND LATENT FUNCTIONS. **Manifest functions** are a part’s anticipated, recognized, or intended effects on maintaining order. **Latent functions** are a part’s *unanticipated*, *unintended*, and *unrecognized* effects on an existing social order. To illustrate this distinction, consider the manifest and latent functions of the cell phone. One manifest function of the cell phone is that it offers people a tool for communicating with others independent of location.

► In this regard the cell phone allows people in some of the world's poorest countries, such as Mali, who have never been connected through landline phones, to connect to the Internet and to relatives, friends, and others. This billboard announces that cell phone service in Mali is available through the phone network Malitel.

A latent function of the cell phone is that few people anticipated that it would become a personal multimedia communication tool, allowing people to take, send, and receive photos; watch television; send text messages; listen to and share music; hear radio shows; and access the Internet. One can argue that anytime-anywhere access eliminates unnecessary delays connecting to people and information sources.

Bert Spieritz/Hollandse Hoogte/Redux Pictures



MANIFEST AND LATENT DYSFUNCTIONS. A part can also have manifest or latent disruptive consequences. **Manifest dysfunctions** are a part's anticipated disruptions to an existing social order. A manifest dysfunction of cell phones relates to drivers who become distracted when dialing, talking, and texting, increasing their chances of being involved in or causing an accident. **Latent dysfunctions** are the unanticipated disruptions to the existing social order. One latent dysfunction of the cell phone is that it can be used to report on and document events as they happen. This capability allows people to disrupt the existing order by bypassing the news media, government censors, and others who try to control or suppress the flow of information.



AP Photo/Paul Sanjaya

◀ Another latent dysfunction relates to the toxic waste generated from the improper disposal of cell phones. The adverse consequences of such disposal to the environment and human health will only increase as disposable cell phones, designed to last for 60 minutes, enter the market in mass.

The strength of the functionalist perspective is that it offers a balanced overview of a part's anticipated and unanticipated effects on an existing social order. One weakness is that it leaves us wondering about a part's overall positive or negative effect on that order. This perspective provides no formula for evaluating whether functions outweigh dysfunctions or about whether a social order needs to be disrupted.

Conflict Perspective

Conflict theorists, who draw inspiration from Karl Marx, ask: "Who benefits and who loses from the ways in which society is organized?" Their answer is that the advantaged groups benefit at the expense of less advantaged groups. Conflict

theorists seek to identify dominant and disadvantaged groups, to document structural inequalities (the unequal access to scarce and valued resources), and to identify the practices that dominant groups have established to promote and protect their interests.

Conflict theorists see conflict as an inevitable fact of social life that takes many forms, including violent confrontations, competition, and arguments. In any society, advantaged and disadvantaged groups compete for scarce and valued resources such as well-paying jobs, water, and even bodily organs for transplant. Not surprisingly, the advantaged seek to protect their positions, whereas the disadvantaged seek change.

The concept of ideology helps explain how groups protect their advantages. **Ideologies** are seemingly commonsense views justifying the existing state of affairs. But upon close analysis ideologies reflect the viewpoints of the dominant groups and disguise their advantages. Often the disadvantaged buy into the ideologies as well. To illustrate, many believe that a free marketplace allows workers the option to strike or quit their jobs if they are dissatisfied with working conditions. On close analysis, however, this assumption falls apart. If employers and workers cannot reach a labor agreement, the employer “can afford to wait.” The employee

who has “but wages to live upon, must take work when, where, and at what terms he can get it. The workman . . . is fearfully handicapped by hunger” (Engels 1886).

Conflict theorists studying the cell phone focus on who controls the resources needed to produce it. For example, a key mineral that helps to regulate voltage and store energy in cell phones and other electronic devices is coltan (also known as tantalum).

◀ Conflict theorists would point out that the coltan miners (top), who labor to extract a critical mineral needed to make cell phones, live in some of the world’s poorest countries. That labor is a critical reason cell phone makers profit from selling their products to people who disproportionately live in the wealthier economies.



Alfredo Falvo/Contrasto/Redux Pictures



Lisa Southwick

The strength of the conflict perspective is that it forces us to consider the ways dominant groups control scarce and valued resources. The weakness is that it simplistically portrays the advantaged group as all-powerful and the disadvantaged as victims incapable of changing their circumstances. In the case of the cell phone, conflict theorists might overlook the millions of previously unconnected people in the world now connected and ignore the empowering elements of the cell phone to circumvent power structures and deliver news at a grassroots level.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Sociologist Herbert Blumer coined the term *symbolic interaction* and outlined its essential principles, which follow. Symbolic interactionists focus on **social interaction**, everyday encounters in which people communicate, interpret, and respond to each other's words and actions. These theorists ask, how do people involved in interaction "take account of what each other is doing or is about to do" and then direct their own conduct accordingly (Blumer 1969). The process depends on (1) self-awareness, (2) shared symbols, and (3) negotiated order.

SELF-AWARENESS. **Self-awareness** occurs when a person is able to observe and evaluate the self from another's viewpoint. People are self-aware when they imagine how others are viewing, evaluating, and interpreting their words and actions. Through this imaginative process people become objects to themselves; they come to recognize that others see them, for instance, "as being a man, young in age, a student, in debt, trying to become a doctor, coming from an undistinguished family and so forth" (Blumer 1969, p. 172). In imagining others' reactions, people respond and make adjustments (apologize, change facial expressions, lash out, and so on).

➤ This facial expression conveys the message "Oops, I shouldn't have done that." Such a reaction requires self-awareness; that is, this woman had to imagine another's evaluation and judgment of something she did, which prompted her to respond with such a look.



SHARED SYMBOLS. A **symbol** is any kind of object to which people assign a name, meaning, or value (Blumer 1969). Objects can be classified as physical (chairs, cell phones, cars, books, a color, the wave of a hand), social (a friend, a parent, the president of the United States, a bus driver), or as abstract (freedom, greed, justice, empathy). In the context of driving, for example, the color red has come to symbolize *stop*. Objects can take on different meanings depending on audience and context: a tree can have different meanings to an urban dweller, a farmer, a poet, a home builder, an environmentalist, or a lumberjack (Blumer 1969). People derive meaning from observing others. By observing, people learn such things as a wave of the hand means good-bye, that true friends are rare, or when it's okay to respond to text messages in front of others.

NEGOTIATED ORDER. When we enter into interaction with others, we take for granted that a system of expected behaviors and shared meanings is already in place to guide the interaction. Although expectations are in place, symbolic interactionists emphasize that established meanings and ways of behaving can be reinforced and affirmed during interaction, but that they can also be ignored, challenged, or changed (Blumer 1969). In most interactions room for negotiation exists; that is, the parties involved have the option of negotiating other expectations and meanings.

The **negotiated order**, then, is the sum of existing expectations and newly negotiated ones (Strauss 1978).

► With regard to cell phones, symbolic interactionists emphasize the process by which people negotiate appropriate and inappropriate uses. People negotiate rules governing cell phone etiquette by posting signs or using body language, including rolling eyes, to let others know when cell phone conversations are inappropriate.



Lisa Southwick



Lisa Southwick

Since symbolic interactionists emphasize the interpretive and negotiating processes, in studying cell phones, they may choose to focus on specific situations during which cell phones ring and people answer them or call others—the situation may be deemed appropriate during an emergency or deemed inappropriate during class, a wedding service, or in a hospice room as someone lays dying.

The strength of the symbolic interactionist perspective is that it requires researchers to observe social interaction as it occurs. The weakness is that the perspective offers no specific directions on how to frame and organize those observations.

Critical Thinking

Which of the three theoretical perspectives best represents your thinking about cell phone use or nonuse?

Key Terms

function

manifest dysfunction

social interaction

ideologies

manifest function

sociological theory

latent dysfunctions

microsociology

symbol

latent function

negotiated order

macrosociology

self-awareness

Research Design

Objective

You will learn the kinds of things sociologists study and how they go about collecting data.



Imagine that you want to research a topic of interest such as self-medication or the social significance of tattoos. What would you study, and how might you go about collecting data?

Sociologists research any topic involving human activity. No matter what they choose to study, they establish a **research design**, a plan for gathering data on a chosen topic. A research design specifies the population to be studied and the **methods of data collection**, or the procedures used to gather relevant data. One research design is not inherently better than another; the design one establishes depends in part on the question driving the research.

Deciding Who or What to Study

Researchers must decide who or what they are going to study. Sociologists often study individuals; that is, they survey, interview, and observe people. But sociologists also study traces, documents, territories, households, and small groups. Traces consist of material evidence that yields information about some human

activity, such as the items that people throw away. Documents and materials are written, printed, or digitized information, such as magazine ads, traffic tickets, letters, or e-mails.

Households include all related and unrelated persons who share the same dwelling. When studying households, researchers collect information about the household itself. They might gather data on the total household income or access to the Internet. Small groups are defined as 2 to about 20 people who interact with one another in meaningful ways. Examples include father-child pairs, doctor-patient pairs, families, sports teams, and circles of friends. Keep in mind that the focus is on the group (e.g., the doctor-patient relationship, rather than on the doctor or patient per se).

➤ Territories are places with designated boundaries within which a population lives or certain activities occur. Researchers may choose to study countries, neighborhoods, playgrounds, markets, or every household in a neighborhood connected to an electrical grid.



Chris Caldeira

Samples

No matter who or what researchers decide to study, they cannot study everyone or everything, if only because of time and financial constraints. Instead, they often study a **sample**, a portion of the cases from the population of interest. Ideally, researchers study **random samples**, a subset of the targeted population in which every case has an equal chance of being selected. Obtaining a random sample is not always easy. For one thing, researchers must begin with a **sampling frame**—a complete list of every case in the population. Securing such a list can be difficult. A list of medical offices or households in a telephone directory is easy to obtain, but lists of adopted children or single people living in a small town are very difficult to secure. Almost all lists are incomplete, omitting those with unlisted telephone numbers or the newest members and including those who no longer belong because they have moved, died, or changed their status. What is important is that researchers consider the extent to which the list is incomplete and make their best effort to update it before drawing a sample. Even when a list is complete, the researcher must also think of the cost and time required to study everyone or everything chosen.

When researchers cannot secure a random sample, they may choose to study **nonrandom samples**, a subset of the targeted population that is accessible for study. While not random, accessible samples can yield important insights. For example, few researchers interested in how much recyclable garbage is thrown away each week in the United States have the resources to select a random sample of households to study. But a researcher may be able to ride along with one sanitation crew for a month and gain valuable insights about the amount and kinds of recyclable items people throw away in a particular kind of neighborhood.

Data Gathering Strategies

A research design must include a plan for collecting observations and other data. Researchers can choose from a variety of data-gathering strategies, including surveys and interviews, observation, secondary sources, case studies, and experimental design.

SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS. One way sociologists gather data is by asking questions using self-administered surveys or through interviews. A **self-administered survey** is a set of questions that respondents read and answer. The survey may ask respondents to write out their answers to questions (open-ended) or it may provide respondents a list of responses from which to choose (forced choice). The self-administered survey is one of the most common methods of data collection. Self-administered surveys have a number of advantages. No interviewers are needed to ask respondents questions, the surveys can be given to large numbers of people at one time, and respondents are less likely to feel pressure to give the socially acceptable response (especially when surveys are anonymous).

► Some drawbacks of self-administered surveys are that respondents can misunderstand the meaning of a question, skip over some questions, or just stop answering them.

The results of a questionnaire depend not only on respondents' decisions to fill it out, answer questions conscientiously and honestly, and return it, but also on the quality of the survey questions asked and a host of other considerations.



In comparison to self-administered surveys, interviews are more personal. The interviewer asks questions and records the respondent's answers.

◀ When respondents give answers during interviews, the interviewers must avoid pauses, expressions of surprise, inflections in their voice, or body language that reflects value judgments. Refraining from such conduct helps respondents feel comfortable and encourages them to give honest answers.

Interviews can be structured or unstructured, or a combination of the two. In a structured interview, the wording and sequence of questions, and sometimes response choices, are set in advance and cannot be altered during the course of the interview. In contrast to the structured interview, an unstructured interview is flexible and open-ended. The question-answer sequence is spontaneous and resembles a conversation in that the interviewer allows respondents to take the conversation in an unplanned direction. The interviewer's role is to give focus to the interview, ask for further explanation or clarification, and probe and follow up interesting ideas expressed by respondents.

No matter what type of interview, questions have to be clear and meaningful. Remember that writing good questions is much more difficult than it appears. Consider issues related to income. Researchers cannot simply ask, “What is your income?” but must specify if they mean hourly, weekly, monthly, or annual income; pretax or after-tax income; household or individual income; this year’s or last year’s income; or income from employment or other sources.

OBSERVATION Observation involves watching, listening to, and recording human activity as it happens. This technique may sound easy, but the challenge lies in knowing how to observe and what, among all the possible things one can notice, is significant while still remaining open to other considerations. Good observation techniques must be developed through practice and involve being alert, taking detailed notes, and making associations between observed behaviors. Observation is useful for (1) learning things that cannot be surveyed easily, and (2) experiencing the situation as those being observed experience it. One disadvantage is that observation research is time consuming and specific to a particular setting. Observation can take two forms: nonparticipant and participant. **Nonparticipant observation** consists of detached watching and listening: the researcher only observes and does not become part of group life.

➤ Researchers engage in **participant observation** when they join a group, interact directly with those they are studying, assume a role critical to the group’s purpose, and/or live in a community under study.



Courtesy of T. Scott McLaren

In participant and nonparticipant observation, researchers must decide whether to hide their identity and purpose. One reason for choosing concealment is to avoid the **Hawthorne effect**, a phenomenon in which research subjects alter their behavior simply because they are being observed. This term originated from a series of worker productivity studies conducted in the 1920s and 1930s involving female employees of the Hawthorne, Illinois, plant of Western Electric. Researchers found that no matter how they varied working conditions—bright versus dim lighting, long versus short breaks, piecework pay versus fixed salary—productivity increased. One explanation is that workers were responding positively to having been singled out for study (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939).

SECONDARY SOURCES Secondary sources or archival data has been collected for a purpose not related to the research study. This kind of data includes that gathered by census bureaus, research centers, and survey companies such as Gallup. Sociologists may use this already-collected data to do their research. The advantages of secondary data are that it is often free or at least costs less to obtain than it would cost to collect. Governments and other large agencies have the resources to execute large-scale surveys of randomly chosen populations, something few researchers can do on their own.

Secondary data goes beyond surveys. It includes biographies, photographs, letters, e-mails, websites, films, advertisements, graffiti, and so on. With this kind of data sociologists often do what is called **content analysis**. That is, they

identify themes, sometimes counting the number of times something occurs or specifying categories in which to place observations. A researcher who studies family photographs over time may look to see the extent to which pets are included.

CASE STUDIES. Case studies are objective accounts intended to educate readers about a person, group, or situation. Well-written case studies shed light through in-depth descriptions of an individual, an event, a group, or an institution. Case studies should tell a story with a beginning, a middle, and an ending. Researchers interested in texting addictions could do a case study on a particular person.

► For example, the case study might include the person's first memory of texting, texting partners, description of situations in which that person texts when he or she should be concentrating on the task at hand, information on how the person defines his or her addiction, and an assessment of the addiction today. A case study should also allow for some generality; that is, while the case study is about a specific person or situation, the account speaks to others in the same situation.

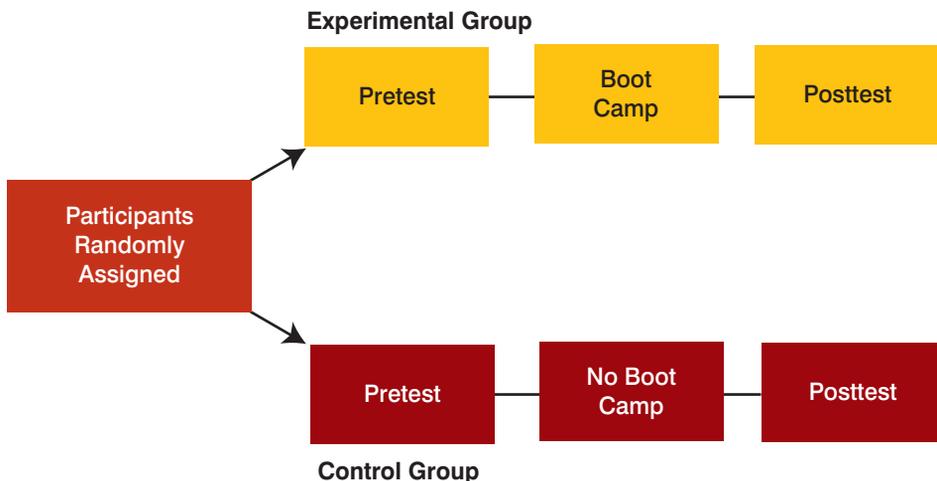


C. Todd Lopez

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS. An experimental design is a highly systematic method used to study people assigned to two groups where theoretically, the only difference is that people in one group are exposed to some action (the independent variable) and those in the other group are not (see Chart 1.7a).

Chart 1.7a Experimental Design

In experimental designs, researchers compare the outcomes of experiencing and not experiencing the independent variable (i.e., a program, treatment, intervention). An experimental design could be used to test the effectiveness of an Internet boot camp at helping those with Internet addiction. First, the researcher establishes a control and experimental group. Ideally, the researcher randomly assigns subjects to the control and experimental group. Second, he or she administers a pre-test measure to both groups that sets a baseline regarding the level of Internet addiction (e.g., how many hours online each day; a symptom checklist). Those in the experimental group participate in the boot camp; those in the control group do not. After the boot camp has ended, the researcher administers a post-test to measure any change in the level of online addiction. If boot camp is effective, the experimental group should have reduced their time online and experience fewer (or less intense) symptoms than in the pre-test measure. If the treatment is effective, those in the experimental group are expected to be less addicted than those in the control group.



Generalizability

In designing their study, researchers have to think about **generalizability**, the extent to which their findings can be applied to the larger population of which their sample was a part. There are many factors to consider depending on the research design used. With surveys, if a sample is random, if almost all subjects agree to participate, and if the response rate for every question is high, we can say that the sample is representative of the targeted population and that the findings are generalizable to that population. With observation research, on the other hand, the findings are generalizable to the group or setting studied, but it is difficult to generalize beyond that setting.

Critical Thinking

Have you ever been part of a research study? If so, describe its design.

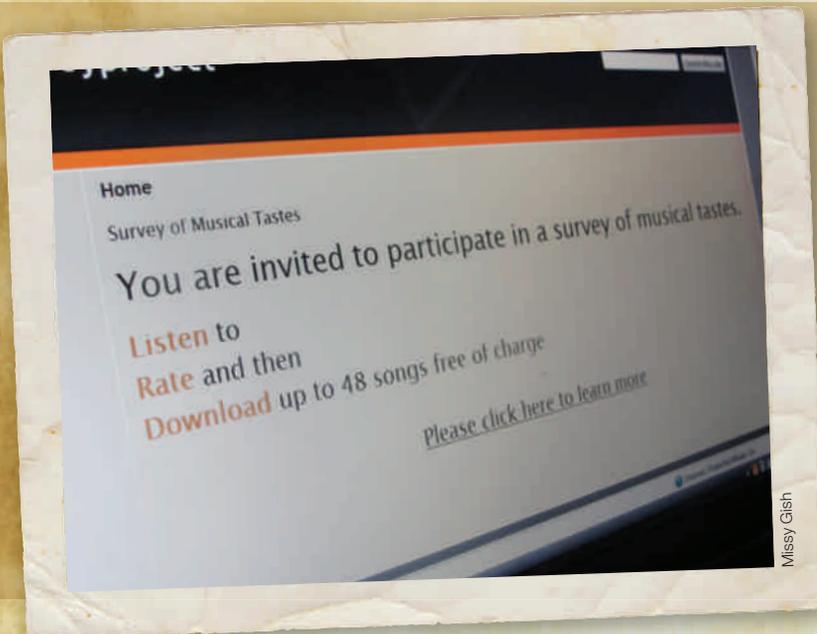
Key Terms

case studies	nonparticipant observation	sample
content analysis	nonrandom samples	sampling frame
experimental design	observation	secondary sources or archival data
generalizability	participant observation	self-administered survey
Hawthorne effect	random samples	
methods of data collection	research design	

Steps of Social Research

Objective

You will learn the steps guiding the research process.



Would you participate in a study that involved rating and then downloading songs of your choice from the Internet? If yes, what factors might affect your rating of and decision to download a particular song?

Sociologists Matthew J. Salganik and Duncan J. Watts (2008) wondered to what extent people's decisions to listen to and download a song are influenced by knowledge of song popularity. The two sociologists designed a study in which they manipulated information about song popularity to determine how these perceptions influenced people's decisions. In this module we draw upon Salganik and Watts' study to illustrate the steps of social research.

The Methods of Social Research

Research methods are the various techniques that sociologists and other investigators use to formulate and answer meaningful questions and to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Sociologists adhere to the **scientific method**, a carefully planned research process with the goal of generating observations and data that can be verified by others. The research process involves at least six interdependent steps:

- determining the topic or research question,
- reviewing the literature,

- choosing a research design,
- identifying variables and specifying hypotheses,
- collecting and analyzing the data, and
- drawing conclusions.

It is important to know that researchers do not always follow the six steps in sequence. For example, they may not decide on a specific research question until they have familiarized themselves with the literature. Sometimes an opportunity arises to collect specific data and a research question is defined to fit that opportunity. Although the six steps need not be followed in any particular order, all must be completed at some point in the research process to ensure the quality of the project.

Choosing a Topic/Reviewing the Literature

It is impossible to list all the topics that sociologists study, because almost any subject involving human activity represents a potential subject for research. Sociology is distinguished from other disciplines, not by the topics it investigates, but by the perspectives it takes in studying human activity. Salganik and Watts chose to investigate the extent to which the perception of a cultural product's popularity becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Specifically, they asked if a song presented as popular, when in fact it is not, will become popular over time. Likewise, will popular songs misrepresented as failures become failures?

When doing research, sociologists consider what knowledgeable authorities have written on the chosen topic, if only to avoid reinventing the wheel. Reading the relevant literature can also generate insights that researchers may not have considered.



◀ Even if researchers believe that they have a new idea, they must still consider the works of other thinkers and show how their research verifies, advances, or corrects existing research. Today most people can access the equivalent of a library via computer search engines.

Lisa Southwick

In writing up an account of their study, researchers cite those who have influenced their work. Salganik and Watts cited about 70 references to scholarly books and articles. Ideally these materials are written by credentialed people who carefully document their sources of information and/or may actually conduct research studies. Ideally,

a scholarly writing is reviewed by experts who assess its quality, recommend whether it deserves to be published, and offer suggestions for improvement.

In choosing literature to review, researchers try to read current writings, but the date a writing was published should not be the only criterion. Classic and groundbreaking articles written decades or even centuries ago can be very

important sources. Salganik and Watts' research was heavily influenced by the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy, a phrase coined by sociologist Robert K. Merton in 1948 to mean "a false definition of the situation" evoking a response that "makes the original false conception come true" (p. 424).

Based on their review of the literature, Salganik and Watts formulated the following questions to drive their research:

- Does behavior informed by false perceptions of song popularity create a response that makes that false perception come true?
- If people come to believe a song is most popular when in reality it is not, do they listen to and download it at the same rate as those who have accurate information about the most popular song?

Choosing a Research Design

After determining the research question, researchers typically decide upon a research design. That involves deciding who or what to study and the method of gathering data (see Module 1.7). Salganik and Watts decided to make the study a web-based one. They recruited participants by sending an e-mail to more than 90,000 people who had participated in another unrelated study. The e-mail invited them to participate in a study of musical tastes in which they would have an opportunity to listen to, rate, and download up to 48 songs from unknown bands. About 13 percent, 12,207 people to be precise, agreed to participate. On first glance the response rate may seem low, but in this case the authors are simulating the market in which consumers are free to decide whether to look at or buy products.

Salganik and Watts settled on an experimental design; they created four "worlds" to which participants were randomly assigned. The researchers manipulated each world's "reality" with regard to song popularity:

- the independent world—participants are given no information about song popularity;
- the social influence world—participants are given actual information on song popularity; and
- two inverted worlds—participants were presented with false or inverted rankings of the 48 songs' popularity.

For example, the song "She Said" by Parker Theory was actually the most popular of the 48 songs and the song "Florence" by Post Break Tragedy was the least popular. Salganik and Watts swapped the counts and rankings, giving participants assigned to these two worlds the false impression that "Florence" was first in popularity and that "She Said" was 48th. They followed this pattern, swapping 47th in popularity with the 2nd most popular, the 46th in popularity with the 3rd most popular song, and so on.

Specifying Variables, Operational Definitions, and Hypotheses

Salganik and Watts specified several variables important to their study. A **variable** is any behavior or characteristic that consists of more than one category. Three variables they used are as follows:

- *Song popularity*—a three-category variable: false, accurate, or no preconception about popularity
- *Song appeal*—a two-category variable: listened to a song, did not listen
- *Downloaded song*—a two-category variable: yes, no

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS. All variables must be **operationalized**; that is, the researcher must give clear, precise instructions about how to observe or measure them. Of the three variables previously named, the most complex operational definition relates to how the researchers manipulated song popularity, which the researchers defined as the number of times a song was downloaded. After the researchers established each song's popularity they withheld, manipulated, or revealed popularity depending on the group to which participants were assigned.

Operational definitions must be reliable and valid. A measure is considered **reliable** if upon repeating the measure a researcher gets essentially the same result. Salganik and Watts, for example, used the decision to listen to a song as a concrete measure of a song's appeal. If listening to a song is a reliable measure of song appeal, then when the consumer is placed in the same situation some time later, he or she should again choose to listen to the same songs. As you might imagine, it is difficult to check the reliability of this measure because a person can never be put in the same situation again once they have already viewed a list of songs. Salganik and Watts tested the reliability of their measure another way: they created two inverted worlds. If the listening pattern of those randomly assigned to each of the two inverted worlds differed significantly, then we must question the reliability of that measure.

A measure is considered to have **validity** when the operational definition is really measuring what it is intended to measure. In the case of Salganik and Watts' study, how can we be sure that participants take notice of the manipulated variable (song popularity) when browsing song lists? If they fail to note song popularity, then researchers are falsely assuming that participants took popularity into consideration when in fact they did not.

While it is likely that participants did notice the popularity ratings, the researchers might do something more to verify that the participants do indeed take note of them. For example, they might ask participants upon choosing songs to indicate the extent to which a song's popularity influenced that decision.

INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES. Researchers strive to find associations between variables to explain or predict behavior. The behavior to be explained or predicted is the **dependent variable**. The variable that explains or predicts the dependent variable is the **independent variable**. The relationship between independent and dependent variables is described in a **hypothesis**, or a trial prediction about the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Specifically, the hypothesis predicts how change in an independent variable brings about change in a dependent variable. One hypothesis that Salganik and Watts tested is: The greater the perceived popularity of a song, the greater likelihood that a consumer will listen to a song. In this hypothesis, the independent variable is perceived popularity and the dependent variable is a specific behavior (listening to a song or not).

Analyzing the Data

When researchers analyze the collected data, they search for common themes and meaningful patterns. In presenting their findings, researchers may use graphs, tables, photos, statistical data, and so on. Among other things, Salganik and Watts showed the extent to which song popularity predicted the percentage in each social world who listened to songs presented as most, least, and moderately popular (see Table 1.8a) and then after listening decided to download a song (see Table 1.8b).

Table 1.8a: Percentage of Consumers in Each Social World Listening to Selected Songs Believed to be Ranked #1 and #48 in Popularity

Among the three groups with information about song popularity, about 60 percent listened to the song they believed was ranked #1 and about 30 percent listened to the song they believed was the least popular.

Social World*	% Listening to Song Believed to Rank #48 in Popularity**	% Listening to Song Believed to Rank #1 in Popularity**
Song's True Popularity Known	31%	60%
Song's True Popularity Not Known, Inverted, Group 1	31%	60%
Song's True Popularity Not Known, Inverted, Group 2	30%	58%

Salganik and Watts (2008)

* Participants in the social world with no knowledge of song popularity (not shown in table) listened with the same probability to songs ranked #1 and #48—18 percent of the time.

** Probabilities presented in this table are best estimates derived from graphs presented in the published journal article.

Table 1.8b: Number of Downloads of Songs Perceived as Most and Least Popular

To assess the data in this table, ask the following questions: How does the number of downloads for the song perceived as #1 compare across the three groups? (Answer: There are 500 downloads of an actual “#1” song and 280 and 260 downloads of the song misrepresented as #1.) How much do the number of downloads differ for the songs perceived as #1 and #48 for each group? (Answer: The difference is 490 for participants with actual ratings; it is 100 and 160 for participants with manipulated ratings.)

Social World	# of Downloads of Song Believed to Be #48*	# of Downloads of Song Believed to Be #1*	Difference in # of Downloads*
Song's True Popularity Known	10	500	490
Song's True Popularity Not Known, Inverted, Group 1	180	280	100
Song's True Popularity Not Known, Group 2	100	260	160

Salganik and Watts (2008)

* Number of downloads presented in this table are best estimates derived from graphs in the published journal article.

This data supports the *hypothesis*: The greater the perceived popularity of a song, the greater the likelihood that a consumer will listen to it. Since the research design required consumers to listen and then rate songs before downloading, we know perceived popularity plays an indirect role in consumers' decision to download it. Unless a participant chooses to listen to a song, there is no chance of it being downloaded. The data on downloaded songs shows that the real least popular song benefited from its false ranking and the popular suffered. Still it managed to sell more songs via downloading than the song falsely ranked as #1.

Drawing Conclusions

Generally, researchers close with some summary statement. Salganik and Watts closed their research paper by pointing out that their data showed that perceptions of song popularity—even misguided perceptions—affect participants' decisions to listen. Specifically, the song that was actually most popular had substantially fewer downloads among those who believed it to be the least popular. On the other hand, the song that was actually least popular benefited from the false perceptions that it was the most popular. Still, the number of downloads for the song misrepresented as most popular never approached 500—the number of downloads made by participants in the social world with accurate information on song popularity. These findings suggest that while the self-fulfilling prophecy has an effect on downloads, sales were not driven by song popularity alone. Apparently, upon listening to songs participants exercised judgments about songs independent of perceived rankings.

To what extent can these findings be generalized to typical consumer behavior? Salganik and Watts point out that it is difficult to predict “how our results would change under more realistic conditions” (p. 352). The fact that the most popular song succeeded despite being misrepresented as the least popular may be the result of the relatively small number of competing songs to which participants could choose to listen. That small number may be one reason the song that was actually the most popular song was noticed even among those misled. Salganik and Watts are left wondering whether their findings apply to more realistic scenarios in which consumers are confronted with thousands or even hundreds of thousands of songs.

Critical Thinking

After reviewing Salganik and Watts' study, what part of the research process would you label the *most* critical to the quality of the findings? Explain.

Key Terms

dependent variable	operationalized	scientific method
hypothesis	reliable	validity
independent variable	research methods	variable

Summary: Putting It All Together

Sociology is the scientific study of human activity in society. More specifically, it is the study of the social forces that affect that activity. Social forces are any human-created ways of doing things that influence, pressure, or make people behave and think in specified ways. People can embrace social forces, be swept along, or be bypassed by them; they can also challenge them. Sociology offers a framework to help us understand the social forces that affect our sense of self, our relationships with and connections to others, the opportunities open to us, the barriers we encounter, and the relative ease or difficulty with which we can break through those barriers.

Durkheim called social forces social facts. He compared social facts to the weight of gravity, emphasizing their constraining qualities on human activity. However, Durkheim also acknowledged that people can break free from them but often pay a heavy social price. Sociology offers the sociological imagination, a perspective that allows us to consider how outside forces shape our life stories or biographies and helps us to distinguish between troubles and issues.

Sociology emerged out of an effort to document and to explain a transformative social force, the Industrial Revolution, on society. In an effort to understand this event, the early sociologists—Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, W.E.B. DuBois, and Jane Addams—gave us frameworks (1) to examine how the division of labor, the means of production, solidarity, and the color line connect or divide us from others in our community and beyond; (2) to think about the reasons we pursue goals, the means we use to achieve them, and their consequences; and (3) to form techniques for learning about others. In addition, sociology offers three broad perspectives to help us think about various social forces, to explain how societies are organized, and to understand how people relate to one another and respond to their surroundings.

Sociologists adhere to the scientific method, a carefully planned research process with the goal of generating observations and data that can be verified by others. When sociologists do research, they decide on a research question, establish a research design, make observations, carefully collect and analyze data to test hypotheses, and draw conclusions.

[Can You Top This Photo?]

Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo with a caption to illustrate how outside forces shape one's life story or biography.



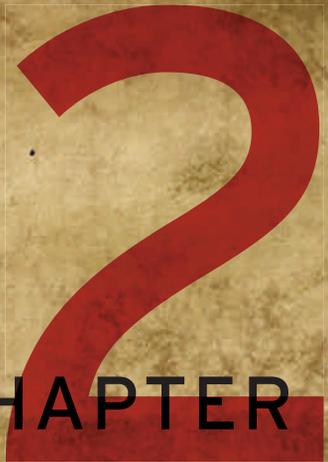
MSGT Scott Reed, USAF



U.S. Army photo by Tim Hipps



U.S. Army photo by Tim Hipps



CHAPTER

CULTURE

- 2.1 Culture**
- 2.2 Material and Nonmaterial Culture**
- 2.3 Cultural Diversity**
- 2.4 Encountering Cultures**
- 2.5 Cultural Diffusion**
- 2.6 Applying Theory: Global Society Theories**
- Summary Putting It All Together**

Sociologists view culture as one of the most important concepts for capturing the human capacity for creating and maintaining ways to live together and for negotiating the surrounding environment. Sociologists are interested in the ways in which culture shapes the human experience. These two photographs—one from the opening ceremonies of the August 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China, and the other from the February 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada—offer some insights about culture’s influence. We can see the cultural importance the Chinese place on feeling a connection to the nation and on directing one’s talents toward serving the nation or a greater public good. Likewise we can see the cultural importance, relative to China, that Canada places on the autonomous individual and self-actualization apart from national identity.

Objective

You will learn the meaning of culture and the challenges of defining a culture's boundaries.



Have you ever interacted with someone from another culture? What did you learn about that person's culture? Do you think that person learned something about your culture?

Defining Culture

Sociologists define **culture** as the way of life of a people. To be more specific, culture includes the shared and human-created strategies for adapting and responding to one's surroundings, including the people and other creatures that are part of those surroundings. As we will learn, the list of human-created strategies is endless: it includes the invention of physical objects such as cars to transport people from one place to another; values defining what is right and good; beliefs about how things should operate; a language with which to communicate; and rules for behavior in almost any situation. Culture cannot exist without a **society**, a group of interacting people who share, pass on, and create culture.



BLOOMImage/Getty Images

Lisa Southwick

▲ These photos show a cultural response to a particular creature—beetles. In Japan, beetles are more popular pets than cats and dogs. Japanese children (usually boys) can buy them in department stores and even vending machines. In the United States many children see beetles and other bugs as something to fear and are often taught to step on them.

The Challenge of Describing a Culture

In our everyday use of the word *culture*, we tend to use it in reference to differences. We often think of culture as something with clear boundaries. You may be surprised to learn that sociologists face at least three challenges in defining a culture's boundaries:

- *Describing a culture*—Is it possible to describe something so vast as a people's way of life? How would you describe American culture?
- *Determining who belongs to a culture*—Does a person have to look Japanese or live in Japan to be considered part of Japanese culture?
- *Identifying the distinguishing markers that set one culture apart from others*—Is keeping a beetle as a pet a marker of Japanese culture? Does an ability to speak Japanese mark someone as Japanese?

➤ The women in the photograph would likely say they belong to Thai culture. Yet if you asked them what markers or special characteristics set Thailand's culture apart from other cultures, it is unlikely that the four would agree on any one characteristic. It is also unlikely that it is a specific characteristic unique to Thai culture.



Chris Caldeira

Given these challenges, is *culture* a useful term? First, there is no question that cultural differences exist. For example, anyone who travels to Japan will note that the children behave differently toward beetles than do children living in the United States. Have you ever seen a beetle vending machine in the United States? Likewise, anyone traveling to Saudi Arabia and then to Brazil will notice that women in the two countries dress quite differently when out in public. But once you think you have identified a clear marker, you can always find exceptions to the rule or you find that other cultures share it (Wallerstein 1990).

Culture as a Rough Blueprint

On some level culture is a blueprint that guides and, in some cases, even determines behavior. Think about it; for the most part, people do not question the origin of the objects around them, the beliefs they hold, or the words they use to communicate and think about the world “any more than a baby analyzes the atmosphere before it begins to breathe it” (Sumner 1907, p. 76). Much of the time people think and behave as they do simply because it seems natural and they know of no other way.

Although culture is a blueprint of sorts, you will notice that people living in the same culture are not replicas of one another. For example, Americans typically eat three meals per day—breakfast, lunch, and dinner associated with morning, noon, and evening. Still, every American does not eat at the same time or eat the same food. Of course, we can find people in the United States who skip breakfast or eat rice for breakfast, but they readily admit that in doing so they are not following what is considered typical of their culture.



Cpl. Michael S. Cifuentes

◀ We do not realize the extent to which culture shapes, even determines, our behavior until we encounter a different way. These U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq who have been invited to a dinner celebrating the opening of a bridge probably never thought to use their hands to eat out of a communal bowl. They are accustomed to eating at a table with food served on individual plates and spaces marked off with eating utensils.

The fact that people are not cultural replicas makes it especially difficult to describe a culture and determine who belongs. What factors contribute to these cultural differences within the same society? One factor is the extent to which the society attracts outsiders. Geographically and socially isolated societies in which people have few opportunities to interact with outsiders have fewer cultural differences within. A society that welcomes immigrants and allows its members to travel beyond its borders will certainly have cultural differences among its population. Such societies are referred to as *multicultural*, consisting of subgroups with cultural practices that blend or sometimes conflict with the dominant culture.



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Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class (SW) David Daniels

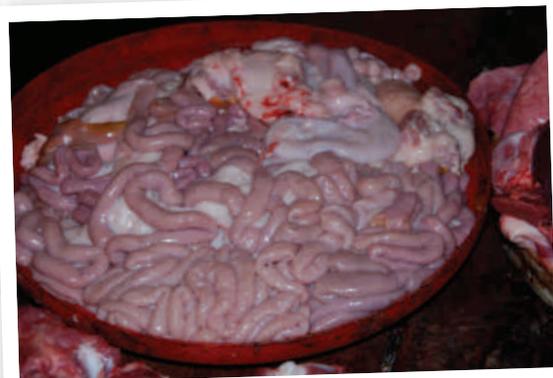
▲ This village in Greenland (left) is geographically isolated. When Arctic sea lanes are iced over, the village becomes inaccessible, thus visitors are rare. Now the warming associated with climate change is allowing sea lanes to stay open eight months a year (instead of four). As tourists and immigrants to the area increase, how might this add to cultural differences? New York City, one of the largest cities in the United States (right), is home to 8.4 million people, 35.9 percent of whom were born outside the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2007).

Cultural Universals and Particulars

Anthropologist George Murdock (1945) distinguished between cultural universals and particulars. **Cultural universals** are those things that all cultures have in common. Every culture has natural resources such as trees, plants, and rocks that people put to some use. In addition, every culture has developed responses to the challenges of being human and living with others. Those challenges include the need to interact with others, to be mentally stimulated, to satisfy hunger, and to face mortality. In every culture, people have established specific ways of meeting these universal challenges.

Cultural particulars include the *specific* practices that distinguish cultures from one another. For example, all people become hungry, but the potential food sources defined as edible vary across cultures. That is, what is appealing to eat in one society may be considered repulsive or simply unavailable in another.

- Animal intestines are a potential source of nutrition, but not every society chooses to eat them.



Chris Caldera



Chris Caldeira

◀ Societies also specify food staples, key and basic dietary items on which a food supply depends. For many countries, such as Laos, rice is a food staple. Rice is also used to feed livestock; to make soap, margarine, beer, wine, cosmetics, paper, and laundry starch; to warm houses; to provide inexpensive fuel for steam engines; to make bricks, plaster, hats, sandals, and raincoats; and to include as packing material to prevent items from breaking in shipping.

While the United States is a major rice exporter, rice is not something most Americans consume daily. The staple of the U.S. diet is corn. Its uses

extend beyond simply viewing it as a vegetable. Most of the American diet is affected by corn, although few Americans fully recognize that fact. “Corn is an ingredient in soft drinks, canned foods, candy, condensed milk, baby food, jams, instant coffee, instant potatoes, and soup, among other things” (Visser 1986). It is also an animal feed and is used to make biofuels.

Cultural particulars for relieving hunger go beyond specifying what to eat; they also specify who should prepare the food, how the food should be served and eaten, how many meals should be consumed in a day, at what times meals should be eaten, and with whom one should eat.

Culture also provides formulas for expressing **social emotions**, feelings that we experience as we relate to other people, such as empathy, grief, love, guilt, jealousy, and embarrassment. Grief, for instance, is felt at the loss of a relationship; love reflects the strong attachment that one person feels for another person; jealousy can arise from fear of losing the affection of someone to another (Gordon 1981). People do not simply express a social emotion directly; they evaluate and can modify their feelings to fit with culturally established rules about how to express them. With regard to grief, some cultures embrace its open expression such that the bereaved are encouraged to wail loudly. Other cultures embrace self-control of grief to the point of encouraging its members to suppress any visible expression of grief (Galginaitis 2007).

Passing on Culture

The process by which people create and pass on culture suggests that it is more than a blueprint. Babies enter the world and virtually everything the child experiences—being born, being bathed, being toilet trained, learning to talk, playing, and so on—involves people. The people present in a child’s life at any one time—father, mother, grandparents, brothers, sisters, playmates, caregivers, and others—expose the child to their “versions” of culture. In this sense people are carriers and transmitters of culture with a capacity to accept, modify, and reject cultural experiences to which they have been exposed and to selectively pass on those cultural experiences to those in subsequent generations. As a case in point, consider that Christmas is celebrated in the United States as if everyone in the country participates in the festivities. Businesses close on Christmas Eve and Day; public schools give children the week of Christmas off; stores, houses, and streets are decorated as early as October, and television commercials and shows run Christmas themes for

a month or more. Yet despite this exposure many people in the United States reject this cultural option, as this reflection from one of my students illustrates:

I grew up in a religion that did not celebrate Christmas or Easter even though we called ourselves Christian . . . While growing up I never challenged these practices. I just did what I was told.

Yet this same student as an adult decided to celebrate Christmas and other holidays that her family rejected in her youth.

Now that I am older and have a child. . . This year was the first year I put up a Christmas tree. I didn't know how to decorate it and I didn't know any Christmas carols but I learned. I decided that I don't want my children growing up the way I did.

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption that describes a cultural marker that distinguishes Laotian views on the sun from that of the typical American considered white.

Write a caption here



Hints: In writing this caption

- note that this woman is using the umbrella to shield herself from the sun's rays,
- think about what a tan symbolizes to Americans considered white, and
- consider what this practice suggests about what is considered attractive in Laos.

Critical Thinking

Do you consider yourself a member of a particular culture? If yes, are there markers that define your membership? If you believe that you are not part of a culture, explain how that is possible.

Key Terms

culture

cultural universals

society

cultural particulars

social emotions

Material and Nonmaterial Culture

Objective

You will learn that culture consists of two components: material and nonmaterial.



Katie Englert

Is there an item in your life that you cannot do without? Did you name the cell phone or something else?

Material Culture

Whatever item you named, it is part of what sociologists call material culture. **Material culture** consists of all the physical objects that people have invented or borrowed from other cultures. Examples of material culture are endless and include iPods, cars, clothing, tattoos, and much more. From a sociological point of view, physical objects are windows into a culture because they offer clues about how its people relate to one another and about what is important. In order to grasp the social significance of material culture, sociologists strive to understand the context during which material culture is created, the purposes for which it is used, the reasons it is modified or abandoned, and the meanings assigned to it.



Lisa Southwick

◀ What clues does the shifting fate of the General Motors Hummer offer about the meanings assigned to it? GM bought the Hummer in 1999 and, at that time, its cost, size, and low gas mileage made it a symbol of conspicuous consumption. When gas prices increased to about \$4.00 per gallon, it became a symbol of wastefulness. Sales plummeted, and GM sold the Hummer to a Chinese company and invested in the fuel-efficient Chevrolet Spark (Kurczewski 2009).

Nonmaterial Culture

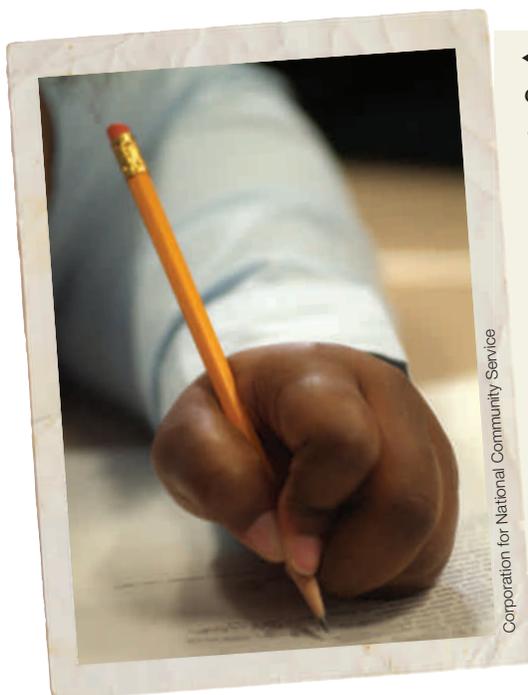
When sociologists study material culture, they are also interested in learning how it affects relationships among people. Consider the microwave. In the United States and elsewhere the microwave oven played a significant role in changing the relationships among family members—specifically, it changed norms about what and when family members should eat; it helped change beliefs about children’s ability to prepare meals. To put it another way, the microwave changed aspects of what sociologists call **nonmaterial culture**, the intangible human creations that include beliefs, values, norms, and symbols.

➤ Because of a combination of microwave technology and already-prepared foods, anyone who can push a button and open a package (no matter their age) can heat meals in minutes. This ease of preparing meals has expanded individuality such that anyone can choose what they want to eat and when they want to eat it (Visser 1986, p. 42).



Missy Gish

BELIEFS. Beliefs are conceptions that people accept as true concerning how the world operates and the place of the individual in relationship to others. Beliefs can be rooted in faith, experience, tradition, or the scientific method. Whatever their accuracy or origins, beliefs can exert powerful influences on actions because they can be used to justify behavior ranging from the most generous to the most violent, and they have a profound effect on behavior.



Corporation for National Community Service

◀ The tense manner in which this child clutches his pencil speaks to the confusion and frustration many American students experience when they do school assignments or take tests. Americans tend to differ from Japanese in their beliefs about the meaning of being confused and frustrated while learning. Americans tend to believe being confused or frustrated are signs that teachers have not done a good job in explaining the material. By contrast Japanese believe that sorting through frustration and confusion are important and natural parts of any learning process (Stigler and Hiebert 1999).

VALUES. Nonmaterial culture also consists of **values**, general, shared conceptions of what is good, right, desirable, or important. One classic study identified 36 values that people everywhere share to differing degrees, including the values of individual freedom, happiness, true friendship, broadmindedness, cleanliness, obedience, and national security. The study suggested that cultures are distinguished from one another not according to which values are present in one and absent in another, but rather according to which values are the most cherished and dominant (Rokeach 1973). For example, consider the following list of potential values:

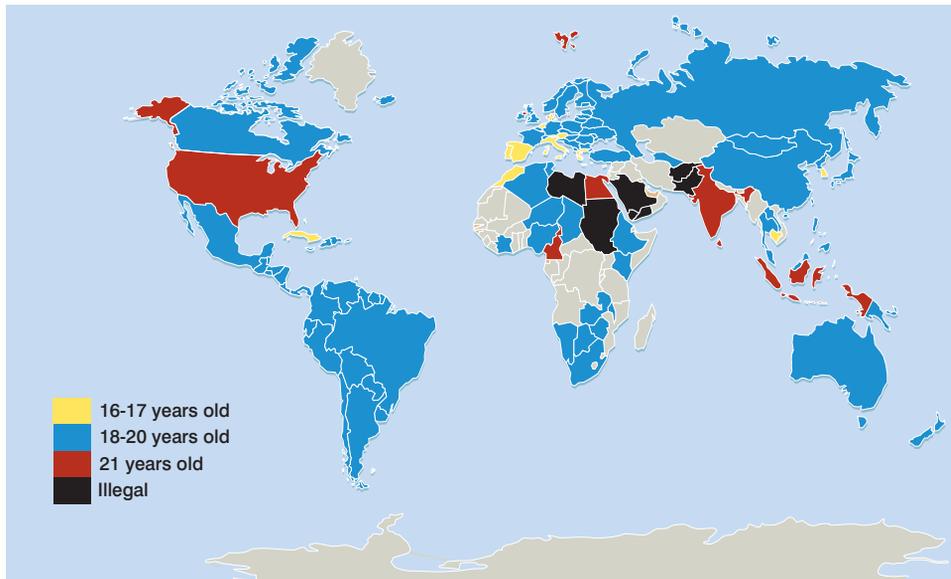
- Obedience
- Freedom
- Health and fitness
- Modesty
- Honesty
- Self-esteem

Which value is most important to the personal principles guiding your life? Which one is least important? If you selected freedom, self-esteem, or honesty, then your values are in line with values that many Americans declare as being among the most important. If you selected obedience, health and fitness, or modesty, then your values are more in line with those Saudis define as most important (Miller and Feinberg 2002).

NORMS. A third type of nonmaterial culture is **norms**, written and unwritten rules that specify behaviors appropriate and inappropriate to a particular social situation. Examples of written norms are rules that appear in college student handbooks (e.g., to be in good academic standing, maintain a 2.0 GPA); on signs in restaurants (No Smoking Section); and on garage doors of automobile repair centers (Honk Horn to Open). Unwritten norms exist for virtually every kind of situation: wash your hands before preparing food; raise your hand to indicate that you have something to say; do not hold hands with a friend of the same sex in public. Sometimes norms are formalized into laws (see Figure 2.2a).

Figure 2.2a Minimum Drinking Age by Country

In the United States one must be 21 to legally drink alcoholic beverages. The United States has one of the highest minimum-age drinking laws in the world. In Mexico the minimum age is 18, and in Canada the age is 19. In some countries, such as Italy, the drinking age is 16. In still other countries, such as Albania, Cambodia, and Ghana, there are no age limits.



Source: International Center for Alcohol Policies (2010)

Depending on the importance of a norm, punishment can range from a frown to death. In this regard, we can distinguish between folkways and mores. **Folkways** are norms that apply to the mundane aspects or details of daily life: when and what to eat, how to greet someone, how long the workday should be, how often caregivers should change babies' diapers. As sociologist William Graham Sumner (1907) noted, "Folkways give us discipline and support of routine and habit"; if we were forced constantly to make decisions about these details, "the burden would be unbearable" (p. 92). Generally, we go about everyday life without asking why until something reminds us or forces us to see that other ways are possible.

► Have you ever used chopsticks or a knife and fork to eat a burger? Probably not. It is a folkway in the United States to eat a hamburger with our hands. For most Americans it seems as if there is no other way to eat a hamburger.



Lisa Southwick

Whereas folkways apply to day-to-day details, **mores** are norms that people define as essential to the well-being of a group. People who violate mores are usually punished severely: they may be ostracized, institutionalized, or condemned to die. Mores are regarded as the only way. Most Americans, for example, have strong mores against marrying cousins, especially first cousins. Marrying a cousin is simply inconceivable. In Iraq, however, 50 percent of marriages are between first and second cousins. In such situations the spouse is not viewed as an outsider coming into the family

but a member of a kin group (Bobroff-Hajal 2006). The practice helps us to understand why family bonds are much stronger in Iraq than the United States.

SYMBOLS. Another type of nonmaterial culture are **symbols**, which are anything—a word, an object, a sound, a feeling, an odor, a gesture, an idea—to which people assign a name and a meaning. In the United States, when someone touches the tip of the index finger to the tip of the thumb and holds the other three fingers open, it is the symbol that everything is okay or a job well done. However, that meaning is not self-evident, because the interpretation of this symbol can vary.



Lisa Southwick

◀ When sociologists say that the meaning of a symbol is not self-evident, they mean that positioning the hand as shown in the photograph does not universally elicit an interpretation of “okay.” In Latin American countries, a hand held in this way conveys a derogatory meaning, and in France it conveys the value of “zero” or that something is worthless.

In the broadest sense of the word, **language** is a symbol system that assigns meaning to particular sounds, gestures, pictures, or specific combinations of letters. The level and complexity of human language sets people apart from animals. In addition, language is among the most important symbol systems humans have created. When we learn the words of a language, we acquire a tool that enables us to establish and maintain relationships, convey information, and interpret experiences. Learning a language includes an expectation that we will communicate and organize our thoughts in a particular way (Whorf 1956, pp. 212–214). For example, some languages such as Korean are structured so that speakers have no choice but to address people using special age-based hierarchical titles. For Koreans age is an exceedingly important measure of status: the older the people, the more status they can assume. As another example, in the United States the word *my* is used to express ownership of persons or things over which the speaker does not have exclusive rights: *my* mother, *my* school, *my* school bus, *my* country. The use of *my* reflects an emphasis on the individual and not the group. In contrast, the Korean language expresses possession as shared: *our* mother, *our* school, *our* school bus, *our* country.

Linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf (1956) advanced the **linguistic relativity hypothesis**, also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which states that “No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached” (Sapir 1949, p. 162). For example, it is certainly possible to translate Korean words into English—a translator can emphasize *our* teacher, not *my* teacher—but lost in translation will be a Korean worldview that actually thinks in terms of *our* teacher. It is difficult for an English-speaking American who has no first-hand experience with Korean or another culture that makes the group the central point of reference (rather than the individual) to grasp thinking in terms of “our.”



TSGT Scott Reed, USAF

◀ Although languages channel thinking in distinct ways, do not assume that those speaking different languages cannot communicate. It may take some work, but it is possible to translate essential meanings from one language into another. With the help of a translator, this English-speaking dental technician is able to answer questions from these Arabic-speaking Iraqi mothers about their children's oral health.

Critical Thinking

Identify an item of material culture that has come into being in your lifetime. Describe the ways this item has affected your relationships with others.

Key Terms

beliefs

folkways

language

linguistic relativity

hypothesis

material culture

mores

nonmaterial culture

norms

symbols

values

Cultural Diversity

Objective

You will learn that in every society there are groups that possess distinctive traits that set them apart.



Look over some of the symbols representing human groups. How many do you recognize?

Cultural Variety

Sociologists use the term **cultural diversity** to capture the cultural variety that exists among people who find themselves sharing some physical or virtual space. That space may be as large as the planet or as small as a classroom. One rough indicator of cultural diversity within a country is the number of languages spoken by its residents. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau (2007) counts 311 primary languages spoken by those living in the United States. About 160 of these languages are considered indigenous; that is, they are spoken by various Native American peoples. The remaining are considered immigrant languages. English is the dominant language with 215 million people (about 85 percent of the population) saying that their first language is English, followed by 28 million people (10 percent) saying it is Spanish. The first language of the remaining 5 percent is one of the 309 other languages spoken in the country (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2007).

Subcultures and Countercultures

When thinking about cultural variety, the concepts of *subcultures* and *countercultures* are especially useful. In every society there are groups that share in certain parts of the mainstream culture but have distinctive values, norms, beliefs, symbols, language, and/or material culture that set them apart in some way. These groups are called **subcultures**.



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Chris Caldeira

▲ An example of subculture is the Deaf Rave audience, a concert organized for those 100 percent deaf. Those attending follow the norm of raising their hands (rather than clapping) in a gesture of applause. Rodeo athletes and fans also constitute a subculture. Rodeos celebrate the skills needed to herd cattle. In some states, such as Wyoming, it is the official state sport with competitive categories based on age. Wyoming's High School State Rodeo Competition is as popular as high school basketball and football state championships are in many states.

Often we think we can identify subcultures simply based on physical traits, ethnicity, religious affiliation, neighborhood, age, gender, dress, or some distinctive behavior. Determining who belongs to a particular subculture, however, is actually a complex task that must go beyond simply including anyone who possesses a single attribute. Sociologists determine whether a group of people constitutes a subculture by learning whether they interact with one another, share a language, share physical or virtual space, and hold certain values.

One characteristic central to all subcultures is that their members are separated or cut off in varying degrees from those thought to be part of the mainstream culture. That separation may be total isolation or limited to selected aspects of life, such as work, school, recreation and leisure, marriage, friendships, religion, or housing. In addition, that separation may be voluntary, the result of geographic location, or imposed.

Sociologists use the term **countercultures** in reference to subcultures that challenge, contradict, or outright reject those of the mainstream culture of which they are a part. Sociologist Milton Yinger (1977) maintains that members of countercultures feel strongly that the society as structured cannot bring them satisfaction; some believe that “they have been caught in very bad bargains, others that they are being exploited,” and still others think the system is broken (p. 834). Because countercultures emerge in response to an existing order, Yinger argues that “every society gets the countercultures it deserves.” Countercultures express themselves by deploring society's contradictions, “caricaturing its weaknesses, and drawing on its neglected and underground traditions” (p. 850). In response some countercultures “attack, strongly or weakly, violently or symbolically, the frustrating social order” (p. 834).

Yinger presents three broad, and at times overlapping, categories of countercultures:

- **Communitarian utopians** withdraw into a separate community where they can live with minimum interference from the larger society, which they view as evil, materialistic, wasteful, or self-centered.
- **Mystics** search for “truth and for themselves” and in the process turn inward. “They do not so much attack society as disregard it, insofar as they can, and float above it in search of enlightenment” (p. 838).
- **Radical activists** preach, create, or demand a new order with new obligations to others. They stay engaged hoping to change society and its values. Strategies to bring about change can include violent and nonviolent protest; Ghandi and Martin Luther King, Jr. both famously used non-violent protest to effect societal change.



Timothy A. Olary/AFP/Getty Images

◀ In the United States the Old Order Amish (one of at least four Amish subcultures) constitute a *communitarian counterculture* in that they remain largely separate from the rest of the world, organizing their life so that they do not even draw power from electrical grids.

► These Buddhist monks (Cambodian-Americans), as part of an anniversary ceremony, hold American flags as they pray for those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. Buddhist monks constitute a counterculture known as *mystics* because they make a point of rejecting the material trappings of capitalistic society. As monks they are committed to simple living, modest dress and vegetarian diet—ways of living that run counter to the values of capitalist-driven societies.



PH11(AW) Michael Pendergrass, USN

Organizers of the Gay Games constitute radical activists in that they have rejected mainstream cultural norms that limit participation in Olympic and other athletic competitions to the most skilled. Anyone, regardless of ability and sexual orientation, can qualify for the Gay Games (Federation of Gay Games 2007).

► Organizers of the Gay Games reject the idea that in certain sports, such as paired figure skating, the competitors must be male-female pairs.



John Gress/Reuters/Landov

Critical Thinking

Are you a member of a subculture or counterculture? Explain.

Key Terms

communitarian utopians

cultural diversity

radical activists

countercultures

mystics

subcultures

Encountering Cultures

Objective

You will learn concepts for describing people's reactions to foreign cultures.



Lisa Southwick

Would you go to a football game or other sports competition such as baseball, if you knew that there was a good possibility that the game would end in a tie?

If witnessing a victory by one team is the reason you attend sporting events, then you will most likely have trouble understanding how fans in Japan accept, even celebrate, a baseball game that ends in a tie or a draw. If you are like most Americans, you expect to see a victory.

The Home Culture as the Standard

Ethnocentrism is a point of view in which people use their home culture as the standard for judging the worth of another culture's ways. Sociologist Everett Hughes (1984) describes ethnocentric thought in this way: "One can think so exclusively in terms of his own social world that he simply has no set of concepts for comparing one social world with another. He can believe so deeply in the ways and the ideas of his own world that he has no point of reference for discussing those of other peoples, times, and places. Or he can be so engrossed in his own world that he lacks curiosity about any other; others simply do not concern him" (p. 474).

Ethnocentrism puts one culture at the center of everything, and all other ways are "scaled and rated with reference to it" (Sumner 1907, p. 13). Thus, other

cultures are seen as strange or as inferior. If you have uncritically accepted that a victory by one team is the *only* standard by which to evaluate a competition, then your point of view can be considered ethnocentric. Often the words people choose to describe cultural differences offer clues as to whether they are ethnocentric (Culbertson 2006).

► If you describe the British as having steering wheels on the wrong side of the car, then you have presented this cultural practice in an ethnocentric way. A less ethnocentric way to describe the difference is to simply say that the steering wheel is on the right-hand side of the car.



© Payless Images, Inc. / Alamy



Sgt. Steven King

◀ If, upon learning that Arabic is written from right to left, you conclude that this is backwards, then you have described the writing process in an ethnocentric way. From the point of view of the Arabic reader, writing English left to right could be considered backwards.

Using one's home culture as the frame of reference to describe another culture's ways distorts perceptions. Many Americans, for example, are appalled when they learn that some cultures eat dog and evaluate this practice from the point of view that dogs possess special qualities that other animals commonly eaten by Americans, such as pigs, cows, and chickens, do not.

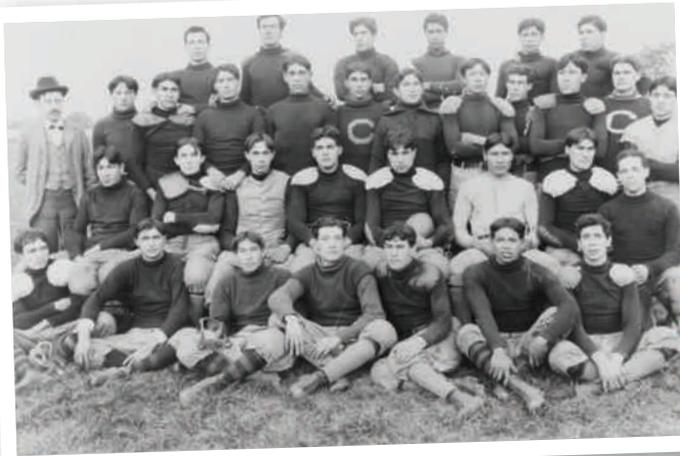
► Keep in mind that people from cultures that define dog as a source of food (right) don't eat *pet* dogs; rather, they eat a "special breed of large tan-colored dogs raised especially for canine cuisine" (Kang 1995, p. 267). In fact, those who eat dog would argue that Americans such as these men slicing meat from a roasted pig are in no position to judge them (Kang 1995). For some reason many Americans protest that they could never eat Fluffy but seem to have no reservations about eating Porky Pig or Babe the Pig.



SRA Diane S. Robinson

The most extreme and destructive form of ethnocentrism is one in which people feel such revulsion toward another culture that they act to destroy it. Unfortunately, in human history there are many examples where one group acts to destroy another by banning the targeted culture's language; changing the first and/or last names of those in the targeted group; miseducating children by using a special curriculum to indoctrinate them; destroying important symbols such as flags, places of worship, and museums; and even killing those who resist. In the United States between 1870 and 1920, Native American children were sent to boarding schools to ensure total immersion into white culture. This process separated them from their families and home cultures. Upon arrival children were issued uniforms, assigned names considered white, and given haircuts.

They were punished for speaking their native languages.



Library of Congress

◀ Native Americans enrolled in these boarding schools were also introduced to sports such as football to socialize them to American ideas about competition, winning, status, and teamwork. The photograph taken in 1899 is of the Carlisle Indian School football team.

Another type of ethnocentrism is **reverse ethnocentrism**, in which a home culture is regarded as inferior to a foreign culture. People who engage in this kind of thinking often idealize other cultures as utopias. For example, they might label Japanese culture as a model of harmony, American culture as a model of self-determination, and Native American culture as a model of environmental sustainability (Hannerz 1992). People who engage in reverse ethnocentrism not only idealize other cultures but also reject any information that might challenge their assessment.

Cultural Relativism

Cultural relativism is an antidote to ethnocentrism. **Cultural relativism** means two things: (1) that a foreign culture should *not* be judged by the standards of a home culture, and (2) that a behavior or way of thinking must be examined in its cultural context—that is, in terms of that culture's values, norms, beliefs, environmental challenges, and history. Critics of cultural relativism maintain that this perspective encourages an anything-goes point of view, discourages critical assessment, and portrays all cultures as equal in value regardless of obviously cruel practices (Geertz 1984, p. 265).

In response to this criticism, there is no question that notions of rightness and wrongness vary across cultures, and if we look hard enough we can probably find a “culture in which just about any idea or behavior exists and can be made to seem right” (Redfield 1962, p. 451). But that is not the purpose of cultural relativism. Ideally, cultural relativism is a perspective that aims to understand a culture on its own terms; the primary aim is not to condone or discredit it. More

than anything cultural relativism is a point of view that acts as a check against an uncritical and overvalued acceptance of the home culture, constricting thinking and narrowing sympathies (Geertz 1984).

► When using their home culture as the standard, Americans often make fun of Sumo wrestling (top) and have a hard time appreciating it as a rigorous sport (bottom). An ethnocentric American might describe a sumo wrestling match as two fat guys trying to push each other out of the ring. Cultural relativism reminds us to place the sport in the context of Japanese culture and history. A serious study of the sport would reveal that it is “rich with tradition, pageantry, and elegance and filled with action, excitement, and heroes dedicated to an almost impossible standard of excellence down to the last detail” (Thayer 1983, p. 271).



Mass Communication Specialist, 3rd Class Sarah West



Victor Decolongon/Getty Images

Culture Shock

Most people come to learn and accept the ways of their home culture as natural. Thus, when they encounter foreign cultures, they may experience **culture shock**, a mental and physical strain that people can experience as they adjust to the ways of a new culture. In particular, newcomers find that many of the behaviors and responses they learned in their home culture, and have come to take for granted, do not apply in the foreign setting. Newcomers may have to learn to squat when using the toilet and learn to eat new foods. Taken as separate incidents, neither may seem especially stressful. The cumulative effect of a series of such adjustments, however, can trigger an all-encompassing disorientation.

The intensity of culture shock depends on several factors: (1) the extent to which the home and foreign cultures differ, (2) the level of preparation for living in a new culture, and (3) the circumstances—vacation, job transfer, or war—surrounding the encounter. Some cases of culture shock can be so intense and unsettling that people experience “obsessive concern with cleanliness, depression, compulsive eating and drinking, excessive sleeping, irritability, lack of self-confidence, fits of weeping, nausea” (Lamb 1987, p. 270).

A person does not have to live in a foreign culture to experience culture shock. People who move from West or East Coast cities to towns in the Midwest and vice versa can experience it. Children who attend private faith-based schools for eight years and then transfer to a public high school (and the reverse) can experience culture shock. When Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005, 1 million people were forced from this region to live in scattered locations across the United States, resulting in the largest mass dislocation of people in U.S. history. Many from urban New Orleans found themselves living in very small towns and report experiences of culture shock. As one example, 100 black residents of New Orleans evacuated to Seguin, Texas, a town of 23,000 with

60 percent of residents considered Hispanic and 31 percent classified as white. They had nothing but the clothes on their backs and had to rely on the goodwill of strangers. Understandably they experienced cultural shock:

Where were the city buses that they had relied on to get around in New Orleans? Where were all the black people? Where were folks sitting on porches, in a festive tangle of music and gossip? . . . a sign in front of the courthouse bragged that Seguin was “Home of the World’s Largest Pecan.” . . . Wrangler jeans and cowboy hats were among the donated items. . . Heifers grazed nearby . . . In the afternoon the breeze smelled like burned chicken from the nearby Tyson’s poultry plant. (Hull 2005)



Chris Caldeira

Reentry Shock

Do not assume that culture shock is limited to experiences with cultures outside of a home country. People can also experience **reentry shock**, or culture shock in reverse, upon returning home after living in another culture (Koehler 1986).

◀ Many people find it surprisingly difficult to readjust when they return home after spending a significant amount of time elsewhere. As with culture shock, returnees face a

situation in which differences jump to the forefront. Imagine, for example, that you have lived for years in a culture where the motorbike is the major mode of transportation. Upon returning to the United States, you must readjust to an automobile culture and traffic jams.

As with culture shock, the intensity of reentry shock depends on an array of factors, including the length of time someone has lived in the host culture and the extent to which the returnee has internalized the ways of the host culture. Symptoms of reentry shock mirror those of culture shock. They include panic attacks (“I thought I was going crazy”), glorification of and nostalgia for the foreign ways, a sense of isolation, and a feeling of being misunderstood. This comment by one American returning from abroad illustrates: “Many things about the United States made me angry. Why did Americans have such big gas-guzzling cars? Why were all the commercials telling me I had to buy this product in order to be liked?” (Sobie 1986, p. 96) In fact, many people become anxious and feel guilty about having problems with readjustment. Upon returning home after a long stay in a foreign culture, many worry about how family, friends, and other acquaintances will react to their sometimes critical views of the home culture; they may be afraid that others will view them as unpatriotic.

The experience of reentry shock points to the transforming effect of an encounter with another culture (Sobie 1986). That the returnees go through reentry shock means that they have experienced up-close another way of life and that they have come to accept the host culture's norms, values, and beliefs. Consequently, when they come home, they see things in a new light.

Critical Thinking

Describe a time when you were introduced to a culture different from your own and reacted with an ethnocentric response.

Key Terms

cultural relativism

ethnocentrism

reverse ethnocentrism

culture shock

reentry shock

Objective

You will learn that many of the items we take for granted in our daily lives originated in foreign settings.



Have you ever stopped to think about where everyday items such as the toothbrush, the camcorder, buttons, and the lock and key came from?

The toothbrush is believed to be a Chinese invention (1498); the camcorder is considered a Japanese invention (1982); buttons are believed to come from Greece (770 BC); and the lock and key originated in Mesopotamia (2000 BC). They are part of our society today because of a borrowing process known as cultural diffusion.

Cultural Borrowing

Most people tend to think that the objects and ideas surrounding them are homegrown—that they originated in their society. People tend to underestimate, ignore, or distort the extent to which familiar ideas and products are connected in some way to outside sources or are even borrowed outright (Liu 1994). The

process by which an idea, an invention, or a way of behaving is borrowed from a foreign source and then adopted by the borrowing people is called **cultural diffusion**. The term *borrowed* is used in the broadest sense; it can mean steal, imitate, purchase, or copy. The opportunity to borrow occurs whenever people from different cultures make contact, whether face-to-face, by phone, via the Internet, or through other media channels. Instances of cultural diffusion are endless.



▲ The compass is a Chinese invention of the 11th century (left). It is an important navigational instrument that helps people know where they are on the earth. Countless cultures have borrowed the compass and improved on its features over the past 900 or so years. The Global Positioning System, known as GPS, is perhaps the most recent variation on that 11th century compass.

Selective Borrowing

People in one culture do not borrow ideas or inventions indiscriminately from another culture. Instead, borrowing is often selective. Even if people in one culture accept a foreign idea or invention, they are nevertheless choosy about which features of the item they adopt. Even the simplest invention is really a combination of complex elements, including various associations and ideas of how it should be used. Not surprisingly, people borrow the most concrete and most tangible elements and then shape the item to fit in with their larger culture (Linton 1936).

Consider baseball, a U.S. invention that has been borrowed by people living in 116 countries, including Japan (International Baseball Federation 2006). An American teaching English in Japan introduced the game there in 1873; professional leagues started in Japan around 1936. While the basic rules of the game are similar in that there are nine players and four bases, the Japanese modified the game to fit their broader culture. For example, controversial calls in Japan can take up to one hour to resolve. “The game stops while all involved seek a face-saving solution to the problem” (WBGU–PBS 2005). In addition, professional baseball games end between 10:15 and 10:30 p.m., no matter the score or the inning.



Christopher Morris/Associated Press

◀ As a result of diffusion, in 1996 the first McDonald's restaurant opened in Saudi Arabia. There are now several hundred restaurants in that country, and the Saudi diet includes the Big Mac and Chicken McNuggets. The Saudis have not adopted the McDonald's model in total, however. As Saudi Arabia is a sex-segregated society, it did not adopt a queuing system in which any customer can step into one line to place orders. In Saudi Arabia women queue to the right and men to the left to place orders. There are also many special items on the menu that cater to Saudi tastes, including date pies and spring rolls (McDonald's Saudi Arabia 2007).

The Diffusion Process

Keep in mind that cultural diffusion is a process that generates change in the borrowing society. The introduction of fast foods changed people's eating habits in many ways, including decreasing the amount of time devoted to eating a meal, increasing the likelihood of eating away from home, and altering the types and amounts of food consumed.

Sociologists who study cultural diffusion are interested in the rate at which the borrowing people come to use or apply a new idea, behavior, or invention. Upon making its debut, sociologists ask how quickly others in the culture acquire, learn about, and/or come to use or consume it. The answer depends on a variety of factors, including (1) the extent to which that borrowing causes people to change ways of thinking and behaving, (2) the existence of a media structure that lets people learn about it, and (3) the social status of the first adopters. For example, first use and acceptance by a lower status group may cause higher status people to reject it as disrespectful, dangerous, or subversive. Conversely, first use by higher status groups may cause those in lower status groups to reject it as elitist and condescending.

Sociologist William F. Ogburn (1968) believes that one of the most urgent challenges facing people today is the need to adapt to new products and inventions in thoughtful and constructive ways. He used the term **adaptive culture** in reference to the role that norms, values, and beliefs of the borrowing culture play in adjusting to a new product or innovation, specifically adjusting to the associated changes in society. In this regard, one can argue that Americans adapted easily to things like the automobile, cell phones, and computers because they save people time and support deeply rooted norms, values, and beliefs regarding individualism and personal freedom.

On the other hand, many point to problems these inventions have created. Some are advocating for laws banning cell phones while driving, increasing automobile gas mileage, and regulating the disposal of obsolete computers. These examples suggest that needed adjustments are not always or easily made. Ogburn uses the term **cultural lag** to refer to a situation in which adaptive culture fails to adjust in necessary ways to a material innovation and its disruptive consequences. In writing about cultural lag, Ogburn emphasized the failure of society to adjust to material innovations but said little about how societies muster a response or about why people are often slow at creating new technologies and reorganizing human activity to address drawbacks.

Critical Thinking

Identify something you do, use, say, eat, or think that has been borrowed from a foreign source. Explain its significance to your life.

Key Terms

adaptive culture

cultural diffusion

cultural lag

Applying Theory: Global Society Theories

Objective

You will learn how global society theorists frame the diffusion process.



Why do you think Coca-Cola is a major sponsor of the Olympic Games?

In 1886 the first glass of Coca-Cola was sold in Atlanta, Georgia. Today, Coke is sold in more than 200 countries. Its global reach is the reason Coke is a major corporate sponsor of the Olympic Games. Sociologist Leslie Sklair (2002) asks how a drink that is “nutritionally worthless” came to be a truly global product. Sklair argues that Coke (and Pepsi, for that matter) are marketed on a global scale, not as soft drinks per se, but as a lifestyle promising that when anyone, even the most poor, buy the product, they “can join in the great project of global consumerism, if only for a few moments” (p. 611). Sklair’s theory of global consumption offers insights about the broader phenomenon of cultural diffusion. First, we place Sklair’s ideas in the context of global society theory.

The Connections between Local and Global

Global society theorists see human activity as embedded in a larger global context. They emphasize that seemingly local events are interconnected with events taking place within other countries and regions of the world. These interconnections are part of a phenomenon known as **global interdependence**, a situation in which human relationships and activities transcend national borders and in

which social problems—such as unemployment, drug addiction, water shortages, natural disasters, or the search for national security—are experienced locally but are shaped by events taking place outside the country. Global interdependence is part of a dynamic process known as **globalization**—the ever-increasing flow of goods, services, money, people, technology, information, and other cultural items across political borders. This flow has become more dense and quick-moving as constraints of space and time break down.



Lisa Southwick

▲ One example of globalization relates to the apple juice we drink, the source of which cannot be fixed to a particular location in the world. The label on a bottle of Dole apple juice informs the consumer that it is made from concentrate that comes from Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Argentina, Chile, China, Turkey, Brazil, and the United States. Globally established social arrangements that we never see deliver us apple juice and thousands of other products and services (Lemert 1995; Zaniello 2007).

Four Positions on Globalization

Globalization is a process that involves economic, political, and cultural transformations between and within countries. Global society theorists differ on the nature of those transformations and favor one of four positions that cannot be considered mutually exclusive (Appelrouth and Edles 2007). There are essentially four positions that when taken together capture the nature of globalization.

Position 1: Globalization is producing a homogeneous world that fuses distinct cultural practices into a new world culture as embodied in trends such as world beat, world cuisine, and world cinema.

► World beat music emerged as a genre in the 1980s when artists such as Peter Gabriel and Paul Simon became popular for blending African and Latin American folk styles into their music. The British group pictured, Boka Halat, uses a technique its members label intercultural (rather than multicultural) because they see themselves as “a group of diverse musicians” creating something that “none of them could arrive at on their own” (Boka Halat 2010).



Bruce Collins for Boka Halat

Position 2: Globalization is producing a homogeneous world by destroying variety or, more specifically, the local cultures that get in the way of progress or cannot compete against large corporations. The engines of this homogeneity—sometimes referred to as McWorld and Coca-colonization—are consumerism and corporate capitalism.



▲ How can this food vendor compete against a fast food establishment that is open 24 hours a day and that is committed to delivering food to customers within minutes of ordering? When people eat a Big Mac or drink a Coke, they consume more than a burger or a drink; they also consume associated values. Those values relate to the time one should spend preparing and eating food, the nature of the relationship between the cook and the person eating, and the place of the individual in relationship to the group (i.e., I can eat whatever I want whenever I want; I do not have to eat what others are eating at set times of the day).

Position 3: Globalization actually brings value to and appreciation for local products and ways of doing things. Consumption is not a one-way exchange in which the buying culture simply accepts a foreign product as is. Although the products of corporate capitalism penetrate local markets, local ingredients, tastes, and preferences do not disappear.

► In Japan, McDonald's has adapted to Japanese sensibilities in a number of ways. For one, the Japanese believe that bread is not filling and thus see hamburgers as a snack or something to be eaten between meals. For meals the Japanese prefer rice burgers—a slice of meat served between rice patties. Second, in Japan, food has a social function, allowing those eating together to share food and in the process cement social relationships and create a feeling community. To support this social function, McDonald's serves rice in common containers to be shared by everyone at the table (Megan 2009).



Position 4: Globalization and its interconnections intensify cultural differences by actually sparking conflicts as people fight (1) to preserve their identity and way of life, (2) to resist outside influences that clash with cultural ideals, or (3) to protect and enforce boundaries even as they are opened (Appelrouth and Edles 2007).



James R. Tourtelotte



SFA John Hughes, Jr.

▲ Airport security and border patrols work to process entering travelers and cargo as quickly as possible, but at the same time they also work to close access off to real and imagined threats. As a case in point, each year there are an estimated 300 million border crossings from Mexico into the United States. To control this exchange of people, the United States has constructed 700 miles of strategically placed fences along that border to prevent illegal crossings (Dinan 2007).

Capitalism and Globalization

In the spirit of Position 2, Sklair (2002) argues that capitalism is *the* force shaping the character of globalization in several ways:

- the vehicle of global capitalism is the transnational corporation,
- the driver of global capitalism is the transnational capitalist class, and
- the cultural ideology of consumerism is the fuel that powers the motor of global capitalism.

TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS (TNCs). The global economy is dominated by a few gigantic transnational corporations marketing their brands all over the world. Sklair does not say what “a few” means, but it would probably include the Global 500 companies. One reason that the largest multinational organizations have great influence on the societies in which they operate is their size. Taken together, the annual revenues of the top 10 global corporations are about \$2.3 trillion. Only five countries in the world—the United States, China, Japan, India, and Germany—possess a gross national product that exceeds that amount. As one measure of how a relatively small number of TNCs dominate the world economy, consider that in the United States alone there are 245,000 exporting companies, 50 of which account for one-third of all exports (U.S. Census Bureau 2007).

TRANSNATIONAL CAPITALIST CLASS (TCC). Globalization “does not just happen: It is engineered and promoted by identifiable groups of people within identifiable organizations” (Sklair 2002, p. 601). Obviously, the TCC includes the executives of the largest TNCs, as well as executives associated with the major media outlets who advertise their products and services. Sklair includes the federal and state politicians who make and pass laws that support corporations and their profit-making activities as part of this capitalist class.

TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL IDEOLOGY (TCI). The TCI is **consumerism**, an ideology that “proclaims that the meaning of life is to be found in the things that we possess.” According to this ideology, when one consumes one feels alive, and “to remain fully alive, we must continuously consume, discard, and consume” (p. 601). According to Sklair, the expansion of capitalism depends on creating legions of consumers who buy, not to satisfy real needs, but because they believe that buying things will allow them to become something they could not

be otherwise. The ideology of consumerism persuades people to consume not simply to satisfy real need, but to satisfy “artificially created desires” (p. 601).



Boni Li

◀ Consider this cosmetic counter located in the People’s Republic of China. Here Lancôme features photographs of models who appear white to sell its products to Asian women. Lancôme and other cosmetic companies send the message that the typical Chinese woman, no matter how beautiful, cannot achieve this appearance without these products.

Beginning in the 1980s, the media dramatically increased its ability through cable, TV, satellite, and Internet technologies to deliver messages and images on an unprecedented scale. Sklair argues that few people in the world can avoid the reach of advertisers and marketers, whose messages “are beginning to penetrate deeply into the countryside even in the poorest places” (p. 607). Sklair believes that there is “nothing in human experience that has prepared men, women, and children for the modern television techniques of fixing human attention and creating the uncritical mood required to sell goods, many of which are marginal at best to human needs” (p. 605).

Critical Thinking

Review the four positions or themes describing globalization effects. Which of the four best captures globalization as you have experienced it? Give examples to support your point.

Key Terms

consumerism

global interdependence

globalization

Summary: Putting It All Together

Sociologists define culture as the way of life of a people. Culture includes the shared and human-created strategies for adapting and responding to the surrounding environment. On some level culture is a blueprint that guides and, in some cases, even determines behavior. People of the same culture are not replicas of each other, because they possess the ability to accept, create, reject, revive, and change culture.

Culture consists of material and nonmaterial components. Material culture is the physical objects that people have invented or borrowed from other cultures. Sociologists seek to understand the ways people use these physical objects and the meanings they assign to them. Nonmaterial culture is the intangible aspects of culture, including beliefs, values, norms, and symbols.

People borrow ideas and objects from other cultures through a process known as cultural diffusion. Borrowing is usually selective in that people are choosy about which features of the item they adopt, and they reshape the item to fit the core values of their own cultures. Cultural diffusion is a process that generates change in the borrowing society. One key challenge facing people today is the need to adapt to new products and inventions in thoughtful and constructive ways.

Sociologists use the term *cultural diversity* to capture the cultural variety that exists among people who find themselves sharing some designated physical or virtual space. Sociologists use the concepts of subcultures and countercultures to help describe diversity. When we encounter different cultures, the natural tendency is to judge them using our home culture as the standard. When people do this, they are engaging in ethnocentrism. Sometimes people find themselves in situations where they must leave their home culture and experience foreign ways of thinking and behaving. Culture shock is the mental and physical strain that people from one culture experience when they must reorient themselves to the ways of a new culture. People can also experience reentry shock upon returning home after living in and adapting to the ways of another culture. Cultural relativism is an antidote to ethnocentrism, in that it acts as a check against an uncritical and overvalued acceptance of the home culture that constricts thinking and narrows sympathies.

[Can You Top This Photo?]

Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo with a caption that represents a counterculture in the United States.





U.S. Navy Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chad J. McNeeley

3 CHAPTER

SOCIALIZATION

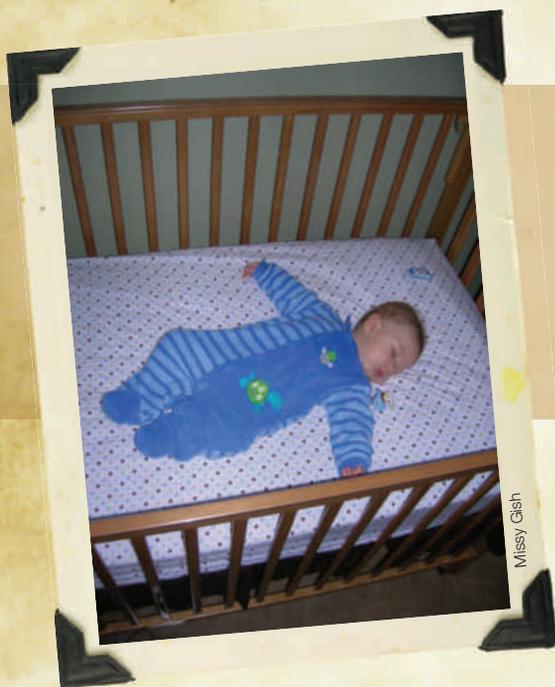
- 3.1 Socialization**
- 3.2 Nature and Nurture**
- 3.3 The Social Self**
- 3.4 The Life Course and Transitions**
- 3.5 Agents of Socialization**
- 3.6 Applying Theory: The Three Perspectives**
- Summary Putting It All Together**

Socialization is the link between society and the individual—a link so crucial that neither individual nor society could exist without it (Robertson 1988). To understand this link, think of society as analogous to a game with rules and expectations in place about how it is played. For individuals to be part of the game, there must be mechanisms in place (socialization) by which they learn the rules and expectations. If there are no such mechanisms, the game (or society) ceases to exist. But the remarkable aspect is that people created the game and the mechanisms for passing it on, both of which can withstand challenges and change from new players and subsequent generations.

Socialization

Objective

You will learn that socialization is a process that prepares people to live in society and interact with others.



Do you believe that babies should sleep alone in a crib or with a parent? Why do you believe what you do?

Some parents believe that sleeping alone creates an independent child. Others argue it creates an insecure child. Whatever your opinion, it is likely informed by the kind of child you believe each socialization experience will create.

Socialization is the lifelong process by which people learn the ways of the society in which they live. More specifically, it is the process by which humans

- acquire a sense of self or a social identity,
- develop their human capacities,
- learn the culture(s) of the society in which they live, and
- learn expectations for behavior.

Socialization is not a one-way process such that people simply absorb these lessons. It is also a process by which people negotiate, resist, ignore, and even challenge those lessons.

Acquiring a Sense of Self

What does it mean to acquire a sense of self? From a sociological point of view, children acquire a **sense of self** when they can step outside the self and see it from another's point of view and also imagine the effects their words and actions

have on others. Having a sense of self also means that children have acquired a set of standards about how they are expected to behave and look in a given situation.

Researchers have devised an ingenious method for determining when a child has acquired a sense of self. A researcher puts a spot of blush on the child's nose and then places the child in front of a mirror. Presumably, a child who ignores the blush does so because he or she is not yet able to imaginatively step outside the self and evaluate it from another's point of view. Moreover, that child has not yet acquired a standard about how he or she is expected to look (Kagan 1989).



Lisa Southwick

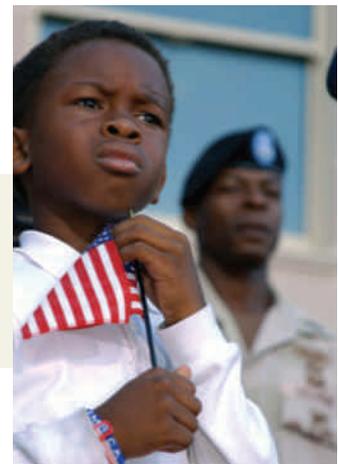


Lisa Southwick

▲ The child to the left does not seem bothered by the spot of blush on her nose. In fact, she does not even appear to know the baby reflected in the mirror is her. This is because she has not yet developed a sense of self. The child to the right appears to be concerned about the blush. Her facial expression tells us that she has acquired a sense of self, which means that she evaluates herself using a set of standards about how she ought to look.

Acquiring a sense of self also involves learning about the groups to which we belong and, by extension, do not belong. The social nature of identity is best illustrated when we think about how we get to know someone. We ask questions like “What is your name?” “Where do you live?” “How many brothers and sisters do you have?” “Are you in school?” “Do you play sports?” The answers to these questions clearly illustrate how group memberships figure into who we are and how others come to know us. Consider how much time we spend teaching young children about the groups to which they belong, including working with them to know their family name, their age, their sex, their race, and the country to which they belong. Such ideas do not come easily. We have to go over them many times before children get it.

➤ Through the socialization process, children come to learn about and to identify with various groups, including the country to which they belong. As this child holds a flag, he is learning to see himself as an American.

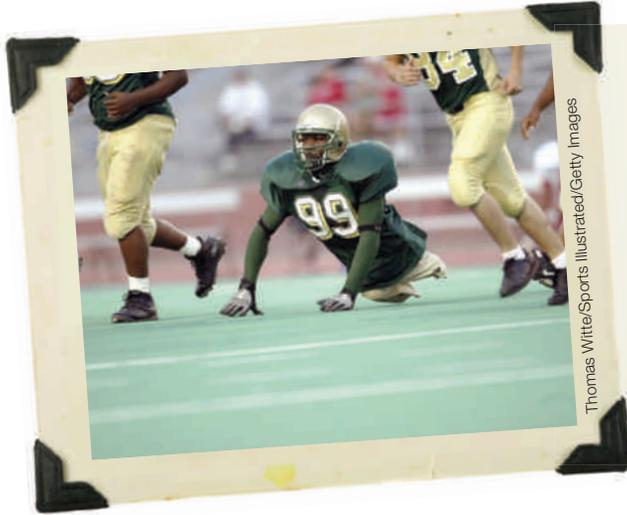


U.S. Navy photo by Chief Photographer's Mate Johnny Bivera

Developing Human Capacities

Socialization is also a process by which human capacities are developed. Our parents transmit, by way of their genes, a biological heritage common to all humans but unique to each person. Our genetic heritage gives us, among other

things, a capacity to speak or sign a language, an upright stance that frees arms and hands to carry and manipulate objects, and hands that can grasp objects. If these traits seem too obvious to mention, consider that, among other things, they allow humans to speak innumerable languages and to use their hands to create and use inventions. Babies cannot realize these biological potentials unless caregivers support and encourage their development. Likewise, babies born with physical impairments find ways to compensate if given the opportunity and support.



◀ The story of Bobby Martin, a high school football player born without legs, captivated the sports world. One reporter described Martin's situation this way: "Never knowing a life with legs, Bobby from an early age just adapted to using his arms and the pendulum motion of his body for movement. And after perfecting this method of locomotion for 17 years—and seeing it first hand—I can tell you this kid can move with the best of them" (Witte 2005).

Learning Culture and Expectations for Behavior

By the time children are two years old, most are biologically ready to pay close attention to social expectations or the "rules of life." They are bothered when things do not match their learned expectations: paint peeling from a table, broken toys, small holes in clothing, and persons in distress all raise troubling questions for children (Kagan 1989). To show this kind of concern, two-year-olds must first be exposed to information that leads them to expect people and objects in their world to be a certain way (Kagan 1989). They develop these expectations as they interact with others.

To understand how children learn the ways of their culture, keep in mind that as they learn a language, they learn their culture's names for things in the world and ways of verbally expressing their thoughts and feelings. The clothes they wear and toys they play with convey messages about their culture and its values. In addition, routines—the repeated and predictable activities, such as eating at certain times of the day or taking baths, that make up day-to-day existence—teach children about what is important to the culture (Corsaro and Fingerson 2003).

Internalization

Socialization takes hold through **internalization**, a process by which people accept as binding learned ways of thinking, appearing, and behaving. We know socialization has taken hold if people suffer guilt when they violate expectations. We also know expectations have been internalized when a person conforms even when no one is watching. In these instances an inner voice urges conformity (Campbell 1964).

► This boy may have been taught not to drink juice out of the carton, but he has not internalized that rule. When no one is looking, he violates that expectation. It is clear from his glance that he knows this expectation.

Anyone who observes young children and their caretakers understands the effort the two parties expend to make living together “workable.” As one example, parents and children negotiate the shopping experience. Parents let their children know through glances, words, and physical contact (e.g., firmly grabbing their hands) that they can’t have everything they want. The child often responds by whining or throwing a tantrum. Now it is the parent’s move and the child responds. The two negotiate an understanding about how they will shop together (Corsaro and Fingerson 2003). But their attempts to make shopping together workable cannot be understood apart from the larger social context of consumerism. The U.S. government has relatively few laws limiting children’s exposure to advertisements. The typical American child views between 25,000 and 40,000 television commercials per year. By contrast, for the past 25 years the Swedish government has banned all television advertising aimed at children during prime time hours (Dumont 2001).



Lisa Southwick

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption that relates this scene to the idea that socialization is a process of developing human capacities.

Write a caption here



Lisa Southwick

Hints: In writing this caption

- ask yourself which of the four dimensions of socialization learning to walk represents (see definition of socialization), and
- think about what is necessary for babies to realize their physical potential to walk.

Critical Thinking

Give an example of an experience when you did not internalize learned expectations.

Key Terms

internalization

sense of self

socialization

Objective

You will learn about the importance of social interaction to physical and social development.



Andy Nelson/The Christian Science Monitor via Getty Images

If you had to choose, which one of the two factors—genetic potential or dedicated training—do you think is more important for achieving success at some activity like gymnastics?

The People's Republic of China is often criticized for how it chooses and develops athletic talent. Between the ages of six and nine, gifted children are chosen to join government-funded sports programs. In determining giftedness, officials look for some exceptional physical attribute, such as a wingspan that exceeds height as one sign of a potentially gifted boxer; above-average height as one sign of a potentially gifted basketball player; or exceptional flexibility as one sign of a potentially gifted gymnast (Krovatin 2008). Chinese sports programs develop athletic talent by subjecting those chosen to rigorous training. It seems that the Chinese system places equal weight on innate potential (nature) and dedicated training (nurture) as important factors in creating the best athletes.

Nature and Nurture

Nature comprises human genetic makeup or biological inheritance. **Nurture** refers to the social environment, or to the interaction experiences that make up every person's life. Both nature and nurture are essential to socialization. Some scientists debate the relative importance of genetic makeup and the social experiences, arguing that one is ultimately more important than the other. Such a debate is futile, because it is impossible to separate the influence of the two factors or to say that one is more critical. In fact, it is difficult to identify any human trait that can be explained by nature or nurture alone. One might argue, for example, that height is genetically determined. But height depends, in part, on nutrition; children who are undernourished are considerably shorter than they might otherwise be. Likewise, one might argue that certain personality traits such as shyness are inherited. But no scientist has found a specific gene responsible for shyness. While it might seem that babies are born with personalities—that is, some babies seem to be born fussy, active, or serene—we must remember that the babies' experiences began in the womb nine months earlier and were shaped by the mother's life, nutritional, and emotional experiences.



Courtesy of Terra Schultz



Courtesy of Terra Schultz

▲ These twins (nature) are male and female. Their lives will take different paths as a result of nurture. Nurture is a factor when caretakers dress babies in pink and blue clothes. Those colors signal to others to treat each according to society's ideas about what boys and girls are and can be.

Trying to separate the effects of nature and nurture is like trying to determine whether length or width accounts for a rectangle's shape (Kolb 2007). The latest research suggests that nurture and nature collaborate to shape people's lives. To grasp this relationship, consider how language is learned. As part of our human genetic makeup (nature), we possess a cerebral cortex, which allows us to organize, remember, communicate, understand, and create. In the first months of life, all babies are biologically capable of babbling the essential sounds needed to speak any language. As children grow, however, this enormous potential is reduced by the language or languages that the baby hears spoken and eventually learns (nurture).

Research tells us that in order for children to realize their biological potential they must establish an emotional attachment with a caring adult. In other words, there must be at least one person who knows the baby well enough to understand his or her needs and feelings and who will act to satisfy them. Under such conditions, a bond of mutual expectation between caregiver and



Molly Hayden, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

baby emerges, and the child learns how to elicit predictable responses in his or her caretakers: smiling causes the child's father to smile; crying prompts the mother to soothe the child.

◀ When there is a bond of mutual expectation, a child can expect his or her caretakers to respond in predictable ways. These mothers are part of a program that teaches them to establish meaningful bonds with their babies through touch.

When researchers set up experimental situations in which parents failed to respond to their infants in expected ways, even for a few moments, they found that the babies suffered considerable tension and distress. Cases of children raised in situations of extreme isolation offer even more dramatic illustrations of the importance of caring adults in children's lives.

The Effect of Social Isolation

Sociologist Kingsley Davis (1940, 1947) did some of the earliest and most systematic work on the consequences of extreme isolation. His research shows how neglect and lack of social contact (that is, nurture) can delay the development of human potential (that is, nature).

Davis documented and compared the separate yet similar lives of two girls: Anna and Isabelle. During the first six years of their lives, the girls received only minimal care. Both children lived in the United States in the 1940s, and because their mothers did not marry the fathers, the babies were viewed and treated as illegitimate. Anna was forced into seclusion and shut off from her family and their daily activities. Isabelle was shut off in a dark room with her mother, who was deaf and could not articulate speech. Both girls were six years old when authorities intervened. At that time, they exhibited behavior comparable to that of six-month-olds. Anna "had no glimmering of speech, absolutely no ability to walk, no sense of gesture, not the least capacity to feed herself even when food was put in front of her, and no comprehension of cleanliness. She was so apathetic that it was hard to tell whether or not she could hear" (Davis 1947, p. 434). Anna was placed in a private home for mentally disabled children until she died four years later. At the time of her death, she behaved and thought at the level of a two-year-old.

While Isabelle had not developed speech, she did use gestures and croaks to communicate. Because of a lack of sunshine and a poor diet, she had developed rickets: "Her legs in particular were affected; they 'were so bowed that as she stood erect the soles of her shoes came nearly flat together, and she got about with a skittering gait'" (Davis 1947, p. 436). Isabelle also exhibited extreme fear of and hostility toward strangers. Her case shows how the "gene" for rickets is turned on by difficult social experiences.

Isabelle entered into a special needs program designed to help her master speech, reading, and other important skills. After two years in that program, she achieved a level of thought and behavior normal for someone her age. Isabelle's success may be partly attributed to her establishing an important bond with her deaf-mute mother, who taught her how to communicate through gestures and croaks. Although the bond was formed under less than ideal circumstances, it gave her an advantage over Anna.

Other evidence showing the importance of social contact comes from less extreme cases of neglect. Psychiatrist Rene Spitz (1951) studied 91 infants who were raised by their parents during their first three to four months of life but who were later placed in orphanages. When they were admitted to the orphanages, the infants were physically and emotionally normal. Orphanage staff provided adequate care for their bodily needs—good food, clothing, diaper changes, clean nurseries—but gave the children little personal attention. Because only one nurse was available for every 8 to 12 children, the children were starved emotionally. The emotional starvation caused by the lack of social contact resulted in such rapid physical and developmental deterioration that a significant number of the children died. Others became completely passive, lying on their backs in their cots. Many were unable to stand, walk, or talk (Spitz 1951). These cases and the cases of Anna and Isabelle teach us that children need close contact with and stimulation from others if they are to develop normally.

Critical Thinking

Give a specific example from your life that illustrates how you are a product of both *nature* and *nurture*.

Key Terms

nature

nurture

The Social Self

Objective

You will learn the process by which children acquire a sense of self.



Lisa Southwick

Have you ever watched small children playing soccer or some other organized sport? If so, did you notice how everyone runs toward the ball and forgets to play his or her position? Why do you think this is the case?

Sociologists maintain that children will play their position once they are able to understand how it fits in with other positions. To grasp this concept, children must be able to step outside the self and imagine what those in other positions expect of them. To do so, children must have acquired a sense of self, meaning that they are able to see the self as an object. The self becomes an object when children can

1. take the role of the other, and
2. name, classify, and categorize the self.

Role-Taking

How do people learn to take the role of the other? Sociologist George Herbert Mead (1934) maintains that the key to role-taking is self-awareness. According to Mead, people possess self-awareness when they can comprehend their place in social activities going on around them. Mead maintained that we learn to do this through a three-stage interactive process that involves imaginative **role-taking**, or stepping into another person's shoes to view ourselves. Those stages

are (1) preparatory, (2) play, and (3) games. Each stage involves a progressively more sophisticated level of imaginative role-taking.

THE PREPARATORY STAGE (UNDER AGE 2). In the preparatory stage, children have not yet developed the cognitive ability to role-take. They mimic or imitate people in their environment but often do not know what they are imitating. In this stage children mimick what others around them are doing or repeat things they hear. In the process young children learn to function symbolically; that is, they learn to name things and they learn that particular actions and words have meanings that arouse predictable responses from others.



Lisa Southwick



Lisa Southwick

▲ In the preparatory stage, children imitate the behavior of those around them without understanding the meaning of what they are imitating. These small children notice that their grandfather is wearing something over his eyes. At this age, neither has a name for what they will one day call sunglasses, nor are they aware of the way sunglasses should be worn or their purpose. We know this because one grandchild is putting them on upside down.

THE PLAY STAGE (ABOUT AGES 2 TO 6). Mead saw children's play as the mechanism by which they practice role-taking. **Play** is a voluntary, spontaneous activity with few or no formal rules. Play is *not* subject to constraints of time (e.g., 20-minute halves) or place (e.g., a regulation-size field). Children, in particular, play whenever and wherever the urge strikes. In play children make rules as they go; they are not imposed by rulebooks or referees. Children undertake play for entertainment or pleasure. These characteristics make play less socially complicated than organized games, such as baseball.

In the play stage, children pretend to be **significant others**—people or characters such as cartoon characters, a parent, or the family pet—who are important in a child's life, in that they greatly influence the child's self-evaluation and way of behaving. When a little girl plays with a doll and pretends to be the doll's mother, she talks and acts toward the doll the same way her mother talks and acts toward her. By pretending to be a mother, the child gains a sense of the mother's expectations and perspective and learns to see herself as an object (through the doll) from her mother's point of view.

► A child playing doctor with her dog as patient is seeing the world from viewpoints other than her own. Such play allows her to think about how a significant other in her life (a doctor) sees the patient and how the patient is supposed to behave relative to the doctor.



Lisa Southwick

THE GAME STAGE (AGE 7 AND OLDER). In Mead's theory, the play stage is followed by the game stage. **Games** are structured, organized activities that involve more than one person. They are characterized by a number of constraints, such as established roles and rules and a purpose toward which all activity is directed. When people gather to play a game of baseball, for example, they do not have to decide the rules of the game. The rules are already in place. To be a successful pitcher, for example, one must understand not only how to play that position but how the position of pitcher relates to the other positions.

When children first take part in organized games, their efforts seem chaotic. This chaos exists because children have not developed to the point at which they can see how each role fits with others. As they learn to play games, children also learn to (1) follow established rules, (2) take simultaneously the roles of all participants, and (3) see how their role fits in relation to an established system of expectations. In particular, children learn that what is happening with other positions affects the position they occupy. They learn that under some circumstances their position takes on added significance or assumes lesser significance.

Through games, children learn to organize their behavior around the **generalized other**—a system of expected behaviors and meanings that transcend the people participating. An understanding of the generalized other is achieved by simultaneously and imaginatively relating the self to many others playing the game. Through this imaginative process the generalized other becomes incorporated into a person's sense of self (Cuzzort and King 2002). When children play

games such as baseball, they practice fitting their behavior into an already established system of expectations. This ability is the key to living in society because most of the time, whether it is at school, work, or home, we are expected to learn and then fit into an already established system of roles and expectations.

◀ When this coach tells this boy what to do on the soccer field, the coach is teaching him what teammates expect of him. In the process the boy learns to take the role of the generalized other.



Lisa Southwick

The Self

Mead maintained that children acquire a sense of self when they are able to role-take. In order to role-take children must learn the meaning of **significant symbols**, gestures that convey the same meaning to the persons transmitting them and receiving them. Mead (1934) defined **gesture** as any action that requires people to interpret its meaning before responding. Language is a particularly important gesture because people interpret the meaning of words before they react. In addition to words, gestures also include nonverbal cues, such as tone of voice, inflection, facial expression, posture, and other body movements or positions that convey meaning.



▲ Through gestures, others convey how they are evaluating our appearance and behavior. Look at the two facial expressions in the photographs. Imagine that you just told this woman that you are going to enroll in college. What does each facial expression convey about your decision?

A sense of self emerges the moment children learn the symbols or **self-referent terms** to distinguish the self (including I, me, mine, first name and last name) and to specify the statuses one holds in society (athlete, doctor, child, and so on). Mead maintains that the self is always recognized in relationship to others. That is, one can be a student only in relationship to teachers and fellow students. Similarly, one can be an athlete only in relationship to other athletes, an audience, a referee, and so on.

Mead described the self as having two parts—the me and the I. The **me** is the social self—the part of the self that is the product of interaction with others and that knows the rules and expectations. More specifically, the me is the sense of self that emerges out of role-taking experiences. The **I** is the active and creative aspect of the self. It is the part of the self that questions the expectations and rules. The I is capable of acting in unconventional, inappropriate, or unexpected ways. The I takes chances that can pay off if others label the risk-takers as unique or one-of-a-kind. At other times such risk taking backfires. The existence of the me and the I suggests that the self is dynamic and complex.

Looking-Glass Self

Like Mead, sociologist Charles Horton Cooley (1961) assumed that the self is a product of interaction experiences. Cooley coined the term **looking-glass self** to describe the way in which a sense of self develops: specifically, people act as mirrors for one another. We see ourselves reflected in others' real or imagined reactions to our appearance and behaviors. We acquire a sense of self by being sensitive to the appraisals that we perceive others to have of us. As we interact, we imagine how we appear to others, we imagine a judgment of that appearance, and we develop a feeling about ourselves somewhere between pride and shame: "The thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves but . . . the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind" (Cooley 1961, p. 824).

Cooley went so far as to argue that "the solid facts of social life are the facts of the imagination." Because Cooley defined the looking-glass self as critical to

self-assessment and awareness, he believed that people are affected deeply by what they imagine others' reactions to be, even if they perceive reactions incorrectly. The student who dominates class discussion may think that classmates are fascinated by his or her comments, when in fact they are rolling their eyes whenever that student speaks. This student continues dominating discussion because he or she misinterprets others' assessment.

We have learned that self-awareness and self-identity emerge when people can role-take, understand meanings of significant symbols, and use self-referential terms. The question that still remains is how people develop the levels of cognitive sophistication to do these things. To answer this question, we turn to the work of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget.

Cognitive Development

Psychologist Jean Piaget (1923, 1929) is the author of many influential books about how children reason and learn. Assessing the impact of Piaget on the study of cognitive development is “like assessing the impact of Shakespeare on English literature, or Aristotle in Philosophy—impossible” (Beilin, 1992, p. 191). Piaget's ideas stemmed, in part, from his study of water snails, which spend their early life in calm waters. When transferred to tidal water, the size and shape of the snails' shells develop to help them cling to rocks and avoid being swept away (Satterly 1987). Building on this observation, Piaget arrived at the concept of active adaptation, a biologically based tendency to adjust to and resolve environmental challenges. Piaget believed that learning and reasoning are important cognitive tools that help children to adapt to environmental challenges. These tools emerge according to a gradually unfolding genetic timetable in conjunction with direct experiences with people and objects.

Piaget's model of cognitive development includes four broad stages: (1) sensorimotor, (2) preoperational, (3) concrete operational, and (4) formal operational. According to Piaget's model, children cannot proceed from one stage to the next until they master the reasoning challenges of earlier stages. Piaget maintained that reasoning abilities cannot be hurried; a more sophisticated level of reasoning will not show itself until the brain is ready.

SENSORIMOTOR STAGE. In the sensorimotor stage (from birth to about age 2), children are driven to explore the world through their senses (tasting, touching, seeing, hearing, and smelling).



Missy Glish

◀ You might notice that very young children put into their mouths just about anything they pick up. This baby uses his mouth to explore things in the world around him.

The cognitive accomplishments of this first stage include an understanding of the self as separate from other persons and the realization that objects and persons exist even when they are moved out of sight. Before this notion takes hold, children act as if an object does not exist when they can

no longer see it. At about eight months, children begin to actively look for an object that was once there.

PREOPERATIONAL STAGE. Children in the preoperational stage (ages 2 to about 7) think anthropomorphically; that is, they assign human feelings to inanimate objects. They believe that objects such as the sun, the moon, nails, marbles, trees, and clouds have feelings and intentions (for example, dark clouds are angry; a nail that sinks to the bottom of a glass filled with water is tired). Children in the preoperational stage cannot grasp the fact that matter can change form but still remain the same in quantity. For example, they believe a 12-ounce cup that is tall and narrow holds more than a 12-ounce cup that is short and wide; height is the criterion by which they judge the amount, failing to consider diameter. In addition, children in this second stage cannot conceive how the world looks from another person's point of view. Thus, if a child facing a roomful of people, all of whom are looking in his or her direction, is asked to draw a picture of how someone in the back of the room sees the group, the child will draw the picture as he or she sees the people, showing faces rather than backs of heads. Finally, children in the preoperational stage tend to center their attention on one detail and fail to process information that challenges that detail. That is, they may believe that women have long hair and when they meet a male with long hair, they classify him as a woman and ignore the detail that he also has a beard, something society attributes to a male.

CONCRETE OPERATIONAL STAGE. By the concrete operational stage (from about ages 7 to 11) children can take the role of the other. But they have difficulty thinking abstractly without reference to a concrete event or image. For example, children in this stage have trouble envisioning death or that life could go on without them in it. One 11-year-old struggling to grasp this idea said to me, "I am the beginning and the end; the world begins with and ends with me." Children in the concrete operational stage can think deductively (using general principles to see the errors of flawed conclusions such as in this statement: "something able to swim is a fish, so a frog in water is a fish"). During this stage they also learn to think inductively, applying a specific situation to a general principle. For example, the child comes to truly understand the concept of brother so that he knows he is his brother's brother and that his dad and other men can be someone's brother, too.

FORMAL OPERATIONAL STAGE. In this stage (from the onset of adolescence forward) children learn to think abstractly. They plan for the future, are able to think through hypothetical situations, and can entertain moral dilemmas. In this stage children can conceptualize their life as being part of a much larger system. The world is not so black-and-white now, but shades of gray.

► Because children in the formal operational stage can think abstractly, they are able to imagine the Earth in relationship to the universe and, by extension, grasp the notion that they are one among billions who live on the planet.



Among other things, Piaget is criticized for making conservative assessments of children's cognitive abilities at certain stages (Lourenço and Machado 1996). Some researchers, for example, have found that children in the preoperational stage can do tasks associated with the concrete operational stage. Piaget would respond by saying that he was not so much interested in the ages at which children move from one developmental task to another but the *sequence* through which they move (Lourenço and Machado 1996).

Critical Thinking

Test Piaget's theory of cognitive development by asking a child in a relevant age category to think through a problem. For example, show a five-year-old two 12-ounce glasses filled with water—one short glass with a wide diameter; one tall glass with a small diameter. Ask the child which glass holds more and why.

Key Terms

games

generalized other

gesture

I

looking-glass self

me

play

role-taking

self-referent terms

significant other

significant symbol

The Life Course and Transitions

MODULE

3.4

Objective

You will learn that socialization is a lifelong process of responding to challenges associated with life transitions.



AP Photo/Gillette News-Record, Paul Ruyter

On their fifteenth birthdays girls from Latin American cultures celebrate *Quinceaños*, a transition in life when they come of age or become a young lady. Can you name a key event in your life that marked both the beginning and end of something?

Did you name your first day of college, sixteenth birthday, first sexual experience, first day on the job, birth of first child, first apartment, layoff or retirement, divorce, a medical diagnosis, or death of a significant person? The list of life transitions is virtually endless. From a sociological point of view, if groups are to survive they must be able to take in new members and to continue on when members leave or die. Resocialization is the process by which people learn new expectations that accompany life transitions (Lutfey and Mortimer 2003). How do sociologists think about these transitions? Sociologists who take a life course perspective emphasize transitions and/or turning points in life, each of which involves resocialization. In this module we consider two models: the life stage model and the life event model.

Life Stage Model

Perhaps the most influential life stage model was put forth by psychiatrist Erik Erikson (1950). While there are other models, all either draw upon or react to the model Erikson proposed 60 years ago. Erikson's eight-stage model emphasizes the developmental challenges associated with major turning points in life, the importance of resolving challenges in constructive ways, and the roles others play in helping to negotiate those challenges.

STAGE 1 (INFANCY–BASIC TRUST VERSUS MISTRUST). In stage 1, babies must come to trust someone. Trust that comes with regular, consistent, and predictable care is the foundation of a healthy personality. When infants experience such care, they acquire an inner certainty about their ability to elicit care; this makes them feel that the world is reliable (Erikson 1950). Inadequate, unpredictable care leaves infants uncertain about that ability.

STAGE 2 (TODDLER–AUTONOMY VERSUS SHAME AND DOUBT). In the toddler stage, the child's nervous and muscular systems mature, and abilities in one area are frustrated by inabilities in another. Growing abilities clash with inabilities, and this stage becomes a battle for autonomy.



Lisa Southwick

◀ For example, toddlers have a drive to move around and explore the world. The problem is that their body coordination is just developing and they are unable to predict the consequences of their actions. Caregivers must protect children from danger, be tolerant yet firm, and support children in their efforts to be independent.

If caregivers are critical, overprotective, or discouraging of children's attempts to master the environment, the children may come to feel shame and doubt, especially if parents resent their children as interfering with their independence (Erikson 1950).

STAGE 3 (PRESCHOOL–INITIATIVE VERSUS GUILT). The preschool stage corresponds with what sociologists call the play stage, in that children role-play at being the kind of person they hope to grow up to be.

➤ Preschoolers identify with people close to them and with others who attract their attention. They gain great pleasure from imagining and pretending to be the admired figure.

If the gap between an admired person and the child's skills is too large, children become frustrated and think, "I am no good compared with X." Adults must show approval and encouragement and let children know they are equal in worth, if not yet ability (Erikson 1950).



Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Holly Boynton

STAGE 4 (AGES 6-12-INDUSTRY VERSUS INFERIORITY). Between ages 6 and 12 children especially need systematic instruction. Recognition is won by doing things. If their teachers are secure with themselves and respected, children develop a positive identification with those who know how to do things. In this setting, they come to enjoy performing tasks and take pride in doing things well.

➤ According to Erikson, it is important that children do meaningful tasks that allow them to experience the pleasure that comes with steady attention and perseverance.

Industry involves doing things independently and with others (Erikson 1950). The danger at this stage is developing a sense of inadequacy and inferiority—the feeling that one will never contribute anything or be any good.

Katie Engler



STAGE 5 (ADOLESCENCE-IDENTITY VERSUS ROLE CONFUSION).

This stage is characterized by rapid body growth and genital maturation. At this time, adolescents develop ideas about what they will do with their lives and begin to search for an identity. As they search, they are often preoccupied with how they appear in the eyes of others. They struggle with being a part of a group and being true to themselves. As they work to establish an identity, adolescents may over-identify with unrealistic cultural or group heroes and exclude people they deem different.



Gin Kai

◀ Armies everywhere recruit the young, some with as little as 17 or 18 years' experience living in the world. That age group is appealing to recruiters because adolescents are searching for an identity and are often seeking discipline and closely structured environments.

STAGE 6 (YOUNG ADULTHOOD-INTIMACY VERSUS SELF-ABSORPTION).

During this stage, the young adult forms close and intimate bonds with others such as a life partner or children. Friendships can become deeper and longer lasting. A mark of a healthy personality is the ability to love and to work. People with this ability can work productively without losing the capacity to be sexual and loving. The opposite of intimacy is self-absorption, a state in which people focus excessively on themselves and their needs to the exclusion of others' needs.

STAGE 7 (MIDDLE AGE-GENERATIVITY VERSUS STAGNATION).

Ideally, those who are middle-aged make an effort to guide those in younger generations and pass on what they have contributed to life. This stage is characterized by strengthening commitments to care for cherished persons and objects. Its counterpart is stagnation and interpersonal impoverishment, sometimes expressed as jealousy and resentment of those who are younger and just beginning their careers (Erikson 1988, p. 16).

► In middle age people may feel the need to mentor, realizing that it is time to hand things over to a younger generation. Ideally, that mentoring is nurturing and supportive.

STAGE 8 (OLD AGE- INTEGRITY VERSUS DESPAIR AND DISGUST).

In old age “one faces the totality of life. Ideally the elderly see their lives as a whole. At last, life hangs together,” and one comes to accept the life one has lived and to acknowledge the people significant to it (Erikson 1985, p. 102). Stage 8 involves the realization that one’s biography is “but one life cycle in but one segment of history.” With this realization comes a sense of comradeship with all human beings. If acceptance is not achieved, one feels despair, often expressed as disgust or displeasure with institutions and people. On the other hand, if all goes well, wisdom is the fruit of the struggle to accept the life one has lived in the face of physical disintegration.

While Erikson’s model includes eight life stages, keep in mind the number of stages varies by society. Generally, the lower a society’s life expectancy, the fewer the number of life cycle stages. As life expectancy increases, however, the number of stages and the time people are expected to take moving from one stage to the next increases. When life expectancy is long, people may take more time to complete school or they may postpone parenthood. In addition, key events that are often associated with specific stages may show up in later stages, such as having a first child at age 50, returning home after college, or changing careers at age 55 (Eder and Nenga 2003).

Life Event Model

Erikson’s life stage model is useful for capturing broad socialization challenges associated with aging, but it does not capture challenges associated with the many, often less significant, social transitions people make over their lifetimes. The life events perspective considers how factors such as age and time in history affect some experiences of social transition (e.g., starting college at age 18 versus 44, or in 1950 versus 2010 changes the experience and meaning of college).

In addition to age and time in history, the life event model considers other factors, including prior life experiences, temporal orientation, and whether a social transition is considered normative or nonnormative (Lutfey and Mortimer 2003).

Prior life experiences can shape how social transitions are experienced. For example, the experience of a new romantic relationship is affected by whether one has had previous romantic relationships. The experience of childbirth is affected by the number of children a woman has already had and the age at which she gives birth.



John Reese

Temporal orientation encompasses ideas about the possible self, including projections of what someone hopes to become or fears becoming. The possible selves for which one hopes “might include the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, or the loved and admired self, whereas the dreaded possible selves could be the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self, the unemployed self, or the bag lady self” (Markus and Nurius 1986, p. 954).

Normative / nonnormative transitions relate to whether a social transition is expected/unexpected of people in light of their age, race, sex, social class, and so on. For the most part, in the United States we expect girls to become cheerleaders, not football players; we do not expect 85-year-olds to divorce, but are not too surprised if 45-year-olds do.

► We do not expect women age 70 to give birth. Omkari Panwar, believed to be the world’s oldest mother, gave birth to twins—a boy and a girl. Panwar became pregnant through IVF treatment.



Resocialization

Resocialization is a process that involves breaking with behaviors and ways of thinking that are unsuited to existing or changing circumstances, and replacing them with new, more appropriate ways of behaving and thinking. Much resocialization happens naturally and involves no formal training; people simply learn as they go. For example, people who marry, have children, and graduate from college must learn ways to live their lives as they transition from single to married, from childlessness to parenthood, and from college student to a career. On the other hand, some circumstances require that people undergo formal training and demonstrate that they have internalized

appropriate knowledge, suitable values, and correct codes of conduct. Medical doctors attend seminars to keep up with changes in their specialty, and people seek debt counseling at the request of creditors.

◀ Those who have lost limbs in accidents and war must go through a process of resocialization in which they relearn how to do things they once did with limbs. Here Kari Miller, a paralympic athlete, sets a volleyball during the warm-up as Joel Dulashanti looks on.



In general, it is easier to resocialize people when they want to be resocialized than when they are forced to give up old values and behaviors. In addition resocialization programs are likely to be successful when participants gain rather than lose status.

Voluntary versus Imposed Resocialization

Resocialization can be voluntary or imposed. Voluntary resocialization occurs when people choose to participate in a process or program designed to remake them. Examples of voluntary resocialization are wide-ranging: the unemployed youth who enlists in the army to acquire a technical skill, the prescription drug addict who seeks treatment, the alcoholic who decides to join Alcoholics Anonymous. Imposed resocialization occurs when people are forced into a program designed to train them, rehabilitate them, or correct some supposed deficiency in their earlier socialization. People drafted into the military, sentenced to prisons, court-ordered to attend parenting classes, or committed to mental institutions represent examples of those who undergo resocialization that is forced upon them.

In *Asylums*, sociologist Erving Goffman (1961) wrote about a particular type of setting called **total institutions** in which people are isolated from the rest of society to undergo systematic resocialization. Total institutions include homes for the blind, the elderly, the orphaned, and the indigent; mental hospitals; prisons; concentration camps; army barracks; boarding schools; and monasteries and convents. In total institutions, people surrender control of their lives, voluntarily or involuntarily. As “inmates,” they carry out daily activities such as eating, sleeping, and recreation in the “immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together” (p. 6). Total institutions control inmates’ social interactions with the outside world. This control is symbolized by the use of locked doors, high walls, fences, and security systems. Inmates participate in activities (lining up, attending classes, making crafts, showering, running, attending group therapy sessions, praying) that fit in with institutionally planned goals. Those goals may be to care for the incapable, to keep inmates out of the community, or to teach people new roles (for example, to be a soldier, priest, or nun).

Goffman (1961) identified standard procedures that total institutions employ to resocialize inmates. The inmates-to-be arrive with a sense of self. Upon entering that self undergoes **mortification**. That is, it is stripped of all its supports and “shaped and coded.” Specifically, staff may take inmates’ life histories, photograph, weigh, and fingerprint them. The staff strips inmates of any personal possessions through which they present themselves on the outside. Clothes and jewelry are taken and uniforms issued. Access to services such as a hairdresser or workout facilities are denied. Communication with those in the outside world is curtailed, and if restored, closely monitored. “Family, occupational, and educational career lines are chopped off” (p. 17). Inmates have no say in how to spend the day; they follow a schedule of activities to which all adhere. Taken together, these policies enforce a clean break with the past and mark the beginning of a process that, if successful, will result in a new identity and way of thinking and behaving.

Ted Aljibe/AFP/Getty Images



Chris Caldeira

▲ Buddhist monks and prisoners live in total institutions. The prisoners (left) are undergoing a resocialization program that requires their extreme compliance or complete obedience. The Buddhist monks in Laos, who live together in a monastery, are required to collect alms or money for the poor at 5:30 a.m. each day.

Critical Thinking

Compare and contrast a specific socialization experience (first day of school, learning on the job, learning to play a sport) with someone of a different generation or culture.

Key Terms

mortification

resocialization

total institutions

Agents of Socialization

Objective

You will learn how agents of socialization shape behavior, thinking, and social identities.



Lisa Southwick

Think back to when you were in grade school. What was your favorite television show? Did it affect your thinking and behavior in any way?

If you answered yes to the second question, then you have acknowledged that television was a socializing agent in your life.

Agents of socialization are significant people, groups, and institutions that shape our sense of self and social identity, help us realize our human capacities, and teach us to negotiate the world in which we live. It is impossible to list all the agents of socialization; they include family, friends, peers, coaches, day-cares, schools, religions, and all forms of media. In this module we consider three agents of socialization: primary groups, peer groups, and mass media.

Primary Groups

A **primary group** is a social group whose members share an identity, have face-to-face contact, and feel strong emotions for each other. These emotions are not always based on love; they can be based on insecurity and need. Whatever the case, the ties are emotional. Primary groups are “fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual” (Cooley 1909, p. 23).

FAMILY. The family is an important agent of socialization because it gives individuals their deepest and earliest experiences with relationships and their first exposure to the rules of life. In addition, the family teaches its members about the world in which they live and ways to respond to it. During difficult times the family can buffer its members against the ill effects; alternatively, it can increase stress. Sociologists Amith Ben-David and Yoav Lavee (1992) offer a specific example. The two sociologists interviewed Israelis to learn how their families responded to missile attacks Iraq launched on Israel during the Persian Gulf War in 1991. During these attacks, families gathered in sealed rooms and put on gas masks. The researchers found that families varied in their responses to this life-threatening situation. Some respondents reported the interaction during that time as positive and supportive: “We laughed and we took pictures of each other with the gas masks on” or “We talked about different things, about the war, we told jokes, we heard the announcements on the radio” (p. 39).

Other respondents reported little interaction among family members but a feeling of togetherness prevailed: “I was quiet, immersed in my thoughts. We were all around the radio. . . . Nobody talked much” (p. 40). Some respondents reported that interaction was tense: “We fought with the kids about putting on their masks, and also between us about whether the kids should put on their masks. There was much shouting and noise” (p. 39). As this research illustrates, even under extremely stressful circumstances, such as war, the family can teach responses that increase or decrease that stress. Clearly, children in families that emphasize constructive responses to stressful events have an advantage over children whose parents respond in destructive ways.

► The family can buffer its members against the effects of stressful events or it can magnify the stress. This family is riding a boat to safety after their home was flooded. Their pleasant manner is striking, and may be a temporary reaction of relief. How do you think your family would react in such a situation? What factors might contribute to this outwardly positive response?

Staff Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III



While a family’s income and wealth will surely shape how it responds to stressful events, there are many examples of families that, lacking even the most basic resources, still manage to respond constructively to stressful situations. Save the Children (2007) staff member Jerry Sternin offers one example. He was charged with a seemingly impossible assignment: to help save starving children in Vietnam. He drew inspiration from the theory of positive deviants—individuals “whose exceptional behaviors and practices enable them to get better results than their neighbors with the exact same resources.” Sternin identified those few Vietnamese children whose weight suggested they were well nourished and compared their situations to peers who were underweight and malnourished. He learned that the mothers of well-nourished children were behaving in ways that defied conventional wisdom. Among other things, these mothers were (1) using alternative food sources available to everyone. They were going to the rice paddies to harvest the tiniest shrimp

and crabs, and they were picking sweet potato greens—considered low-class food—and mixing both food sources with rice; (2) feeding their children when the children had diarrhea, contrary to traditional practice; and (3) making sure their children ate, rather than “hoping children would take it upon themselves to eat.” Save the Children successfully introduced these strategies to 2.2 million Vietnamese in 276 villages and to people in at least 20 other countries where malnutrition is widespread (Dorsey and Leon 2000).

MILITARY UNIT. A military unit is a primary group. A unit’s success in battle depends on the existence of strong ties among its members. Military units train their recruits always to think of the group before themselves. In fact, the overriding goal of military training is to create a primary group and make individuals feel inseparable from their unit.



Lance Cpl. J.J. Harper

◀ Military *units*, such as this one in the People’s Republic of China, are considered primary groups because recruits are trained to think of themselves as a unit and not as individuals. Strategies used to make recruits feel inseparable from their unit include dressing and looking as much alike as possible, assigning a number to the unit, and doing specific tasks together.

Other strategies include ordering recruits to march in unison; to live, sleep, and eat together; and to work together to accomplish some task. Still other key strategies are to punish the entire unit when one member fails and to focus the unit’s attention on a common enemy. Soldiers become so close that they fight for one another, rather than for victory per se, in the heat of battle (Dyer 1985).

PEER GROUPS. A **peer group** consists of people who are approximately the same age, participate in the same day-to-day activities, and share a similar overall social status in society. That status may be middle school student, adolescent, teenager, or retired. Sociologists are especially interested in the process known as **peer pressure**, those instances in which people feel directly or indirectly pressured to engage in behavior that meets the approval and expectations of peers and/or to fit in with what peers are doing. That pressure may be to smoke (or not smoke) cigarettes, to drink (or not drink) alcohol, and to engage (or not engage) in sexual activities.

➤ Among other things, peer groups are especially important to children and adolescents as they work to establish an identity and to test their effectiveness at interacting with others. Peer groups can be a source of both emotional support and personal anguish (Atwater 1988).



Lisa Southwick

It is through peer groups that children and others learn what it means to be male or female or to be classified into a racial/ethnic category. In the process children are influenced by overall societal conceptions of race and gender but also create and integrate their own meanings. Sociologist Amira Proweller (1998) found that white middle-class students tended to perceive black counterparts as being more exotic and sensual in their styles, whereas blacks tended to perceive white middle-class styles as more accepted in school settings. Both blacks and whites adopted each other's styles but criticized each other when acting "out of race," labeling those blacks who did so as "acting white" and those whites who did so as "acting black."

Peer groups are important agents of socialization regarding gender as well. Among other things, peer groups negotiate what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate physical expression toward same- and other-sex persons. Close same-sex friendships are often labeled as gay, and the fear of being labeled as such can restrict expression and interpretations of feelings toward same-sex friends. Peers discuss and comment on physical changes accompanying puberty that revolve around girls wearing bras, menstruation, boys growing facial hair, girls removing (or failing to remove) body and facial hair, sexual development, sexual activity, rumors regarding romantic connections, and breakups. Praise, insults, teasing, rumors, and storytelling inform them about the meaning of being male, female, or something in between (Proweller 1998).

Mass Media

Another source of socialization is **mass media**, forms of communication designed to reach large audiences without direct face-to-face contact between those creating/conveying and receiving messages. Examples of mass media include magazines, newspapers, commercials, books, sitcoms, reality shows, websites, radio broadcasts, video games, movies, and music CDs. The tools of mass media—such as television, radio, the Internet, and iPods—expose audiences to a variety of real and imaginary people, including sports figures, animated characters, politicians, actors, disc jockeys, and musicians.

We can argue that any exposure to a television show, a song, and other media represents an act of socialization if only because it introduces viewers to possible ways to act, appear, and think. Because media is so pervasive it is difficult to make any definitive statements about its effects, except perhaps to say that a very significant but unknown portion of what we know about the world is acquired through the media.

➤ The influence of television varies by society. One measure of its influence on people's lives is the number of televisions per 1,000 people. That number is 740 per 1,000 in the United States and 3.25 per 1,000 in Afghanistan (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2008). In the United States it is common for households to have several televisions and for families to watch TV on big screens.



SSGT Cherie A. Thurby, USAF



Lisa Southwick

TELEVISION. Arguably, the most influential medium of mass communication in the United States is television; 98 percent of U.S households have at least one television, and 82 percent have a cable connection or satellite dish antenna (U.S. Census Bureau 2006). Each day, the average American watches about 4 hours of TV. That translates into 28 hours per week, or 2 months of nonstop TV watching per year (A. C. Nielsen Co., 2006). While television is still the major way national and international news is delivered, for those under age 30, the Internet and television are equally important sources.

Children's exposure to television, including recorded shows and movies, is the subject of extensive research, as the childhood years are considered the most formative. Research shows that television plays a big role in the daily lives of children.

- Each day the average child watches 4 hours of television.
- Almost 70 percent of 8- to 18-year-olds have a TV in their bedroom.
- In two-thirds of households the TV is usually on during meals.
- In half of all households the TV is turned on most of the time.
- If children were not watching television, it is likely they would replace it with play, socializing with friends, some physical activity, reading, or homework.
- There is a clear connection between viewing television violence and “aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares, and fear of being harmed” (University of Michigan Health System 2008).

Content analysis of violent scenes from television programs reveals that more often than not violence goes unpunished, is accompanied by humor, and fails to show human suffering and loss as a consequence. This is true even of G-rated programming. Violence is presented as the method even the heroes use to address problems (University of Michigan Health System 2008).

SOCIAL MEDIA. **Social media** includes the Internet and other digital technologies that allow people to interact or share information, personal creations, stories, and experiences with friends, family, acquaintances, even strangers. The information shared may take the form of words, pictures, videos, and/or voice, and it may involve creating a profile on a social networking site, uploading photographs and videos for others to see, and creating webpages or blogs.

➤ Social media includes video teleconferencing, which allows this man stationed in Iraq to see and talk to his daughter.

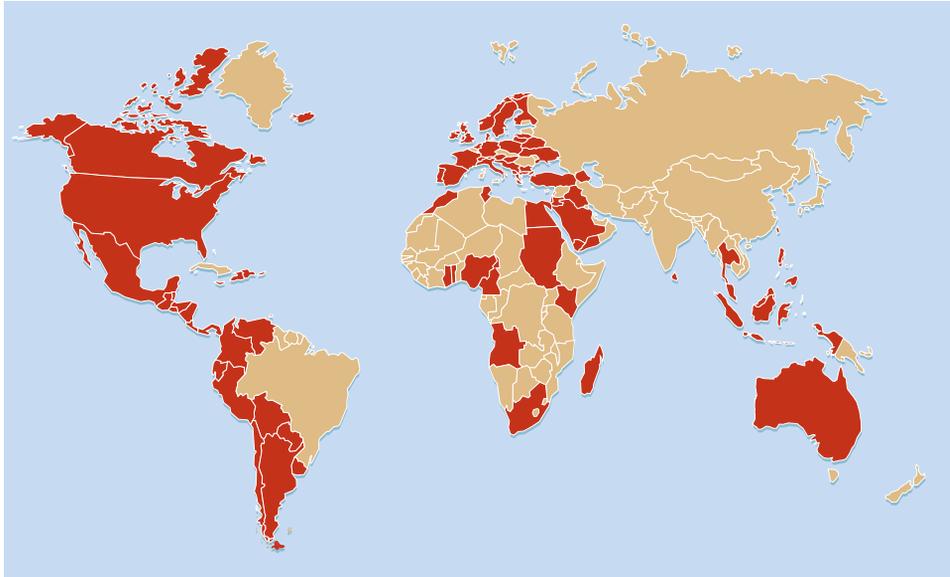
While use of social media is widespread across age groups, teenagers' use of this media is perhaps the most scrutinized. The latest research shows that 93 percent of teens ages 12 to 17 in the United States use the Internet in their homes, public library, schools, or at a friend's house. One indicator of the overall popularity of the various social media can be found in the list of the 10 most visited websites, not including search engines (Alexa 2009). Four are social networking and video/photo sharing websites: MySpace, YouTube, Facebook, and Photobucket (see Figure 3.5a).



4th Brigade Combat Team; 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs

Figure 3.5a Countries Where at Least One Social Networking Website Is among the 10 Most Visited Internet Sites, 2008

This map shows the countries (red) in which at least one social networking/video/photo sharing website is ranked as among the 10 most visited websites. Such sites have a socializing function, because they allow us to learn about someone's personal tastes and interests, and in the process gain insights as to what personal lives should be like, what someone should be doing, and ways to feel about things.



Source: Alexa (2009)

In addition to obtaining news, many people use the Internet to learn about themselves. The latest research shows that almost 50 percent of people have Googled or otherwise searched for information about themselves to learn their digital footprint or how they are known to others in the digital world. Only 3 percent of those who have searched the Internet in this way check regularly; 74 percent have checked once or twice. It is not known how many people use the Internet to investigate someone they know on a personal basis (PEW 2007).

Critical Thinking

Analyze your family's typical approach to stressful situations with reference to the study covered in this module. Be sure to illustrate with a specific example.

Key Terms

agents of socialization

peer group

primary group

mass media

peer pressure

social media

Applying Theory: The Three Perspectives

Objective

You will learn about how the theoretical perspectives help us think about Internet platforms for presenting the self to others.



Lisa Southwick

If you saw this photograph on Facebook or some other social networking site, what impression would it make on you?

If you are one of the millions of people who are members of a networking website such as Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter, you have made decisions about how to present yourself online. Did you post a photograph? Did you share your age, sexual orientation, sex, race, income, or occupation? Who did you invite into your circle of friends or connections? What kinds of things do you reveal about your life? Do you keep your space private or did you open it up to the Internet public?

Sociologists are interested in these questions because they offer a window into how people present themselves to others. The sociological theories—functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist—help us to think about the Internet as a platform for presenting the self.

Functionalist Perspective

Functionalists focus on how parts of society function in expected and unexpected ways to maintain existing social order. They also pay attention to how parts disrupt the existing order in expected and unexpected ways. Of course the use of social networking sites as a platform for presenting the self to others is the part of society we are analyzing.

Some expected, or *manifest*, functions of social networking sites are that they facilitate connections with family, friends, and other parties; allow members to

share photos and videos; support discussions with like-minded people about hobbies and other interests; and help users to plan face-to-face meetings with friends. They also allow users to establish and maintain contacts with a far greater number of people than is typically possible using non-digital means.

► It is impossible to manage connections with everyone we have come to know or hope to know via phone calls and face-to-face meetings. There is simply not enough time. Social networking sites allow individuals to manage a potentially infinite number of contacts.



Lisa Southwick

An unexpected, or *latent*, function of social networking sites is that many offer users a tool that allows them to find people with whom they have lost contact, including lost relatives. It is also a tool that police departments draw upon to find incriminating evidence (Hodge 2006).

One *manifest dysfunction* of such websites is that there is no way to tell whether people are presenting real or fabricated self-profiles. The news feature seemingly endless numbers of stories about people who post fabricated profiles, such as one involving three teens who posted embarrassing material and falsely attributed it to a disliked teacher. As one critic argues, “There is a general feeling that social networking is the wild west of identity management” (Martin 2008).



Missy Gish

◀ Many people create a Facebook page for the purpose of meeting like-minded friends or staying in touch, not thinking that potential employers may view postings for clues about someone’s character apart from the resume and interview. How might a potential employer view the man pictured?

A unexpected, or *latent*, dysfunction of social networking sites is that once something is posted for others to access, there is no way to control how it will be used.

Conflict Perspective

Conflict theorists seek to identify advantaged and disadvantaged groups, document unequal access to scarce and valued resources, and describe the ways in which advantaged groups promote and protect their interests. With regard to social networking websites, conflict theorists ask, “Who ultimately controls these websites? And who benefits from this arrangement and at whose expense?” Conflict theorists maintain that the advantaged groups include those who own the social networking websites, advertisers, potential employers, and other parties interested in selling products. No matter how much users think they benefit from social networking, in the final analysis they are the disadvantaged groups, especially if they mistakenly believe that they control the information they have posted. On close analysis we see that the control lies with the website. Facebook (2008), for example, makes it clear that “all content on the Site and available

through the Service, including designs, text, graphics, pictures, video, information, applications, software, music, sound and other files . . . , are the proprietary property of the Company.” MySpace (2008) warns that it may use “cookies and similar tools to customize the content and advertising gleaned from the Profile Information you have provided.”

Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Symbolic interactionists study social interaction and focus on self-awareness, symbols, and negotiated order. Symbolic interactionists ask, “How do the involved parties experience, interpret, influence, and respond to what they and others are saying and doing?” Symbolic interactionists are interested in how social networking platforms serve as a mirror, giving users the chance to be noticed by others and to receive feedback (often immediate). This feedback is particularly important to teenagers.



Lisa Southwick

◀ Many teens (and adults, for that matter) access a social networking site at least once a day. Teens who have a computer or smart phone may keep the site open while doing homework or even chat by instant messaging. Teens may check during class, lunch break, study hall, and even disrupt their sleep so as not to miss a message (Boyd and Jenkins 2006).

Symbolic interactionists studying Facebook and other social networking sites familiarize themselves with vocabulary and symbols people use to convey intent and mood—words such as *block* (take action to prevent a user from making contact or viewing a profile) and *add* (to gain a new friend). Finally, symbolic interactionists are interested in how order is negotiated with regard to presenting the self and soliciting responses to that presentation.

Table 3.6a: Summary of Three Theoretical Perspectives on Social Networking Theory

	Functionalist	Theory Conflict	Symbolic Interaction
Question	What are the anticipated and unanticipated functions and dysfunctions of digital social networking?	Who controls social networking platforms? Who benefits from that arrangement?	How do people experience, interpret, influence, and respond to social networking?
Answer	<p>Manifest function: a tool for connecting with a potentially infinite number of people</p> <p>Manifest dysfunction: lacks checks on accuracy of postings</p> <p>Latent function: a tool for finding lost relatives; a crime-investigation tool</p> <p>Latent dysfunction: information posted may be used for purposes the user did not anticipate</p>	<p>Advantaged groups: owners of social networking websites, employers, and others interested in selling products</p> <p>Disadvantaged groups: social networkers who do not really control postings</p> <p>Scarce and valued resource: information about and access to social networkers</p>	<p>Self-awareness: social networking platforms offer feedback</p> <p>Shared symbols: vocabulary of social networking terms; symbols used to convey mood</p> <p>Negotiated order: terms of agreement and how they are followed in practice</p>

Critical Thinking

Which of the three theoretical perspectives do you think best captures social networking? Explain.

Summary: Putting It All Together

Socialization is the process by which people learn to live in society. Socialization takes hold through internalization. Any discussion of socialization must take into account nature and nurture, both of which are essential to human and social development. Social interaction is critical to the socialization experience. Cases of children raised in extreme isolation show that people need meaningful social contact with others to realize their human potentials.

Sociologists maintain that a sense of self emerges out of interaction experiences. Children acquire a sense of self when they (1) take the role of the other, and (2) name, classify, and categorize the self relative to other social categories. Children learn to take the role of others through three stages: preparatory, play, and game.

The concept of the looking-glass self sheds light on the role of the imagination in role-taking. The social experiences of the looking-glass self and the three stages of role-taking prepare the child to establish his or her place in a wider system of rules and expectations. Psychologist Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development explains how children gain the conceptual abilities to role-take.

Socialization is a lifelong process by which people learn new expectations that come with making the many transitions in life. The life stage model emphasizes socialization challenges that accompany the major transitions in life, and the life event model focuses on any social transition. The life event model considers how factors such as age and time in history affect the experience and significance of a social transition. All social transitions involve resocialization so that people abandon behaviors and ways of thinking unsuited to changing circumstances, replacing them with new, more appropriate ways. Resocialization can be voluntary or imposed. Total institutions specialize in resocialization. They are a setting in which people are isolated from the rest of society to undergo systematic resocialization. We are socialized by agents of socialization. Three important agents are primary groups, peer groups, and mass media.

[Can You Top This Photo?]



Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo with a caption that illustrates some characteristics of the preparatory stage.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Chad A. Bascom

4

CHAPTER

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

- 4.1 Defining Social Structure
 - 4.2 Division of Labor and Social Networks
 - 4.3 Formal Organizations
 - 4.4 The Effects of Size
 - 4.5 Rationalization and McDonaldization
 - 4.6 Workplaces
 - 4.7 Applying Theory: Dramaturgy and Emotional Labor
- Summary** Putting It All Together

Sociologists study the largely invisible social structures that broadly coordinate human activities in predictable ways. The social structures they study can involve as few as two people or billions. A social structure, for example, coordinates the relationships between and among medical staff and patients at this medical center. As we will learn, social structures encompass at least four interrelated components: statuses, roles, groups, and institutions. Social structures shape people's sense of themselves, their relationships with others, and the opportunities and barriers they encounter in life.

Defining Social Structure

Objective

You will learn about how the largely invisible system sociologists call social structure coordinates human activity.



Think of the last time you walked into a doctor's office. What did you expect would happen? Did you expect to wait? To pay the co-pay before seeing the doctor? To get a prescription?

When you entered the doctor's office, you stepped into what sociologists call a **social structure**, a largely invisible system that coordinates human activities in broadly predictable ways. Social structures shape

- relationships with and opportunities to connect to others;
- the identities of those involved;
- barriers to accessing resources and people; and
- the relative ease or difficulty with which those barriers can be broken.

Sociologists study social structures that involve as few as two people (doctor-patient, shopper-store clerk, parent-child), that are global in scale (the food industry, the pharmaceutical industry), and that are every size in between (a local bar, a college dorm, an extended family, a hospital).



Boni Li



U.S. Navy photo by Journalist 2nd Class Jim Williams

▲ Sociologists may study the social structure of a particular store such as this Wal-Mart Supercenter in China, or they may simply study the social structure guiding interactions between a store clerk and shopper. Both of these social structures are embedded in other social structures. For example, the shopper-cashier relationship is embedded within a Wal-Mart store. Each Wal-Mart store is part of the Wal-Mart Corporation (a global enterprise with 8,000 stores in 15 countries). In addition, the cashier-shopper interaction in the Wal-Mart store takes place in a particular community that may embrace or resent Wal-Mart.

Social structures encompass at least four interrelated components: statuses, roles, groups, and institutions.

Status and Roles

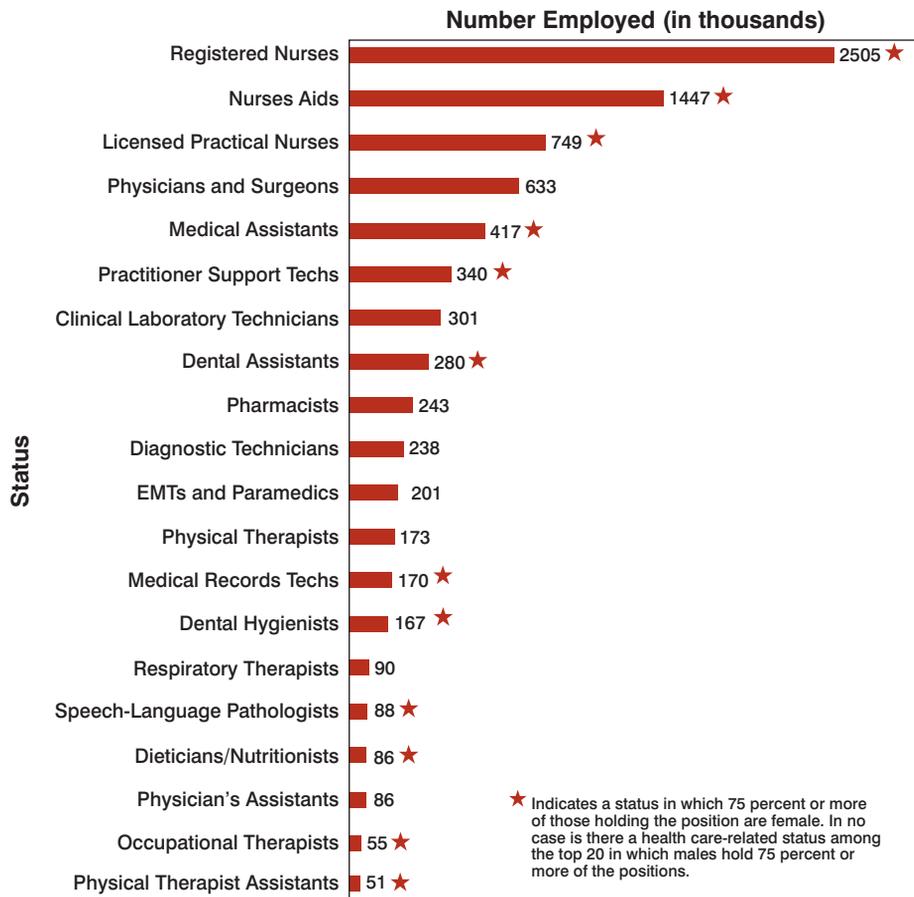
Sociologists use the term *social status* in a very broad way. **Social status** is a human-created and defined position in society. Examples are endless but include female, teenager, doctor, patient, retired, sister, homosexual, heterosexual, employer, employee, and unemployed. A social status has meaning only in relation to other social statuses. For instance, the status of a physician takes on quite different meanings depending on whether the physician is interacting with another physician, a patient, or a nurse. Thus, a physician's behavior varies depending on the social status of the person with whom he or she is interacting.

Note that some statuses, such as sister, are ascribed. **Ascribed statuses** are the result of chance in that people exert no effort to obtain them. Birth order, race, sex, and age qualify as ascribed statuses. Other statuses, such as nurse's aide and college student, are **achieved statuses**; that is, they are acquired through some combination of personal choice, effort, and ability. Ascribed and achieved statuses are not clear-cut. One can always think of cases in which people take extreme measures to achieve a status typically thought of as ascribed; they undergo sex transformation surgery, lighten their skin to appear to be another race, or hire a plastic surgeon to look younger. In addition, ascribed statuses can

play a role in determining achieved statuses, as when women choose to enter a female-dominated career such as elementary-school teacher, or when men choose to enter a male-dominated career such as car repair (see Chart 4.1a).

Chart 4.1a Top Twenty Social Statuses in U.S. Health Care Industry

Approximately 10.5 million people work in the health care industry, occupying a variety of statuses. The chart shows that 2.5 million people occupy the status of registered nurse and 1.4 million people occupy the status of nurse's aide. There are approximately 633,000 physicians and surgeons. While you might think each status listed in this chart is an achieved status, consider that an ascribed status—sex—influences occupational “choices” and that 75 percent of *all* health care-related occupations are filled by women. Within specific occupational statuses such as registered nurses, that percentage is even higher—91 percent of registered nurses are females.

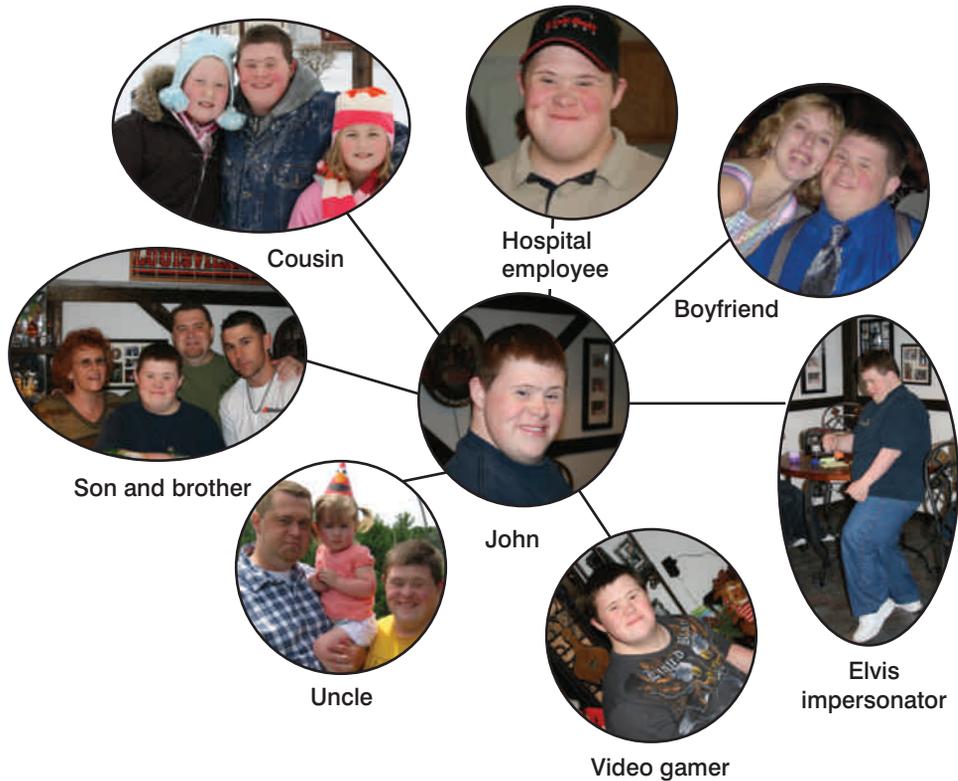


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009)

People usually occupy more than one social status. Sociologists use the term **status set** to capture all the statuses any one person assumes (see Figure 4.1a). Sometimes one status takes on such great importance that it overshadows all other statuses a person occupies. That is, it shapes every aspect of life and dominates social interactions. Such a status is known as a **master status**. Unemployed, retired, ex-convict, and HIV-infected can qualify as master statuses. The status of physician can be a master status as well, if everyone, no matter the setting (party, church, fitness center), asks health-related questions or seeks health-related advice from the person occupying that status.

Figure 4.1a Diagram of a Hypothetical Status Set

John was born with Down syndrome, and that status can be considered a master status because it shapes every aspect of his life, dominates his social interactions, and overshadows other statuses that he occupies such as brother, video gamer, uncle, and hospital employee.



Sociologists use the term **role** to describe the behavior expected of a status in relation to another status—for example, the role of brother in relationship to sister; the role of physician in relationship to patient. Any given social status is associated with an array of roles, called a **role-set**, which are the various role relationships with which someone occupying a status is involved (Merton 1957). The social status of son is associated with a role-set that can include a relationship with a mother and/or father. The social status of school principal is associated with a role-set that includes relationships with students, parents, teachers, and other school staff.

The distinction between role and status is this: *people occupy statuses and enact or perform roles*. Associated with each social status are **role expectations**, or norms about how a role should be enacted relative to other statuses. The role of physician in relation to a patient specifies that a physician has an obligation to establish a diagnosis, to not overtreat, to respect patient privacy, to work to prevent disease, and to avoid sexual relations with patients (Hippocratic Oath 1943). Relative to a physician, patients have an obligation to answer questions honestly and to cooperate with a treatment plan. Quite often **role performances**, the actual behavior of the person occupying a role, do not meet expectations—as when some physicians knowingly perform unnecessary surgery or when some patients fail to comply with treatment plans. The concept of role performance reminds us that people carry out their roles in unique ways. Still, there is predictability in our interactions with others. Moreover, if people deviate too far from the expected range of behaviors, negative sanctions (penalties)—ranging in severity from a frown to imprisonment and even death—may be applied (Merton 1957).

If we consider that people hold multiple statuses and that each status is enacted through its corresponding role-set, we can identify at least two potential sources of stress and strain: role conflict and role strain.

ROLE CONFLICT. **Role conflict** is a predicament in which the roles associated with two or more distinct statuses that a person holds conflict in some way. For example, people who occupy the statuses of college student and full-time employee often experience role conflict when professors expect students to attend class and keep up with coursework and employers expect employees to be available to work hours that leave little time for school work. The student-employee must find ways to address this conflict such as working fewer hours, quitting the job, skipping class, or studying less.

ROLE STRAIN. **Role strain** is a predicament in which there are contradictory or conflicting role expectations associated with a single status. For example, doctors have an obligation to do no harm to their patients. At the same time doctors have an obligation to pay office staff. Some physicians may feel pressured to recommend expensive and unnecessary medical treatments to generate sufficient revenue to stay in business.

Role expectations and performances are embedded within the larger cultural context. For example, unlike in the United States where patients are expected to schedule an appointment, in Japan patients are expected to just walk in (Gharib 2009). Doctors in the United States, relative to those in other wealthy countries, order more tests such as X-rays, CAT scans, and MRIs to diagnose medical conditions; prescribe more drugs; and recommend surgery. More than likely, this is because the U.S. system rewards doctors monetarily for number of services provided rather than for health outcomes (see Table 4.1a and Table 4.1b).

Table 4.1a: The Cultural Context of the Physician-Patient Relationship: Health Care Spending and Resources Devoted to Health Care in the World's Richest Countries, 2006

In which country is health care spending, as a percentage of GDP, highest? In which country is the per capita spending on health care and on pharmaceuticals the highest? Which country most highly subsidizes the cost of health care with taxpayer dollars?

Countries	Health Care Spending as a Percentage of GDP*	(\$ Per Capita Spending on Health Care	(\$ Per Capita Spending on Pharmaceuticals	Percentage of All Health Care Costs Subsidized by Tax Dollars
United States	15.3	6,714	843	45.8
France	11.0	3,449	564	79.7
Germany	10.6	3,371	500	76.9
Austria	10.1	3,606	449	76.2
Canada	10.0	3,678	639	70.4
Denmark	9.5	3,362	286	84.1
Iceland	9.1	3,340	439	82.0
Italy	9.0	2,614	524	77.2
Norway	8.7	4,520	384	83.6
Spain	8.4	2,458	533	71.2
United Kingdom	8.4	2,760		87.3
Finland	8.2	2,668	389	76.0
Japan	8.1	2,578	506	81.3

Source: OECD (2009)

*GDP is the gross domestic product, the value of all goods produced and services provided each year in a country.

Table 4.1b: Health Care Outcomes—Life Expectancy and Infant Mortality—in 10 of the World’s Wealthiest Countries

The data in this table suggest that some health care systems deliver better outcomes than others. Given the high amount of public and private spending, one might expect the United States to have the best health outcomes—specifically the highest life expectancy and the lowest infant mortality. Statistics show, however, that the United States is not a leader in either category. Which country on this list has the best and worst outcomes related to life expectancy and infant mortality?

Countries	Life Expectancy at Birth	Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)
United States	77.8	6.9
Austria	79.9	3.6
Norway	80.6	3.2
Sweden	80.8	2.8
France	80.9	3.8
Australia	81.1	4.7
Spain	81.1	3.8
Iceland	81.2	1.4
Switzerland	81.7	4.4
Japan	82.4	2.6

Source: OECD (2009)

Groups

Like statuses and roles, groups are an important component of social structure. A **group** consists of two or more people interacting in largely predictable ways who share expectations about their purpose for being. Group members hold statuses and enact roles that relate to the group’s purpose. Groups can be classified as primary or secondary. **Primary groups** are characterized by face-to-face contact and by strong emotional ties among members who feel an allegiance to one another. Examples of primary groups include the family, military units, cliques, and peer groups.



▲ These men who frequent the Cowboy Bar in Wyoming constitute a primary group. The men share similar occupations, such as coal miners and roughnecks (a name for those who work in oil and natural gas fields), but they know each other in ways that go beyond their occupational statuses. A sociologist studying this bar’s underlying social structure would have to identify the extent to which its patrons are part of primary groups that meet at the bar.

Secondary groups consist of two or more people who interact for a specific purpose. Thus, by definition, secondary group relationships are confined to a particular setting and specific tasks. Members relate to each other in terms of specific roles. People join secondary groups as a means to achieve some agreed-upon end, whether it be to cheer for a sports team, to achieve a status (college graduate), or to accomplish a specific task, such as fund-raising. Secondary groups can range from small to extremely large in size. They include a work unit, college classroom, parent-teacher associations, and churches. Larger secondary groups include fans gathering in a stadium, colleges, Wal-Mart employees, and large city police departments.

Institutions

A fourth component of social structure is **institutions**, relatively stable and predictable social arrangements created and sustained by people that have emerged over time with the purpose of coordinating human activities to meet some need, such as food, shelter, or clothing. Institutions consist of statuses, roles, and groups. Examples of institutions include education, medicine, and sports (Martin 2004). We will use examples from medicine as practiced in the United States to illustrate characteristics of institutions.

1. *Institutions have a history.* Institutions have standardized ways of doing things that have come to be viewed as custom and tradition. That is, most people accept these ways without question. In the United States, Americans have come to expect that the physician will write a prescription whether they actually need one or not. Many patients suggest, even demand, a specific prescription.
2. *Institutions continuously change.* Over time ways of doing things become outdated and are replaced by new ways. Change can be planned and orderly, forced, and/or chaotic. Change can come from within or from outside the institution. Sometimes a change is hardly noticed; at other times it revolutionizes ways of doing things.



Library of Congress

Staff Sgt. Darnell T. Camnady

▲ Before the advent of tiny digital cameras and microchips, surgeons used their fingers to operate and control instruments (left). Today, surgeons may use these technologies to see deep inside the patient's body and organs and direct instruments to do what fingers once did (right). Such technology means that surgeons now have the ability to operate on a patient from practically any location in the world. This change has the potential to revolutionize the delivery of health care and the patient-physician relationship.

3. *Institutions allocate scarce and valued resources in unequal ways.* The U.S. medical system does not produce enough general practice physicians to meet the health care needs of its population, especially the least wealthy segments. In the United States just 2 percent of medical students say they want to be primary care physicians. The most common reasons given for rejecting this vocation is inadequate pay relative to debt incurred to pay for medical school and the costs of liability insurance (*Online Newshour* 2009).
4. *Institutions allocate privileged and disadvantaged status.* These privileges and disadvantages are reflected in individuals' salaries, benefits, degree of autonomy, and amount of prestige.



2nd Lt. David Herndon



© Ronnie Kaufman/Larry Hirshowitz/Blend Images/Corbis

▲ The U.S. Department of Labor lists anesthesiologists as the health care status with the highest annual average salary (\$200,000). Home health aides (right) receive the lowest average salary (\$20,800). Of course, there are many good reasons for paying some categories of workers more than others. On the other hand, should the lowest paid employees (many of whom have families) work for poverty-level wages?

5. *Institutions promote ideologies that legitimate their existence.* These legitimating ideologies are largely created and advanced by those occupying the most advantaged statuses or by those who benefit from institutionalized ways of doing things. The masses often accept these ideologies and resist change. For example, many Americans who would dismiss other health care systems that provide universal health care coverage by evoking “rationed care,” “socialized medicine,” and “government interference in people’s lives” without seeing that such terms have applied to many aspects of the U.S. system even before the passage of health care reform legislation in 2010. The idea that the United States is somehow a model of free market policies permitting choice and unlimited access is evoked to protect the existing arrangements from change.

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption that relates fans gathered to watch a football game to a component of social structure.

Write a caption here



Hints: In writing this caption

- review each of the four components of social structure (statuses, roles, primary/secondary groups, and institutions), and
- think about which component is most evident in the image.

Critical Thinking

Use the concepts in this module to describe a social structure that coordinates your activity in predictable ways.

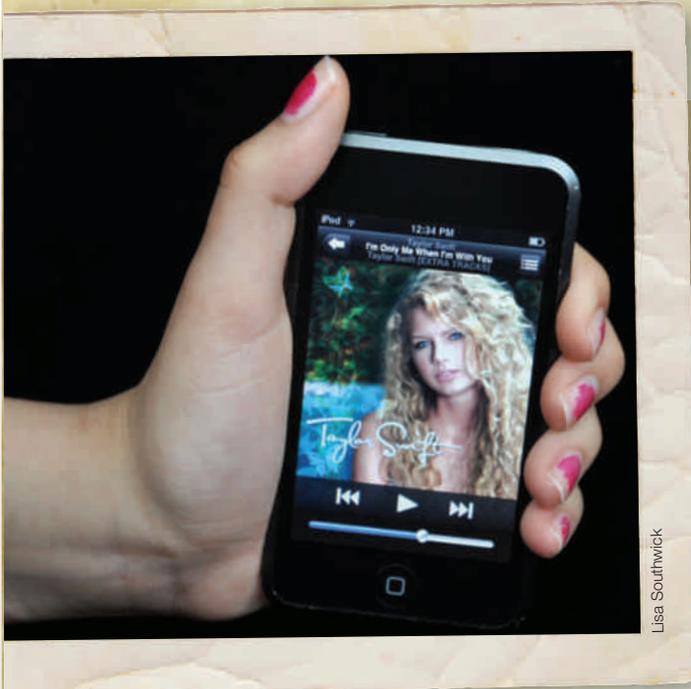
Key Terms

achieved statuses	role	secondary groups
ascribed statuses	role conflict	social status
group	role expectations	social structure
institutions	role performances	status set
master status	role-set	
primary groups	role strain	

Division of Labor and Social Networks

Objective

You will learn how division of labor and social networks connect people to one another and to society.



Lisa Southwick

Did you know that the Apple iPod was designed in the United States and that its creation involved programmers in India and labor from China and the Democratic Republic of the Congo?

The Global Assembly Line

Although the Apple iPod was designed in the United States, the millions of lines of code—etched into the microchip that allows the device to store and manage thousands of videos, songs, and photos—were created by programmers working around the clock in the United States and India. The iPod is assembled in China. Coltan, the metallic ore that allows the iPod's battery to store energy and regulate voltage, is mined by workers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is just a fraction of the labor that goes into producing the iPod. Others navigate the freighters carrying iPods from China's ports to U.S. ports, where dock workers unload them. Then truck drivers transport those iPods to thousands of stores located across the United States. And we cannot forget the labor that creates the songs, videos, photographs, and podcasts that appear at the touch of a finger (Leonard 2005).

In *The Division of Labor in Society* (1933), sociologist Émile Durkheim provides a general framework for understanding the forces driving global-scale interactions among workers whose combined efforts bring us products like the iPod. As Durkheim describes it, the **division of labor** refers to work that is broken down into specialized tasks, each performed by a different set of workers trained to do that task. The labor and resources needed to manufacture products often come from many locations around the world.

A complex division of labor increases differences among people, in turn leading to diversity in people's outlook and experiences. People relate to one another in terms of their specialized roles in the division of labor. When we interact in this manner, we ignore personal differences and treat individuals who perform the same tasks as interchangeable. Thus, most day-to-day interactions are largely transitory, limited, impersonal, and instrumental (that is, we interact with people for a specific reason, not to get to know them). We do not need to know these people personally to interact with them. Likewise, we do not need to know the people behind the scenes who contributed to making the products we purchase. In spite of this anonymity, the largely invisible ties that bind people to one another and to their society are very strong because in industrial societies few individuals possess the knowledge, skills, and materials to be self-sufficient. Consequently, people need one another to survive (see Figure 4.2a).

Figure 4.2a Countries in Which 30 Percent or More of All Exports Involve Manufactured Clothing

In societies characterized by organic solidarity people do not personally know the workers who produce the products they consume, such as clothes. This map highlights countries for which 30 percent or more of exports involve clothing. If you noticed that the job of sewing the world's clothes takes place primarily in Asian countries, then you have identified one way in which the division of labor ties American consumers to Asian factory workers.



Source: European Commission (2006)



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© David De La Paz/epa/Corbis

▲ Many Americans do not make a conscious connection between the clothes they wear and those who labor to make them. The chances are quite high that those who sew them are laboring in Asian factories.

Disruptions to the Division of Labor

Durkheim hypothesized that societies become more vulnerable as the division of labor becomes more complex and more specialized. He was particularly concerned with the kinds of events that break down people's ability to connect to each other and their society through their labor. As one example, consider the life of someone who has been laid off from work. After losing a job, daily interactions shift from colleagues at work to contacts with people at the unemployment office. Moreover, the newly unemployed person loses the structure that comes with a job. Now instead of working, the person may watch TV or search the Internet for job openings. If the unemployed have a partner or children, that relationship may be strained if the partner or children must work more hours or give up activities. This example illustrates how labor or work is central in people's lives and that "absence of decent and productive work is the primary cause of poverty and social instability" (International Labour Union 2009).



▲ As early as 1907, Detroit, Michigan—home to GM, Ford, and Chrysler—was considered the automotive capital of the world. Beginning with an oil embargo in 1979 and continuing through today with the government-funded bailout of the auto industry, Detroit has been affected by a series of ongoing industrial and commercial crises. As a result, on some streets of Detroit and surrounding suburbs, more houses and businesses are abandoned than are occupied.

Durkheim identified five key events that disrupt the ability of the division of labor to provide ties that bind people to each other and their communities:

1. *industrial and commercial crises*, triggered by technological revolutions, epidemics, and war that result in plant closings and massive layoffs.
2. *worker strikes* that occur when a group of workers agree to stop work as a way of enforcing a demand or expressing a grievance related to pay, benefits, or working conditions. In this situation, the employer must find replacement workers or shut down operations. Workers sacrifice pay and benefits with the hope of forcing change.
3. *job specialization* creating a situation in which workers perform tasks isolated from fellow workers performing other tasks in the production process. Thus workers lack a complete understanding of the overall enterprise and, by extension, lack an understanding of the unintended consequences of the products they have helped create.
4. *forced division of labor* such that occupations are filled according to nationality, age, race, or sex—rather than ability. There are many examples of what Durkheim calls the forced division of labor, as when some occupations are formally or informally reserved for a particular group—childcare workers

are almost always female; airplane pilots are almost always male—or when an ability to do the job is not the primary criterion in hiring.

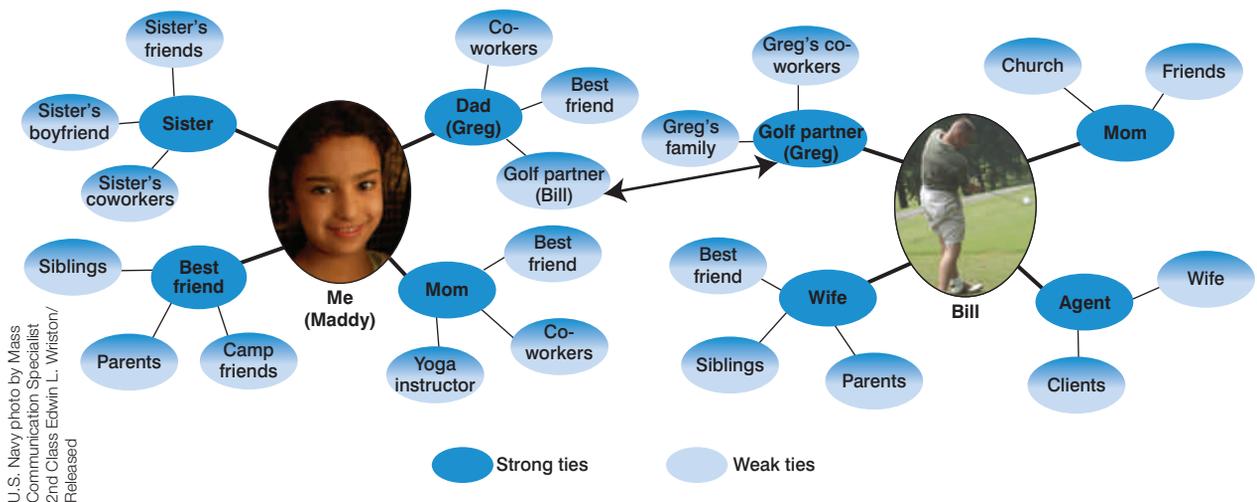
5. *inefficient development or use of workers' talents and abilities* so that work for some is nonexistent, irregular, intermittent, or subject to high turnover. A strong and efficient division of labor is one that develops and uses all its available talent. The division of labor does not work efficiently when those who want to work full time can find no work, can find only part-time work, or become discouraged and stop looking.

Social Networks

Imagine you are looking for a job. Do you know someone who might help you? If you know of someone who could help you find a job, you are using your social network to gain employment. If there is no one in your social network to connect you to employment opportunities, you are at a disadvantage in the job market.

A **social network** is a web of social relationships linking people to one another. Social networks can be closely knit or loosely knit. A person has a **closely knit network** when all or most of the people in it know each other across a wide range of settings. For example, if someone's network is largely limited to relatives who also work together, attend the same church, consider each other friends, and socialize together in the evenings and on weekends, that network is considered closely knit. The network is **loosely knit** when all or most of the people in it do not know one another very well and, if some do know others, it is in a limited way (Milroy and Milroy 1992).

Sociologists consider people we most interact with, feel emotion for, confide in, and reciprocate favors to be **strong ties**. By contrast acquaintances, or those people we know something about but to whom we are not especially close, are considered **weak ties**. A person's social network consists of strong and weak ties. Of course the people we consider to be strong and weak ties within our network have their own strong and weak ties (most of whom may not be directly acquainted with you).



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Edwin L. Wriston/Released

Department of Defense

▲ Think about Maddy's social network as depicted in this image. Who might be considered strong ties and who would be considered weak ties? Obviously, "best friend Lily" is a close tie and it is likely that "dad's golf partner, Bill" constitutes one of Maddy's weak ties. Through her dad, however, Maddy is also connected to Bill's network. Maddy is connected to the networks of all who are part of her network. Here only Bill's network is shown.

Because the people we consider strong ties tend to be part of the same social circles (e.g., in the same fraternity, attend the same college, work for the same company), weak ties are more likely to expand our knowledge of opportunities, news, and other areas of life.

Electronic-Supported Social Networks

Sociologists, of course, are interested in how digital technologies affect the size and character of social networks and people's ability to connect to others through them. Even before digital technologies such as the Internet, e-mail, and cell phones, sociologists realized that it is not easy to map a person's social networks. Digital technologies are not the first innovations to expand the size and reach of social networks. The telephone, airplane, train, and car expanded social networks to the point that it was impossible to manage and sustain connections with everyone we have come to know or hope to know. In what ways do digital technologies further enhance the ability of people to connect with others?

They

- allow people in different time zones and on different schedules to communicate at their convenience,
- increase the speed of communication,
- expand the number of people with whom one communicates to theoretically include anyone with access to the Internet, and
- offer people in spatially distant relationships a convenient and inexpensive tool by which to remain in touch. Strong ties that may have faded without these technologies are more likely to remain so, and a person's weak ties are maintained and perhaps strengthened.

► With the advent of digital technologies, people can communicate many times a day, send and receive images, and even see each other while talking. This father, who is separated geographically from his baby daughter, stays in daily, and visual, communication with her through video conferencing.

Digital technologies do not just expand the size and reach of social networks but also enhance local connections. Preliminary research suggests that many e-mails are to those who live nearby—to significant others, work colleagues, and friends—all of whom use the technology to check in, send reminders, or arrange a face-to-face meeting (Wellman and Hampton 1999).



The Importance of Weak Ties

Sociologist Mark Granovetter (1973), who wrote one of the most cited articles in sociology, "The Strength of Weak Ties," studied 100 professional, technical, and managerial workers living in a Boston suburb who had recently changed jobs. Fifty-four of these workers found their jobs through a contact. To measure the strength of workers' ties to their contacts, Granovetter asked how often they saw that contact. He found that 27.8 percent saw their contact rarely (once a year or less), 56 percent saw their contact occasionally (more than once a year but less than twice a week),

and 16.7 percent saw their contact often (more than twice a week). This led him to conclude that “the skew is clearly in the weak end of the continuum” (p. 1371).



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▲ According to Granovetter’s measure of weak and strong ties, if you see a person you work out with at least twice a week, that relationship constitutes a strong tie. If you see someone you consider your best friend only once a year, that is a weak tie. Does his measure of weak and strong ties make sense in terms of the kinds of contact that can help someone find employment?

In interviews with newly employed workers, Granovetter learned that the contacts who helped them land the job were most often an old friend, a former coworker, or former employer. In addition, that contact was likely to be someone with whom that newly employed person had maintained sporadic contact over the years. These findings led Granovetter to conclude that it is “remarkable that people receive such crucial information from individuals whose very existence they have [mostly] forgotten” (p. 1372). In his interviews, Granovetter asked respondents how their contacts knew about the job opening. He found that

- 45.0 percent said that their contacts knew the prospective employer,
- 39.1 percent said their contact was a prospective employer, and
- 12.2 percent said that their contacts knew someone who knew the potential employer.

Granovetter was surprised to find that the information paths to employment opportunities involved only one to three contacts. He hypothesized that if the paths had involved more links, larger numbers of people “might have found out about any given job, and no particular tie would have been crucial” (p. 1372). Granovetter’s findings do not discount the importance of strong ties and individual initiative in finding a job. But his research does speak to the importance of cultivating weak ties within social networks when searching for employment.

Critical Thinking

Think about jobs you have held over your lifetime. How did you learn about the job opening? If you have never worked, then think about how a friend or family member learned about the job he or she holds.

Key Terms

closely knit network

loosely knit network

strong ties

division of labor

social networks

weak ties

Formal Organizations

4.3

Objective

You will learn that formal organizations coordinate human activity with the aim of achieving some valued goal.



AP Photo/Peoria Journal Star, Adam Gerik

Have you ever participated in Race for the Cure, a breast cancer awareness and fundraising event, or some other activity that drew a large number of participants?

If yes, you have experienced the coordinating power of **formal organizations**, coordinating mechanisms that bring together people, resources, and technology and then direct human activity toward achieving a specific outcome. That outcome may be to maintain order in a community (as does a police department), to challenge an established order (as do People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), to provide a credentialing service (a university), or to fundraise (Race for the Cure). Formal organizations are a taken-for-granted part of our lives. Simply consider that the human biography can be chronicled by encounters with formal organizations: if you were born in a hospital, attended a school, acquired a driver's license from a state agency, secured a loan from a financial institution, worked for a corporation, received care at a hospital, or purchased a product at a store, you have been involved with a formal organization (Aldrich and Marsden 1988).

Formal organizations can be voluntary, coercive, or utilitarian, depending on the reason that people participate (Etzioni 1975). **Voluntary organizations** draw in people who give time, talent, or money to address a human and community need or to achieve some other not-for-profit goal. Voluntary organizations include food banks, political parties, religious organizations, fraternities, and sororities.

► There are millions of voluntary organizations worldwide to which people give time, talent, and money. One example is a college student organization that, as part of its outreach efforts, adopts a highway.

Coercive organizations draw in people who have no choice but to participate. Organizations dedicated to compulsory socialization, such as elementary schools where students are required to attend by law, and the military (when there is a draft), qualify as coercive organizations.

Other examples of coercive organizations include any treatment facilities to which judges or some other authority order people to report because they are (or are seen as) not moving along normal pathways or not adequately performing their social roles (Spreitzer 1971). Prisons are coercive organizations because they are places in which people are physically confined and forced to surrender a range of personal freedoms.

Utilitarian organizations draw in those seeking to offer their labor, seeking to change status, looking to acquire a skill, seeking a treatment, requesting a service, or needing a product in exchange for money. Anyone who is employed, in college, part of a sports camp, or shopping in a department store is part of a utilitarian organization.

From a sociological perspective, formal organizations, whatever their type, can be studied apart from their specific employees, members, and clients. Indeed, even as their members, employees, or clients die, quit, retire, or get fired, formal organizations have a life that extends beyond the people who constitute them unless they become obsolete, lose funding, or go out of business. One concept that sociologists use to think about how organizations coordinate resources and human activity is bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy

Sociologist Max Weber (1925) defined a **bureaucracy**, in theory, as a completely rational organization—one that uses the most efficient means to achieve a valued goal, whether that goal is feeding people (McDonald's), recruiting soldiers (military), counting people (Bureau of the Census), collecting taxes (IRS), drilling for oil (ExxonMobil), or providing a service (hospitals).

There are at least six means by which a bureaucracy efficiently coordinates human activity to meet organizational goals.

1. *A clear-cut division of labor exists.* Each office or position is assigned a specific task geared toward accomplishing the organizational goals. ExxonMobil, for example, employs 80,786 people worldwide in occupations including office managers, technicians, laborers, chemists, engineers, and so on. All employees work toward exploring, producing, refining, supplying, and marketing the company's energy products (ExxonMobil 2008).
2. *Authority is hierarchical.* Most bureaucracies publish organizational charts depicting how authority and responsibility are distributed among the





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positions that make up the organization. Within bureaucracies there may be vice presidents, regional managers, managers, assistant managers, and entry-level employees, all of whom report to someone in the chain of command.

◀ This office building evokes images of a bureaucracy. We can imagine employees, each with a job description, assigned to an office, cubicle, or work space, working to achieve organizational goals. The building suggests a hierarchy with offices on the top floors occupied by people holding the most power and authority in the organization.

3. *Written rules specify the exact nature of relationships among personnel and describe the way an organization should operate.* Administrative decisions, rules, procedures, and job descriptions are recorded in operations and training manuals, handbooks, or bylaws.
4. *Positions are filled according to objective criteria.* Criteria include academic degrees, seniority, merit points, or test results but not emotional considerations, such as family ties or friendship.
5. *Authority belongs to the position.* It does not belong to the particular person who fills a position. This characteristic implies that while on the job, managers, for example, have authority over subordinates because they hold a higher position. Managers cannot demand that subordinates do tasks unrelated to work, such as washing a manager's car or babysitting.
6. *Organizational personnel treat clients or customers as cases.* That is, "without hatred or passion, and hence without affection or enthusiasm" (Weber 1947, p. 340). To put it another way, no client receives special treatment. This objective approach is believed necessary because emotion and special circumstances can interfere with the efficient delivery of goods and services. Many organizations require employees to greet every customer with standard lines such as "Thank you for shopping at K-Mart. May I help you?"

► The "take a number" system, is designed to ensure that employees treat clients/customers as "cases." This system eliminates emotion and bias in determining who is next. Taking a number sends the message that no person is special or can demand to be served before another.



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Taken together, these six characteristics describe a bureaucracy as an **ideal type**—a deliberate simplification or caricature in that it exaggerates essential traits of something. Ideal does not mean desirable; an ideal is simply a standard against which real cases can

be compared. The six essential or ideal features of bureaucracy can be used to evaluate how a real bureaucracy operates. Anyone involved with a bureaucracy realizes that actual behavior departs from this ideal. In this regard sociologists distinguish between formal and informal dimensions of organizations.

Formal and Informal Dimensions

The **formal dimension** is the official, by-the-book way an organization should operate. The formal dimension is known through an organization's job descriptions and through its written rules, guidelines, and policies. The **informal dimension** encompasses any aspect of the organization's operations that departs from the way the organization is officially supposed to operate. The informal dimension includes employee-generated responses that circumvent official policies and regulations. A manager who demands that employees work off the clock, employees who give their friends free food and soft drinks, and servers who spit in a rude customer's drinks are all displaying behavior that departs from official policies. Another example is worker-generated norms that govern physical effort, including norms about the appropriate amount of work to be done in an hour or a day and norms about taking breaks that exceed official rules regarding number and length.



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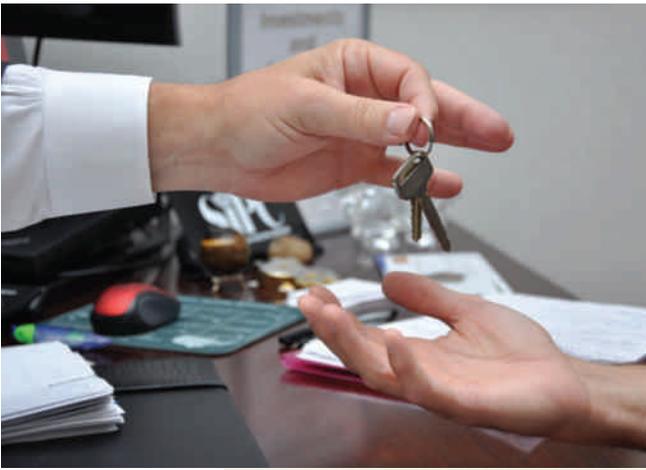
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▲ These photos speak to informal and formal dimension of organizations. When employees sleep on the job or engage in activities unrelated to work, such as browsing the Internet while on the clock, they are behaving in ways that circumvent official organizational policies. When checkout clerks at Home Depot wear a smock proclaiming “I Put Customers First,” they are complying with official policy.

Performance Measures

Many bureaucracies have performance measures in place, quantitative indicators of how well their employees or clients are performing with reference to some valued organizational goal. Executives and other managers often compile statistics on profits, losses, market share, customer satisfaction, total sales, production quotas, and employee turnover as a way to measure individual, departmental, and overall organizational performance. Such measures can be convenient and useful management tools for two reasons: they are considered to be objective and precise, and they permit comparison across individuals, time, or departments. Based on these measures, management can reward good performance through pay increases, profit sharing, and promotions and can act to correct poor performance.

But performance measures have shortcomings, one of which is that they can encourage employees to concentrate on meeting performance goals and to ignore problems generated by their drive to score well.



Lisa Southwick

◀ The ongoing mortgage crisis in the United States can be connected to performance measures that rewarded loan officers for the number of loans they made and little else. As a result, many loan officers concentrated on making loans regardless of risk to the bank. To meet quotas, loan officers falsely inflated applicants' incomes and created fake W-2s as documentation. If an applicant had no credit record, loan officers created phony loan histories showing timely payments (French and Wilkinson 2007). In the end, loan officers gave many people keys to houses they could

not afford. Perhaps one of the greatest incentives for making so many bad loans was that these loans were sold to third party investors who assumed the risk instead of the bank. Then the third-party investors bought insurance to protect against defaults, so insurance giants such as AIG were left holding the bag.

Critical Thinking

Name three organizations to which you are connected. Classify each as utilitarian, coercive, or voluntary. Explain why you classified each the way you did.

Key Terms

bureaucracy

formal organization

utilitarian organization

coercive organization

ideal type

voluntary organization

formal dimension

informal dimension

The Effects of Size

Objective

You will learn some ways in which group size affects social dynamics.



Lisa Southwick

Think about a time when you and a friend were talking and a third person walked over to join the conversation. How did it affect that conversation?

A third party joining a two-person conversation already in progress will change the dynamics between those two people. The third person might direct his or her attention toward one of the two and someone may feel left out or decide to leave. Sociologist Georg Simmel (1950) argued that one of the most important criteria for understanding group dynamics is size. Size affects the relationships among members and shapes the character of interactions.

Dyads, Triads, and Beyond

A **group** is defined as two or more people who interact and are subjected to group expectations and obligations, and pressures to identify with the group. The smallest group is a **dyad**, which consists of two people. Sociologists are interested in the reasons dyads form, whether by consequence of birth (mother-son), choice (two friends), or because of social necessity (doctor-patient, teacher-student, author-editor). In assessing a dyad, sociologists ask, “How much does each party know about the other?” Keep in mind that no person can know everything about another. But we can say that in **comprehensive dyads** the involved parties have more than a superficial knowledge of each other’s personality and life; they know each other in a variety of ways. In **segmentalized dyads** the parties know much less of the other’s personality and personal life; and what they do know is confined to a specific situation, such as the classroom, a hair salon, or other specialized setting (Becker and Unseem 1942).



▲ Sociologists consider this husband-wife dyad (left) comprehensive, as it is very likely that after 50 years of marriage each knows a lot about the other as a person. The hair stylist–client represents a segmentalized dyad because the involved parties interact out of social necessity—one out of a need to make a living; the other out of a need to have her hair cut. It is likely that the hair stylist and client interact only when the client needs a haircut.

Simmel (1950) maintained that there is a special pressure on dyads that groups of other sizes do not face because the dyad's existence and success rests on just two people. According to Simmel, “the decisive characteristic of the dyad is that each of the two must actually accomplish something, and in the case of failure only the other remains” (p. 137).

If a third member is added to a dyad (a stepfather to a mother-son dyad, a nurse to a doctor-patient dyad, a second student to a teacher-pupil dyad), the result is a **triad**, or a three-person group. The addition of a third person significantly alters the pattern of interaction between the two people who made up the original dyad. Now two members can form an alliance against the third. Obviously, as more members are added—a fourth, a fifth, and so on—the patterns of interaction and alliance possibilities increase. At some point—perhaps around seven members—the group breaks down into subgroups because it is impossible to focus everyone's attention on the group per se. That is, it is difficult to have a single, focused conversation in which everyone is listening, taking turns talking, or focusing on the task at hand. Unless someone steps forward and directs communication among the members, the group breaks down into dyads and triads with each smaller group carrying on its own conversations (Becker and Unseem 1942).

Oligarchy

Political analyst Robert Michels (1962) was interested in very large groups involving hundreds or even tens of thousands of people. He believed that large organizations inevitably tend to become oligarchical. **Oligarchy** is rule by the few, or the concentration of decision-making power in the hands of a few persons who hold the top positions in a hierarchy. Michels maintained that one of the most bizarre features of any advanced industrial society is that life-and-death choices are made by a handful of people, usually men, who cannot possibly consider all who will be affected.

► Organizations become oligarchical for at least two reasons. First, democratic participation is virtually inconceivable in large organizations. Size alone makes it impossible to discuss matters and settle controversies in a timely and orderly fashion. For example, Wal-Mart is the largest employer on the Global Fortune 500 list with 1.9 million employees and millions of stockholders. Obviously, such a large number of employees cannot engage in direct discussion.



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A second reason organizations become oligarchical is that the greater an organization's size, the less likely it is that members can comprehend its workings. As a result, many members are working to advance organizational goals, the full consequences of which they may not be able to know or understand. A danger of oligarchy is that key decision makers may become so preoccupied with preserving their own leadership or with the bottom line that they do not consider the greater good or the full implications of their choices.

We can apply the concept of oligarchy to the 2008 Great Recession. Some blame this economic crisis on a small group of powerful executives, running financial institutions that were too big to fail, for creating and abusing unregulated financial products for personal and institutional gain. Others point to complex financial instruments that few, if any, people understood until it was too late. Regardless of the real source of the crisis, a few people at the top of some of the largest organizations in the world ultimately decided to use these products to build profits, with disastrous consequences for national and global economies (Gross 2009).

Critical Thinking

Think of a time a third person was added to a dyad to which you belonged. Describe how that third person changed the interactional dynamics between you and the other person.

Key Terms

comprehensive dyads

group

segmentalized dyads

dyad

oligarchy

triad

Rationalization and McDonaldization

Objective

You will learn what it means to use any means necessary to achieve a desired goal, most notably profit.



© Sanctome Tokyo

Why would a company invest in a robot that lumbers about town selling its products?

One answer is that the company sees it as an efficient way to get its product everywhere. No longer will people have to look for a soft drink machine—the soft drink machine can look for them. Also, the robot has no fears about approaching any person to buy the product.

What does this invention say about the way society is organized, the way in which people think, and the choices open to them? The answer to these questions lies with a concept sociologist Max Weber called rationalization. Before defining that concept we will consider the meaning of another related concept: instrumental rational action.

Instrumental Rational Action

Instrumental rational action is result-oriented behavior and practices that emphasize the most efficient methods for achieving some valued goal, regardless of the consequences. In the context of an industrial and capitalist society, *efficient* means the most cost-effective and time-saving way to achieve a goal—whether that goal is producing eggs, satisfying hunger, or recovering from an illness. Instrumental rational action, for example, drives the treatment of animals raised on factory farms. Obviously, the more chickens a factory farm can house and the faster it can raise them to egg-laying maturity, the more eggs it can produce and sell.



© Bruce Burkhardt/CORBIS

◀ Corporations that supply eggs are driven by instrumental rational action. They raise chickens in crowded conditions that give each chicken an average of 7×7 inches of space. Because chickens live in such close quarters, factory farm workers clip the wings and trim the beaks to prevent hens from injuring one another.

Weber maintained that the rise of instrumental rational action as a dominant way of organizing human activity is a product of industrialization. Through a process he labeled rationalization, instrumental rational action came to replace other ways of thinking and behaving. Before industrialization thought and action were rooted in emotion, mysterious forces, and tradition. When thought and action are rooted in emotion, they are accompanied by a physiological component, such as feelings of love, hate, or fear. When thought and action are driven by respect for mysterious forces, they are grounded in a fear of offending or in a desire to please nature, the spirits, or the gods. Thought and action that are rooted in tradition are guided by precedent or by the ways things were done in the past.

▶ This drawing of a chicken and her babies represents the way many of us imagine or would like to believe chickens are raised. The drawing suggests that the farmers who raise this chicken and her chicks are driven by emotion or an obligation to care for them. It also suggests that this mother hen is capable of feeling love for her chicks.



Lisa Southwick

Rationalization

Rationalization, then, is a process in which thought and action rooted in emotion, superstition, respect for mysterious forces, or tradition is replaced by instrumental rational action or means-to-end thinking. Weber made several important qualifications regarding rationalization. First, he used the term to refer to the way daily life has come to be organized so that on some level people are forced to use the structures that are already in place to meet their needs (Freund 1968). For example, most of the available food choices are processed and take little time to prepare. People who purchase such food are likely to know home-cooked meals are healthier and to prefer them to processed food, but it is difficult to resist the efficiency of processed foods.

Second, rationalization does not assume better understanding or greater knowledge. In fact, Weber argues that the so-called primitive man “knows infinitely more about the conditions under which he lives, the tools he uses, and the food he consumes” (Freund 1968, p. 20). People who live in an instrumental rational environment typically know little about their surroundings. The consumer buys any number of products in the grocery store without knowing how they were made, where they were made, or what ingredients they contain. Most people are not troubled by such ignorance; rather, they seem content to let specialists or experts manage things.

Finally, when people identify a valued goal and decide on the means (actions) to achieve it, they seldom consider less profitable or slower ways to reach it. For example, Americans often seek prescription drugs to address real or imagined illnesses including behavioral problems—so much so that they consume 44 percent of the world’s pharmaceutical supply (*Online Newshour* 2004).

➤ When children exhibit behavioral and learning problems at school, principals and teachers often approach parents about putting their children on drugs for attention deficit and hyperactive disorders before trying to modify behavior through discipline and instruction, which are more time-consuming and labor-intensive.



McDonaldization of Society

Sociologist George Ritzer (1993) describes an organizational trend guided by instrumental rational action in which people use the most cost-efficient and quickest means to achieve some valued end. He called that trend the **McDonaldization of society**. Ritzer defines McDonaldization of society as the process by which the principles of the fast-food industry are coming to dominate other sectors of American society and the world. Those principles are (1) efficiency, (2) calculability, (3) predictability, and (4) control.

EFFICIENCY. **Efficiency** is using the method that will achieve a desired end in the shortest amount of time. Many organizations claim that they offer products or services that allow consumers to move most quickly from one state of being to another—from hungry to full, from fat to thin, from uneducated to educated, or from sleep-deprived to rested. In some cases, the pursuit of efficiency can result in customers serving themselves. Customers scan, bag, and pay for purchases; clear their table after eating in a quick-service restaurant; and check themselves into the airport without expecting to be compensated for their labor.



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◀ Drive-thru centers to give flu vaccinations apply the efficiency principle of McDonaldization to health care services. According to one nurse who administered the shots, “The drive-through concept is so popular because of its ease and convenience. For many people it is very difficult to get themselves and/or children out of the car and into a doctor’s office,

or other inside location. It is very convenient for those who just don’t want to get out of their car” (*UK News* 2003).

CALCULABILITY. The second McDonaldization principle is **calculability**, which emphasizes numerical indicators by which customers and the service provider can judge the amount of product and the speed of service (e.g., delivery within 30 minutes, lose 10 pounds in 10 days, earn a college degree in 24 months, limit menstrual periods to four times a year, or obtain eyeglasses in an hour). These are clear measures that customers can draw upon to assess results. Ritzer argues that the emphasis on quantity promotes the idea that size matters, more is better, and something obtained quickly is superior to a product that takes time to deliver.

PREDICTABILITY. The principle of **predictability** is the expectation that a service or product will be the same no matter where in the world or when (time of year, time of day) it is purchased. With regard to food products, this kind of predictability requires that the product be genetically modified. If the consumer expects strawberries year round, they must be able to withstand shipment from one continent to another. The fruit is genetically modified so that the berry stays firm and does not decay before it reaches its destination (Barrionuevo 2007).

➤ These employees work at a Wal-Mart in China. Notice they are wearing the standard uniform. No matter the location, a customer entering a Wal-Mart store can expect (predict) a common experience.



Bloomberg/Getty Images

CONTROL. The fourth McDonaldization principle, **control**, involves replacing employee labor with nonhuman technologies and/or requiring, even demanding, that employees and customers behave in a certain way. From an employer’s point of view, humans are a source of uncertainty and unpredictability. The quality and consistency of people’s work, for example, is affected by any number of factors, including how they feel, if they are paying attention, the personal

problems they face, and their relationship with the boss. Consider how an automatic dispenser programmed to drop a specified amount of ice and liquid into a cup eliminates human tendency to vary the amount of ice and liquid. Likewise, customers can slow service down if they talk too much or are unprepared. Customers calling 411 to obtain a phone number are greeted by a computer voice asking the city and state and then asking the name of the person or business they wish to contact. Customers cannot proceed unless they give clear and precise answers to the questions. When a computer-generated voice asks the city and state, the customer cannot use free-flowing speech expressing uncertainty about a city's name.

Assessing McDonaldization

Clearly, there are advantages to McDonaldization—people can check bank balances, take college classes, and pay bills at the hours of their choosing. Though McDonaldization has facilitated amazing feats, the model has drawbacks. In the quest to deliver products and services quickly and efficiently, an organization can create dehumanizing structures that can lower the quality of life. Ultimately, we must ask whether so-called rational processes create irrationalities (Weber 1994; Ritzer 2008). Sociologists use the term **iron cage of irrationality** to label the process by which supposedly rational systems produce irrationalities. As one example, consider that the pharmaceutical industry creates medicines for just about every social, physical, and psychological problem people face. It is irrational, however, that this industry seeks to fix the conditions that are part of nature and the human condition by offering medications that eliminate monthly menstruation, minimize wrinkles, and alter moods (even normal sadness and grief).

Critical Thinking

Give an example of McDonaldization that involves something other than fast food.

Key Terms

calculability

control

efficiency

instrumental rational
action

iron cage of irrationality

McDonaldization of
society

predictability

rationalization

Workplaces

Objective

You will learn about sources of alienation and empowerment in the workplace.



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If you are employed, how satisfied are you in your current job? If you are not employed, ask a few people you know how satisfied they are with their employment.

In his book *Three Signs of a Miserable Job*, Patrick Lencioni (2007) names three signs of dissatisfaction:

1. anonymity—my boss has little interest in me as a person with a unique life, interests, and aspirations;
2. irrelevance—my work makes no real difference in people’s lives; and
3. cluelessness about impact—there is no way of knowing whether I make an impact or contribution through my work.

Karl Marx wrote about such issues more than 150 years ago. Marx (1844) wrote: “labor is *alien* to workers when they do not affirm themselves through labor.” The alienated worker “does not feel happy, but rather unhappy; he does not grow physically or mentally, but rather tortures his body and ruins his mind. . . . Its estranged character becomes obvious when one sees that as soon as there is no physical or other coercion, labor is avoided like the plague.”

Alienation

Human control over nature increased with mechanization and the growth of bureaucracies. Both innovations allowed people with the help of machines to extract raw materials from the earth quickly and more efficiently. Mechanization also reduced the amount of human labor needed to complete a task and increased the speed by which necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter could be produced and distributed. Karl Marx believed that increased control over nature is accompanied by **alienation**, a state of being in which humans lose control over the social world they have created and are dominated by the forces of their inventions.

Although Marx discussed alienation in general, he wrote more specifically about alienation in the workplace. Marx maintained that workers are alienated on four levels: (1) from the process of production, (2) from the product, (3) from the family and the community of fellow workers, and (4) from the self.

ALIENATION FROM THE PROCESS AND PRODUCT. Workers are alienated from the *process* when they produce not for themselves or for known consumers but rather for an abstract, impersonal market. In addition, they are alienated when they do not own the tools of production and when what they produce has no individual character and sentimental value to either the worker or the consumer (Marx 1888).



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◀ Workers are alienated from the product when their roles are rote and limited and when their employers treat them like replaceable machine parts. Marx believed that the conditions of work are such that most jobs do not allow people the chance to be active, creative, and social (Young 1975).

ALIENATION FROM FAMILY AND COMMUNITY OF FELLOW WORKERS. Workers are alienated from the *family* because households

and workplaces are separate environments. Specifically the workplace makes few, if any, accommodations to family life unless forced to do so. Workers can lose touch with their families when they work shifts late at night, early in the morning, or on weekends, keeping them from participating in family life. They also lose connection to their families when they must relocate to find employment.

➤ An estimated 25 percent of the Philippines' labor force works outside the country in 190 countries, leaving children to be cared for by relatives (Migration Policy Institute 2007). The United States and Western European countries, for example, recruit 85 percent of all nurses trained in the Philippines. The exodus of nurses is so great that the World Health Organization has expressed concerns about its effect on the Philippines' system of medical care (Coonan 2008).



Romeo Gacard/AFP/Getty Images

Workers are alienated from the *community of fellow workers* because they compete for jobs, business, advancement, and salary. Migrant workers, especially the undocumented, are often viewed as taking the jobs of people in the host country.

As workers compete for jobs, they fail to consider how they might unite as a force to better control their working conditions.



© David De La Paz/epa/Corbis

◀ These workers in Honduras earn approximately 81 cents per hour, about 24 cents less per hour than their Mexican counterparts and about 40 cents less per hour than their counterparts in China.

ALIENATION FROM THE SELF. Finally, workers are alienated from the *self*, or from the human need to realize one's unique talents and creative impulses. Alienation from the self occurs when employers use only those talents and creative energies that produce a profit. When Karl Marx developed his ideas about alienation in the late 1800s, he was describing alienation from self as it relates to industrial society. More recently, sociologist Robin Leidner (1993) has described the

alienation from self that can occur in service industries when management standardizes virtually every aspect of the service provider–customer relationship, so that neither party feels authentic, autonomous, or sincere: “Employers may try to specify exactly how workers look, exactly what they say, their demeanors, their gestures, even their thoughts” (p. 8). The means available for standardizing interactions include giving employees scripts to follow, requiring workers to follow detailed dress codes, and issuing specific rules and guidelines for dealing with customers and with co-workers. Employers may use surveillance cameras or computer software to monitor worker performance and enforce compliance.

Empowering versus Alienating Work Environments

Social psychologist Shoshana Zuboff (1988) wrote about work environments that use computers in both empowering and alienating ways. Zuboff's conclusions are the result of more than a decade of field research observing environments in which workers were learning to use computers. By studying this transition, Zuboff gained insights about the ways in which computers can be used to alienate or empower employees. Employers alienate workers when they use computers to do the thinking for employees (cash registers that calculate change), watch them, or push them to produce (monitor key strokes per minute).

► Computer technology is an alienating tool if management uses it strictly as a means for monitoring things like how long customer service employees take to respond to people on hold, the number of calls handled per hour, or the time that lapses between calls.

Sheldon S. Smith, AKO/DKO



Employers can choose to use computers as tools that empower workers, enhancing their knowledge of the overall production process, with the expectation that they will make critical and collaborative judgments about production tasks. Workers who used computers as an empowering tool experience their jobs very differently than those workers who are monitored by them.

The Best Work Environments

There are many work environments designed to reduce alienation among employees. Each year *Fortune Magazine* lists the 100 best companies for which to work (see Table 4.6a). There are a variety of characteristics that make a company one of the best for which to work, including

- ethical and collaborative values and principles of the top leadership, including president,
- open communication with immediate supervisor,
- opportunities for personal growth through training and development and future prospects for advancement,
- concern about helping employees manage workplace stresses,
- policies that bring balance to work and personal life,
- quality relationships with immediate colleagues,
- chances to give something back to community and society through work,
- engagement with job and organization such that work stretches and challenges an employee, and
- fairness as it relates to pay and benefits (*Times Online* 2008).

Table 4.6a: The Top 5 (Out of 100 Chosen) Companies for Which to Work, 2008

This table lists the five companies featured in *Fortune Magazine* as among the best companies for which to work in 2008. These companies offer job sharing, telecommuting, and compressed work weeks—practices that help employees balance demands of work and personal life. These companies also embrace diversity as measured by percent of minority and female employees, and by availability of domestic partner benefits. The table lists the characteristic for which each corporation is best known.

Company	Featured Characteristic
Google	Stock options for 99% of employees
Quicken Loan	Avoided subprime lending
Wegmans Food Mart	Family-owned
Edward Jones (Brokerage Firm)	70% of employees received 6.5% raises
Genentech	Doggie day care; onsite farmers' market; 401(k) match 100% (up to 5% of pay)

Source: *Fortune Magazine* (2008)

Critical Thinking

Think about the work you or someone close to you does for a living. Have you or they experienced one or more of the four levels of alienation? Explain why or why not.

Key Term

alienation

Applying Theory: Dramaturgy and Emotional Labor

Objective

You will learn the circumstances under which employees are required to engage in emotional labor.



TSGT John M. Foster

Do you hold a job in which you are expected to hide negative or excessively positive emotions when relating to customers, clients, or the public?

If your job requires you to serve customers, clients, or the public, your employer is asking that you engage in what sociologists call

emotional labor, work that requires employees to display and suppress specific emotions and/or manage customer/client emotions.

Dramaturgical Theory

Dramaturgical theory, which is most associated with the work of sociologist Erving Goffman, views social interaction as if it were theater and people as if they were actors giving performances before an audience in a particular setting. In social situations, as on a stage, people manage the setting, their dress, their words, and their gestures so that they correspond to an impression they are trying to make. This process is called **impression management**.

Sociologist Arlie Hochschild (2003) extended the work of Erving Goffman by presenting actors as not only managing their outer impressions, but also working at managing their inner feelings. Hochschild recognized that emotions—whether sadness, anxiety, anger, boredom, nervousness, feelings of self-importance, or satisfaction—are more than simply reflex-like responses; they are shaped by expectations about how one should feel in a particular situation. Thus people are sad at funerals, not simply because someone has died, but because that is

how people are supposed to act (Appelrouth and Edles 2007). Likewise, people suppress feelings of envy at award ceremonies when not chosen for an award as they congratulate a competitor. They suppress this emotion because losers are supposed to be gracious.

Emotion Work

Hochschild argues that people do **emotion work**—that is, they consciously work at managing their feelings by evoking an expected emotional state or suppressing an inappropriate emotional state. That work may involve presenting an outward display of an emotion that does not match inner feelings or convincing oneself to actually feel the expected emotion. For Hochschild, emotion work involves *effort*—with emphasis placed on trying to feel a certain way and not the actual outcome of that effort, “which may or may not be successful” (p. 241). Such phrases as “I psyched myself up,” “I squashed my anger down,” “I tried hard not to feel disappointed,” “I made myself have a good time,” “I tried to feel grateful,” and “I let myself finally feel sad” represent examples of emotion work (Hochschild 2003, p. 241). Hochschild acknowledges that there are often discrepancies between “what one does feel and what one wants to feel,” which are further complicated by what one thinks one should feel (p. 242). Even when people fail at managing an emotion, their efforts are still influenced by social expectations. For that reason, sociologists are just as interested in failures to manage emotions as they are in successes.

Emotional labor is a requirement for those jobs in which employees

1. must engage with the public,
2. are directed to produce a specific emotional state in clients/customers, whether it be feelings of satisfaction with a service delivered or a reasonable outlook (such as police officers who calm excited citizens), and
3. are required to follow scripts and are penalized for deviating from them (such as clerk who must greet the customer with a “Welcome to . . .”

➤ Service economy jobs—customer service representatives, food servers, sales clerks, funeral directors, front desk clerks, cashiers, doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers—involve emotional labor. People in service jobs must present their emotions in ways that suggest they are out to please and that mask aggressive emotions felt toward customers, especially difficult ones.



In her research on flight attendants, Hochschild found their job required them to manufacture feelings of warmth, caring, and cheerfulness and suppress anger or boredom. Hochschild believes that the emotional labor associated with service work can be an alienating experience in much the same way as the repetitive physical labor we associate with the assembly line. In the case of factory work, employers control workers’ bodies and movements; in the case of service work,



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employers direct workers' emotional states and reactions to customers. Both the service and factory workers are alienated from their authentic (true) self.

◀ Service workers' emotions are commodified when those emotions are an expected part of the product or service being sold. When you check into a hotel, the staff's friendliness and helpfulness are likely to be factors in your satisfaction.

Hochschild writes that "those who perform emotional labor in the course of giving service are like those who perform physical labor in the course of making things—both are subject to the demands of mass production. But when the product is a

smile, a mood, a feeling, or a relationship, it comes to belong more to the organization and less to the self" (1983, p. 198). Hochschild argues that this commodification of emotions is not applied equally across race, class, gender, and age. She makes the case that women especially face more pressure to manage their emotions than their male counterparts and to present their emotions in motherly or sexy ways. Why is this the case?

First, there is the deeply rooted cultural idea that women are practiced at managing emotions—that they "have the capacity to premeditate a sigh, an outburst of tears, or a flight of joy. In general, women are thought to manage expression and feelings, not only better than, but more often than men" (p. 248). Second, when women fail to manage emotions in expected ways they are considered less "feminine." Finally, women feel pressure to manage their emotions, because when they lose control they are labeled as "unstable" or "too emotional" to do the job. While it is true that men face cultural pressures to manage their emotions in so-called masculine ways, the specific kinds of cultural expectations women face explain why they are overrepresented in occupations that require emotional labor.

Hochschild found that these cultural pressures specific to women help explain why female flight attendants are more likely to handle the babies, deal with the children, and comfort older passengers. Male flight attendants (when on board) are less likely to engage with passengers in these ways because they are not expected to. As a result they are more likely to enforce rules about where to stow oversized luggage and to monitor seatbelt usage.

Critical Thinking

Give an example of emotional labor from your own work life or from your observations of someone who works in a customer service job.

Key Terms

emotional labor

emotion work

impression management

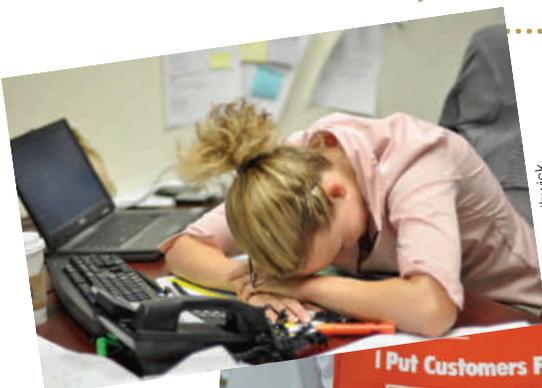
Summary: Putting It All Together

A social structure is a largely invisible system that coordinates human activities in broadly predictable ways. Social structures shape people's sense of themselves, their relationships and opportunities to connect with others, the barriers they will encounter, and the relative ease or difficulty with which people can break through them. Social structures encompass at least four interrelated components: statuses, roles, groups, and institutions.

The division of labor is a social structure that connects people to one another and to their society. Durkheim hypothesized that societies become more vulnerable as the division of labor becomes more complex and more specialized. He was particularly concerned with the kinds of events that break down people's ability to connect to each other and their society through their labor. Those events include economic crisis and job specialization.

The concept of formal organization emphasizes how social structures can operate as coordinating mechanisms bringing together people, resources, and technology to achieve specific outcomes. The concept of bureaucracy describes specific coordinating strategies employed to achieve outcomes, including a clear-cut division of labor, an authority structure that is hierarchical, and written rules governing operations. Of course, people embedded in bureaucracies depart from official ways of doing things. To capture these dynamics sociologists use the concepts of formal and informal dimensions of organizations. Sociologists employ a variety of other concepts—including dyads, triads, oligarchy, and strong and weak ties—to capture how groups and organizations connect or fail to connect people to one another. The concepts of rationalization and McDonaldization alert us to a process by which organizations channel human behavior in the most efficient ways. The concept of alienation describes the downside of such efficiency.

[Can You Top This Photo?]



Lisa Southwick

Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a pair of photos with captions that illustrate the distinction between formal and informal dimensions of organizations.



Lisa Southwick



Chris Caldeira

5 CHAPTER

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

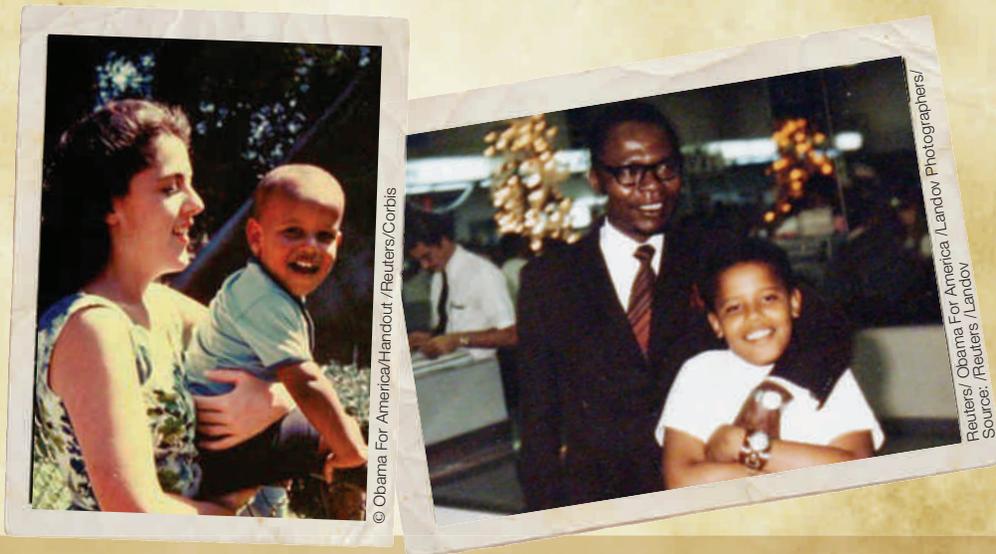
- 5.1 Definition of the Situation
- 5.2 Attribution Theory
- 5.3 Dramaturgical Model
- 5.4 Ethnomethodology
- 5.5 Reference Groups
- 5.6 Ingroups and Outgroups
- 5.7 Applying Theory: Phenomenology
- Summary Putting It All Together

The process by which people make sense of the world is known as the social construction of reality. Imagine going to a market and seeing chickens as shown here instead of wrapped in plastic. Would your assumptions about the chicken you eat change? When sociologists study the social construction of reality, they focus on how people go about assigning meaning to what is going on around them. Sociologists also focus on the knowledge people draw upon to create a reality upon which they act. For the most part people do not question the accuracy of that knowledge, nor do they consider alternative realities until they encounter something that challenges existing assumptions. So for example, there is little about the way chicken is processed in the United States that reminds us that the meat we buy was once a living creature.

Definition of the Situation

Objective

You will learn that people do not approach a situation with a blank slate.



With which photograph of President Barack Obama as a child are you most familiar? Do the photographs affect your perception of who Barack Obama is? Why or why not?

The photo on the left is Barack Obama as a child with his Kansas-born mother. The photo on the right is Obama with his Kenyan-born father. It is also important to note that for three years of his life, from 1969 to 1971, Obama lived in Indonesia. Some who opposed Obama's campaign for president hoped that foreign connections might raise questions in some voters' minds about Obama's loyalty to the United States. Obama supporters, on the other hand, emphasized his Kansas connections. These photographs, and the meanings each evoke for viewers, relate to the concept of definition of the situation.

Definition of the Situation

W. I. Thomas (1923) points out that the human nervous system carries "memories or records of past experiences." When we observe something, like the Obama photographs, we do not see them as something new and fresh. Rather, what we

see and how we define it is shaped by past experiences. Those experiences begin accumulating as soon as a babies are born (perhaps before), at which point they encounter people who define situations for them. Obviously, infants have no real chance to make their own definitions without interference from caretakers.

➤ Caretakers define the situation for babies through speech and gestures. Caretakers usually talk to the baby about what is happening—such as “let me see if I can get this thing to work.”

Other examples of how caregivers define the situation include “Grandpa’s coming; we have to take a bath.” “What’s the matter, are you hungry?” “You stay here, and don’t move.” Gradually, by observing definitions conveyed within the family, by playmates, at school, in the neighborhood, in books, and through formal instruction, the growing child learns the codes of society (Thomas 1923).

Thomas (1923) maintains that before people respond or take action there is a fleeting moment during which people consciously or unconsciously deliberate about the meaning of the situation. That is, they attach a subjective meaning, informed by past experiences, to the situation. Thomas described the link between the meaning assigned and the response as follows: “if men define situations as real they are real in their consequences” (Thomas and Thomas 1928, p. 572). This is known as the **Thomas Theorem**. What happens when people assign false definitions to a situation? It can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Sociologist Robert K. Merton (1957) defined a **self-fulfilling prophecy** as a false definition of a situation that is assumed to be accurate. People behave, however, as if that false definition is true. In the end, the misguided behavior produces responses that confirm the false definition. Merton argued that the “tragic, often vicious, cycle of self-fulfilling prophecies can be broken” if the initial definition that set the circle in motion is abandoned. Only when that definition is questioned and a new definition is introduced will the situation correct itself. Researchers Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson (1968) designed an experiment to test Merton’s hypothesis to see how teachers’ positive expectations about their students’ intellectual growth can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

➤ Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson realized most schools have some system to sort students into “fast,” “average,” or “slow” learners and consequently expose them to “fast,” “average,” and “slow” learning environments. The researchers wanted to see whether teachers’ perception of academic ability or potential affected the way they taught and interacted with students.



Spoc. Eric J. Cullen



Pfc. Ethan Hoadridge

The experiment took place in an elementary school called Oak School, the name the researchers assigned to the school to protect its identity. The student body came mostly from lower-income families and was predominantly white (84 percent). Sixteen percent of the students were Mexican Americans. Oak School sorted students into ability groups based on reading achievement and teachers' judgments. At the end of a school year, Rosenthal and Jacobson gave a test, purported to be a predictor of academic "blossoming," to the students who were expected to return the next year. Just before classes began in the fall, all full-time teachers were given the names of the students, assigned to "fast," "average," and "slow" groups the previous school year, who had supposedly scored in the top 20 percent. The teachers were told that these students "will show a more significant inflection or spurt in their learning within the next year than will the remaining 80 percent of the children" (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968, p. 66). Teachers were also told not to discuss the scores with the students or their parents. In actuality, the names researchers gave to teachers were chosen randomly; that is, the differences between the children earmarked for intellectual growth and the other children existed only in the teachers' minds. The students were retested after one semester, at the end of the academic year, and after a second academic year.

Overall, intellectual gains, as measured by the difference between successive test scores, were greater for the students who had been identified as "bloomers" than they were for the students who were not identified as such. Although all "bloomers" benefited in general, some benefited more than others: First- and second-graders, Mexican American children, and children in the middle track showed the largest increases in test scores.



▲ Rosenthal and Jackson's research suggests that teachers' perceptions or misperceptions of ability and potential shape how they see and respond to a student's academic work. Students look to teachers for feedback on how well they are doing. The expression on this child's face, as he holds up the letters A and L, suggests that he is not quite sure if he is right. It is important that the teacher respond in constructive ways. Constructive does not mean unqualified praise or outright dismissal of something as wrong, because neither critique leaves students with an accurate view of their academic abilities.

Rosenthal and Jackson reported that their study was designed so that those identified as “bloomers” received no special instruction or extra attention from teachers. Thus the only difference between them and the other students was the teacher’s belief that the “bloomers” bore watching. Rosenthal and Jacobson speculated that this belief was communicated to “bloomers” in very subtle and complex ways, which the researchers could not readily identify. Rosenthal and Jacobson further speculated that the teacher, “by what she said, by how and when she said it, by her facial expressions, postures, and perhaps by her touch” may have communicated to the “bloomers” that she expected their intellectual performance to improve. The two researchers called for further research to narrow down the specific mechanisms whereby teacher expectations shape students’ intellectual growth (p. 180).

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption that applies the concept of definition of situation to this little girl watching her mother make a “welcome home” sign.

Write a caption here



Hints: In writing this caption

- think about W. I. Thomas’s thoughts on where memories are stored,
- consider the kind of event this little girl is about to experience, and
- think about the kind of situation to which she will apply this experience in the future.

Critical Thinking

Can you think of a personal experience in which you were affected by a self-fulfilling prophecy? Describe that situation.

Key Terms

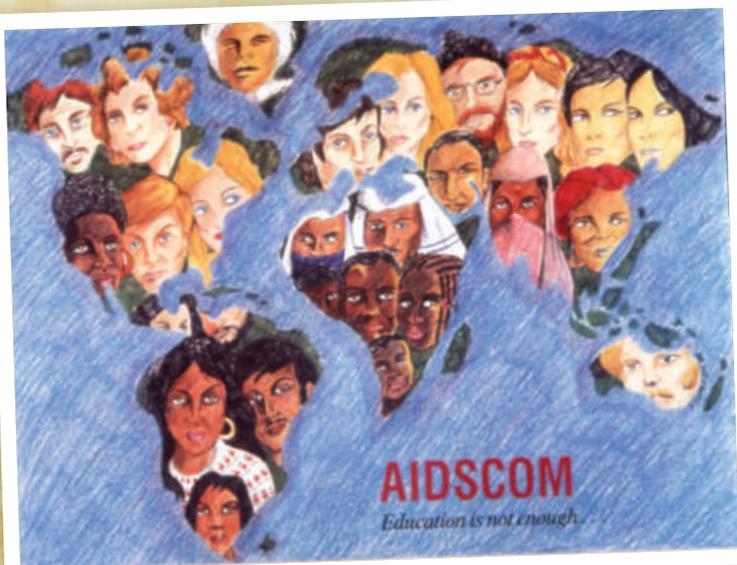
self-fulfilling prophecy

Thomas theorem

Attribution Theory

Objective

You will learn to distinguish between dispositional and situational attributions of cause, each of which constructs very different realities and responses.



Academy for Educational Development

How did the now 30-year-old global HIV/AIDS epidemic begin?

If your answer assumes people with HIV/AIDS are personally responsible, then you are emphasizing what attribution theorists call dispositional factors. If your answer emphasizes larger social forces that created populations vulnerable to that illness, then you are emphasizing situational factors.

Dispositional and Situational Factors

Social life is complex. People need a great deal of historical, cultural, and biographical information if they are to accurately pinpoint the cause of even the most routine happenings. Still, most people form judgments about cause, and take action, without complete information. **Attribution theory** examines the process by which people explain their behavior and that of others. Specifically, people attribute cause to one of two factors: (1) dispositional or (2) situational.

Dispositional factors are things that people are believed to control, including personal qualities related to motivation, interest, mood, and effort. **Situational**

factors are things believed to be outside a person's control—such as the weather, bad luck, and another's incompetence. Usually people stress situational factors in explaining their own failures (“I failed the exam because the teacher is terrible”) and dispositional factors in explaining their own successes (“I passed the exam because I studied hard”). With regard to others' failures, people tend to emphasize dispositional factors (“She failed the exam because she parties too much”). With regard to others' successes, however, people tend to stress situational factors (“She passed the test because it was easy”).

Applying Attribution Theory to AIDS

When I ask my students—most of whom were born after 1981 (the year that what is now known as AIDS was recognized as a disease)—about the origin of AIDS, most point to Africa. Some students mention that they have read that the virus jumped from chimpanzees to humans—specifically that the jump occurred when an African person was exposed to an infected chimp's blood while hunting or preparing it for consumption. My students' views are supported in part by AIDS researchers who believe that the global HIV/AIDS epidemic actually started, not in the early 1980s, but around 1930 in southeastern Cameroon, when the virus “jumped” from a chimp to a human host. Specifically, these researchers speculate that the human host was a male from the Bantu ethnic group who hunted and butchered chimpanzees for meat. AIDS researchers hypothesize that for the virus to survive and reach epidemic proportions, it had to jump from human to human and make its way to a big city, where human hosts were numerous and concentrated. The closest such city was Léopoldville (later renamed Kinshasa), located in the country then known as Belgian Congo (Abraham 2006).

An unspoken assumption of this theory is that dispositional factors are at work: if this Bantu male didn't kill or eat monkeys, this epidemic would never have occurred. But one leading HIV/AIDS researcher, Jim Moore (2004) argues there must be more to the story, because (1) one infected hunter could not trigger a global epidemic, and (2) this hunting practice had been going on for thousands of years. Why does he think so?

Moore maintains that more than a single hunter had to be involved. Suppose a single hunter in 1930 was infected by a chimp and then transmitted the virus to, say, 2 people over five years, making a total of 3 infected people by 1935. In turn, each of those 2 and the hunter transmitted the virus to another 2 people each over the next five years. We now have a total of 9 people infected between 1930 and 1940. Now imagine how the virus spread over a series of five-year progressions. The number of cases climbs from 9 to 27 (1940–45) to 81 (1945–50) to 243 (1950–55) to 729 (1955–60) to 2,187 (1960–65) to 6,561 (1965–70) to 19,683 (1970–75) to 59,049 (1975–80). While 59,049 is a large number, this progression as noted cannot account for the tens of millions of people eventually diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. This is because not every sexual or other intimate encounter with an infected partner transmits HIV—depending on the kind of encounter, the probability of transmission ranges from .5 to 60 infections per 10,000 exposures to an infected source (Varghese et al. 2002). Moore argues that the virus must have been “helped along” by some large-scale event or situational factors that made the population in what was then Belgian Congo particularly vulnerable.

Situational Factors and AIDS

In 1883 King Leopold II of Belgium claimed as his private property one million square miles of land in Central Africa where 15 million people lived. Leopold's personal hold over this land, which would become known as the Belgian Congo, was formalized in 1885 by the leaders of 13 European countries and the United States, who were attending the Berlin West Africa Conference. The purpose of that conference was to carve Africa into colonies and divide the continent's natural resources among competing colonial powers (Witte 1992). For 23 years Leopold capitalized on the world's demand for rubber, ivory (to be used in making piano keys, billiard balls, and snuff boxes), palm oil (a machine-oil lubricant and an ingredient in soaps such as Palmolive), coffee, cocoa, lumber, and diamonds.



King Leopold's Soliloquy: A Defense of His Congo Rule, By Mark Twain, Boston: The P. R. Warren Co., 1905, Second Edition.

ing piano keys, billiard balls, and snuff boxes), palm oil (a machine-oil lubricant and an ingredient in soaps such as Palmolive), coffee, cocoa, lumber, and diamonds.

◀ One of the most grisly policies of Leopold's rule was to sever a hand of Congolese who refused to gather rubber. Leopold's soldiers were also under orders to turn in a hand for every bullet fired, as proof that they were using bullets to kill people, and not killing animals or using them for target practice. Often soldiers would sever a hand to cover for other uses of bullets (Hochschild 1998; Twain 1905).

The methods Leopold used to extract rubber for his own personal gain involved atrocities so ghastly—such as severing right hands—that in 1908 international outrage forced the Belgian government to assume control. But like Leopold, the Belgian government also forced the indigenous Africans to leave their villages to

work the mines, cultivate and harvest crops, and build and maintain roads and train tracks. By 1930, Belgian colonization had forced enough people together to sustain the HIV/AIDS virus. As Moore describes it:

Forced labor camps of thousands had poor sanitation, poor diet and exhausting labor demands. It is hard to imagine better conditions for the establishment of an immune-deficiency disease. To care for the health of the laborers, well-meaning, but undersupplied doctors routinely inoculated workers against small pox and dysentery, and they treated sleeping sickness (an infectious disease transmitted by the tsetse fly with symptoms that include severe headache, fever, and lymph node swelling, extreme weakness, sleepiness, and deep coma) with serial injections. The problem was that multiple injections given to arriving gangs of tens or hundreds were administered with only a handful of syringes. The importance of sterile technique was known but not regularly practiced. Transfer of pathogens would have been inevitable. And to appease the laborers, in some of the camps sex workers were officially encouraged. (2006, p. 545)

► The strategies employed to force people to extract resources made them weak and vulnerable to sleeping sickness. The Europeans' approach to diagnosing sleeping sickness involved taking a blood sample through a finger prick or taking spinal taps using unsterilized needles (now a known risk factor in the transmission of HIV). Between 1923 and 1938 an estimated 26 million spinal taps were performed in the Belgian Congo. The risk of transmission by needle sharing is 67 per 10,000 infected sources, and it is 6,000 per 10,000 by exposure to infected blood products (Donegan and Niland 1990; Kaplan and Heimer 1995).



IMTSSA Pharo Marseille



Provided Courtesy of Urbain Ureel

◀ The human muscle required to move this loaded barge into the Congo River speaks to labor demands placed on African workers. Working conditions were so difficult that they left the African workers vulnerable to illnesses and sent thousands fleeing into the unfamiliar jungle where, as they searched for food, they encountered chimpanzees that were sometimes infected.

To exacerbate matters, HIV is exceptionally efficient in that it does not kill its human host within a few days, a week, or even a month. The human host stays alive for years and, in most cases, the host is unaware of the infection, increasing the chances of inadvertently passing it on to others (Abraham 2006). The point is that even with “help” it took time for the virus to “burst” onto the global scene 50 years later (Moore 2004). As long as the “disease” was confined to central Africa, few, if any, paid attention because AIDS-like symptoms were very common in this environment. In fact the symptoms of sleeping sickness and AIDS are very similar.

Critical Thinking

How does your understanding of HIV/AIDS change, or not change, as a result of reading this module? Explain.

Key Terms

attribution theory

dispositional factors

situational factors

Dramaturgical Model

Objective

You will learn an approach for thinking about how people manage interactions and the presentation of self.



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What if a stranger handed you a blank postcard and asked you to write down a secret you have been keeping and mail it anonymously to the address on the front? Would you follow through?

This is what Frank Warren, founder of the PostSecret Project, asked strangers to do beginning in 2005. Since then he has received more than 300,000 personally designed postcards mailed anonymously from people around the world. The secrets that people revealed cover topics relating to “hopes, fantasies, sexual desires, embarrassing habits and funny experiences, racism, sexism, infidelity, eating disorders, drug abuse and mental health issues” (Brown 2009). Specific examples include a woman who disclosed that “no one knows I have a husband . . .,” a person who wrote, “I like to make mixed CDs and leave them in random mailboxes,” and a woman who revealed, “I wake up early every morning to fix my makeup and then hop back in bed [with my partner].” For such secrets to remain hidden, those keeping them have had to engage in what sociologists call impression management, a concept that is part of the dramaturgical approach to social interaction.

Life as Theater

Sociologist Erving Goffman's (1959) writings revolve around the assumption that "life is a dramatically acted thing" (p. 72). He offered the dramaturgical model for analyzing social encounters. **Dramaturgical sociology** studies social interactions emphasizing the ways in which those involved work to create, maintain, dismantle, and present a shared understanding of reality (Kivisto and Pittman 2007).

► Goffman uses the analogy of the theater to describe this work of impression management. In the theater, actors use scripted dialogue, costumes, gestures, and settings to convey a particular reality to the audience. Social encounters are like theater, and the involved parties are like actors in costume and on stage performing roles. Like actors they must work, in conjunction with other cast members, to convince their "audience" that they are who they appear to be or who they say they are.



Master Sgt. Val Gempis

◀ In social encounters, as on a stage, people manage the setting (stage), their dress (costumes), and their words and their gestures (script) to correspond to the impression they are trying to make. This process is called impression management. The photograph shows people performing the role of football fans. From a dramaturgical point of view they are in "costume," on "stage" with appropriate props, and following a "script" that we all recognize.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John L. Beaman

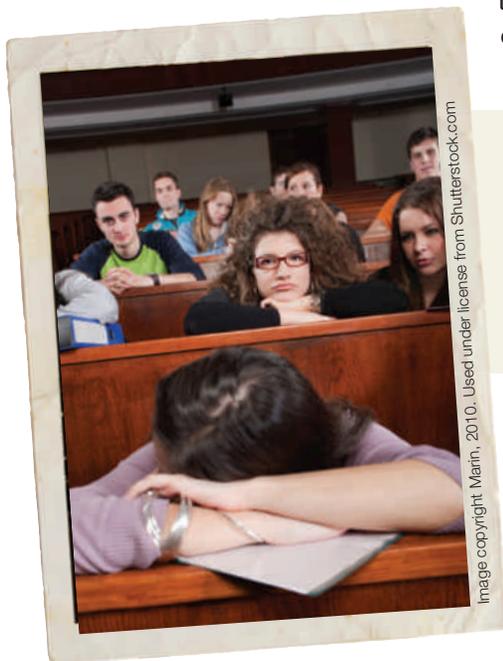
Managing Impressions

When managing impressions some people behave in completely calculating ways with the goal of evoking a particular response (Goffman 1959). An example of such calculation involves someone presenting a photograph taken 10 years earlier as an up-to-date likeness on a social networking website. Likewise, thieves posing as utility workers, who knock on doors and request permission to enter under false pretenses, are thoroughly calculating in their attempt to gain entrance (the desired response) so they can rob the occupants.

Impression management is not always self-serving; sometimes people have to talk or behave in a particular way, because the status they occupy requires them to do so. Coaches work to hide any doubts about whether they think their team

can win and instead express great optimism in team meetings. They engage in impression management because that is what coaches are expected to do. At other times people are unaware that they are engaged in impression management because they are simply behaving in ways they regard as natural. Women engage in impression management when they put on makeup, dye their hair, or shave their legs even if they never question the reason for doing so, which is to present themselves as something they are not. Men engage in impression management when they hide their emotions in stressful situations so that no one questions their masculinity.

Goffman (1959) judges the success of impression management by whether an audience “plays along with the performance.” If the audience plays along, the actor has successfully projected a desired definition of the situation or has at least cultivated an understanding among those in the audience that they will uphold that definition even if they doubt an actor’s abilities and intentions. According to Goffman, there are times that an audience goes along simply because that actor is “a representative of something” considered important to the society; that is, the audience gives deference, not “because of what they personally think of that actor but in spite of it” (p. 210).



◀ Most students manage to stay awake in class or at least give the appearance that they are paying attention, even when they think the teacher is not very good. They do so, not out of respect for the teacher they view as incompetent, but out of respect for the position that the teacher occupies.

Goffman (1959) recognized that there is a dark side of impression management that occurs when people manipulate their audience in deliberately deceitful and hurtful ways. But impression management can also be constructive. If people said whatever they wanted and behaved entirely as they pleased, social order would break down.

Goffman argues that social order depends on people at least conveying the impression that they are living up to the societal expectations, standards, and agreements by which they know others judge them. According to Goffman, in most social interactions people weigh the costs of losing their audience against the costs of losing their integrity. If keeping the audience seems more important, impression management is viewed as necessary; if being completely honest and upfront seems more important, we may take the risk of losing our audience.

Front and Back Stage

Goffman used a variety of concepts to elaborate on the process by which impressions are managed—including the idea of front and back stage. Just as the theater has a front stage and a back stage, so too does everyday life. The **front stage** is the area visible to the audience, where people feel compelled to present themselves in expected ways. Thus, when people step into an established social role such as a teacher in relation to students or a doctor in relation to patients, they step onto a front stage such as a classroom or an examining room (Goffman 1959).

The **back stage** is the area out of the audience's sight, where individuals let their guard down and do things that would be inappropriate or unexpected in a front-stage setting. Because back-stage behavior frequently contradicts front-stage behavior, we take great care to conceal it from the audience. In the back stage, a "person can relax, drop his front, forgo his speaking lines, and step out of character" (Goffman 1959, p. 112).

- ▶ The division between front stage and back stage can be found in nearly every social setting. Often that division is separated by a door or sign signaling that only certain people such as "employees only" can enter the back stage without permission or knocking.



Goffman uses a restaurant as an example of a social setting that has clear boundaries between the back stage and front stage. Restaurant employees do things in the kitchen, pantry, and break room (back stage) that they would never do in the dining areas (front stage), such as eating from customers' plates, dropping food on the floor and putting it back on a plate, and yelling at one another. Once they enter the dining area, however, such behavior stops. Of course, a restaurant is only one example of the many settings in which the concepts of front stage and back stage apply.

The Self and Impression Management

Goffman (1959) maintains that the self "is a product of a scene that comes off." To put it another way, the self is a performed character, rising out of performances (pp. 252–253). The self cannot be thought of as a lone actor; rather, it depends on a supporting cast and stage. For example, a firefighter exists only in relation to a social whole that includes a fire station, other firefighters, and victims of fire. Goffman (1959) argues that any analysis of interaction cannot focus on the individual person. Rather, the focus should be on what he calls the **team**, a group of people linked together in interaction for a common social purpose (Kivisto and Pittman 2007).

Anxiety dreams, something everyone has experienced on some occasion, get at the importance and necessity of a team in presenting the self. Anxiety dreams are about "scenes" that fail and "teammates" who do not cooperate, as described in this example by a teacher who fails to gain the cooperation of her team.

My room is never prepared. Nothing is set up. The custodians left the furniture smooshed against the wall. I open the cupboards and they are completely bare. There aren't even pencils. . . (Barrett 2005)

Critical Thinking

Describe an anxiety dream you have had. Describe it in terms of the scenes that failed and the "teammates" who did not cooperate.

Key Terms

back stage

front stage

team

dramaturgical sociology

Ethnomethodology

Objective

You will learn an observational, investigative method of studying how people construct social order.



Missy Glish

How would you react if you saw a mother lighting a cigarette while holding a toddler?

Most of the time our encounters with others can be classified as ordinary and routine. That is, we have little reason to question what is going on. Think about the number of times we see a parent carrying a small child and feel no need to question that parent's motives; we take it for granted that parents want to protect their children from harm. We think to question parents' motives only when something is out of place, as when we see parents smoking in front of their children. It is the taken-for-granted quality of most social encounters that gives the seemingly ordinary and routine aspects of life a special hold over us, making the commonplace "impervious to deeper analysis" (Cuzzort and King 2002, pp. 307). The commonplace lulls us into complacency.

Ethnomethodology

Sociologist Harold Garfinkel coined the term *ethnomethodology* more than 50 years ago. **Ethnomethodology** is an investigative and observational approach that focuses on how people make sense of everyday social activities and experiences. Ethnomethodologists assume that people have to work at making social

encounters meaningful. Social encounters are meaningful when both parties share essentially the same understanding of the situation. Ethnomethodologists gather descriptions and accounts from people to understand how people are able to recognize what is going on and how they respond and work together to produce a shared social order.

Ethnomethodologists seek to penetrate a reality that those caught up in it cannot even begin to question (Cuzzort and King 2002). Garfinkel maintains that the only way we can possibly get at the structure and character of routine social interactions is by disrupting expectations. Once expectations are disrupted, ethnomethodologists observe how people react and/or take action to restore normalcy.

Disrupting Social Order

Disrupting the social order is perhaps the best known investigative technique ethnomethodologists employ. By disrupting order, and then observing how the participating parties handle that disruption, ethnomethodologists gain insights about how order is organized and upheld. They also gain insights into the work people do to maintain the order they know. To reveal such efforts, ethnomethodologists do something to disrupt the taken-for-granted ways of doing things. They ask, “What can be done to make trouble . . . to produce and sustain bewilderment, consternation, and confusion; to produce the social structured effects of anxiety, shame, guilt, indignation; to produce disorganized interaction?” (Garfinkel 1967, pp. 37–38). As one example, Garfinkel (1967) asked his students to engage an acquaintance in conversation and insist that that person clarify everything he or she says by asking “what do you mean?” or “would you please explain?”

Acquaintance: (waving hand cheerily) How are you?

Student of Garfinkel: How am I in regard to what? My health, my finances, my school work, my peace of mind, my . . . ?

Acquaintance: (red in face and suddenly out of control) Look I was just trying to be polite. Frankly I don't give a damn how you are! (p. 44)

As a second possibility, Garfinkel instructed his students to engage someone in conversation and to pretend that the chosen person was deliberately misleading them in some way. Garfinkel (1967) noted that only two of his 35 students chose strangers. “Most admitted being afraid to carry this assignment out with a stranger thinking things could get out of hand.” So they selected “friends, roommates, and family members” as subjects (p. 51). Even then, students reported rehearsing in their imagination possible responses and consequences.

► Would you get on this bus, and then act as if you did not trust this bus driver to take you to the right location? That is what one of Garfinkel's students did. She chose to act as if the bus driver was not forthcoming about whether the bus was on a route that passed by a certain street. After asking the bus driver and then seeking his reassurance, the bus driver responded, “Look lady I told you once, didn't I? How many times do I have to tell you?” (p. 52).



Lisa Southwick

In another case, the student chose to question her husband about his reasons for working the evening before and about whether he was really at a poker game several days earlier as he claimed. Other assignments Garfinkel devised included asking his students to

- initiate a game of tic-tac-toe with someone. After the chosen opponent made the first move, the student should erase the mark and move it to another square; or
- engage a person in an ordinary conversation. Sometime later in the conversation, the student should open his or her jacket and show a device recording the conversation and announce “See what I have.”

► As a final example of the kinds of assignments Garfinkel devised, he asked students to select a person, other than a family member, with whom to strike up an ordinary conversation. During the course of conversation the student was to bring his or her face increasingly closer to the selected subject to a point where the student’s and subject’s noses almost touched.



Missy Gish

Garfinkel noted that his students found it very difficult to disrupt routine expectations. Depending on the specific experiment, students expressed a range of emotions, including anxiety, distrust, hostility, anger, frustration, and isolation. Garfinkel related his students’ reluctance to disrupt expectations to **trust**, the taken-for-granted assumption that in a given social encounter others share the same expectations and definitions of the situation and that they will act to meet those expectations. When one or more of the involved parties, including the student, are put in a position in which they are forced to violate those expectations and/or to mistrust another, the relationship becomes problematic, deteriorates, and eventually collapses.

Critical Thinking

Imagine you were a student in Garfinkel’s class. How would you feel about the kinds of assignments he required? Which of the Garfinkel assignments described in this module would you feel most comfortable carrying out? The least comfortable? Why?

Key Terms

ethnomethodology

trust

Reference Groups

Objective

You will learn that reference groups provide standards by which people evaluate their behavior or performance.



U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Eric A. Clement

Are you impressed by this woman's ability to do pull-ups? By what standard are you judging her?

Chances are you used the standards of a particular reference group—women. Using that group as the standard, you might rate her performance as exceptional, because less than 1 percent of females can do pull-ups.

Reference Groups

Sociologists define a **reference group** as any group whose standards people take into account when evaluating something about themselves or others, whether it be personal achievements, aspirations in life, or individual circumstances. The family is an important reference group, as are classmates, teammates, and co-workers. A person does not have to belong to a reference group to be influenced by its standards. A reference group can be a group to which a person belonged to in the past or hopes to belong to. There are three broad types of reference groups: normative, comparison, and audience (Kemper 1968).

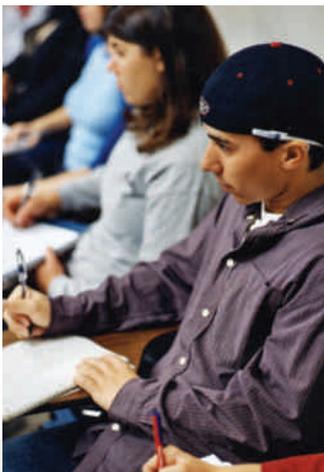
NORMATIVE REFERENCE GROUPS. Normative reference groups provide people with norms that they draw upon or consider when evaluating a behavior or a course of action. The mark of a normative reference group's influence is that the person simply takes its norms into consideration; in the end the person may follow those norms or pursue a contradictory course of action (Kemper 1968). Regardless, the person takes the group's norms into account.

► This poster reminds parents that their children use them as a reference group. If parents smoke, it is likely that their children will at least consider taking up smoking as well.

COMPARISON GROUPS. Comparison reference groups provide people with a frame of reference for

- judging the fairness of a situation in which they find themselves (i.e., “Everyone at work earns \$15.00 per hour while I only earn \$10.00 per hour. What’s up with that?”);
- rationalizing or justifying their actions or a way of thinking (i.e., “All taxpayers cheat the government, why should I be the exception?” “Everyone I work with takes home office supplies; it’s a way to make up for the low salaries we earn.”); and
- assessing the adequacy of their performance relative to others in the same situation, as when a student earns a 68 on a chemistry test and feels terrible until she assesses that grade in light of her peers’ test scores. When she learns that the class average was a 48 and the highest grade was a 70, she feels pretty good. With the curve, a 68 is an A.

AUDIENCE GROUPS. Audience reference groups consist of those who are watching, listening, or otherwise giving attention to someone. In addressing an audience, people consider what they believe that audience wants or needs and then adjust the message accordingly (Kemper 1968). Candidates running for elected office often alter their message depending on the audience.

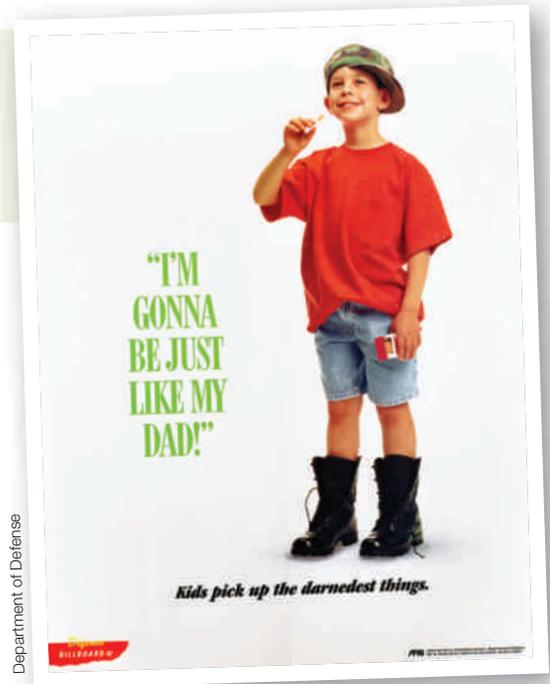


Department of Defense



James Denton Wylie, Sentinel editor

▲ Imagine a politician scheduled to speak before an audience of college students and then to an audience of retired adults. The politician considers issues important to each audience group then tailors the message accordingly. When speaking to college students, the politician is likely to mention efforts to increase access to college loans and grants. When speaking to retired adults the candidate is sure to mention efforts to safeguard Social Security benefits.



Department of Defense

Nonmembers as a Reference Group

When thinking about groups and their importance in shaping social identity, we often overlook the significant role played by those who don't belong—the nonmembers. Nonmembers include those who are eligible to join but do not, as well as those who are ineligible. From the group's point of view, it is the eligible nonmembers, including ex-members, who reduce its completeness. A group is complete when everyone who is eligible joins and no one leaves the group (Simmel 1950).



▲ The fact that only 12.3 percent of American workers belong to unions calls attention to those who could join but have not. Nonmembers include those workers who outright reject union membership and those who work to dismantle or resist unions.

Obviously, the more complete a group, the greater its power and influence (Merton 1957). Those eligible who outright refuse to join cast doubt on a group's purpose and value and reduce the group's power and influence (Merton 1957). Table 5.5a shows a typology of nonmembers.

Table 5.5a: Typology of Eligible and Ineligible Nonmembers

This table shows six types of nonmembers, three of which are *eligible* for membership and three of which are *ineligible*. Eligible means that people meet criteria for membership.

Nonmember Type	Eligible for Membership	Ineligible for Membership
Motivated to Be a Member	Candidates for Membership Those awaiting induction	Marginal Men/Women Those rejected outright as members; people on the outside looking in
Indifferent	Potential Members Those who feel neutral about joining the group	Detached Nonmembers Those who feel neutral about being ineligible
Motivated Against Membership	Autonomous Nonmembers Those who refuse to join, calling into question a group's importance and purpose	Antagonistic Nonmembers Those who seek to dismantle the group or change its charter

Source: Adapted from Fishbein (1963)

The prevalence of each nonmember type offers clues about a group's reputation, standing, or influence. For example, what does it say when there are large numbers of people eligible to join, but very few do? What does it mean if there are large numbers of people considered ineligible but who want to join? Think of a group to which you belong, perhaps a school-related group such as the Black Student Association, Sociology Club, College Democrats or Republicans, or even the football team. Which of the six types of nonmembers is most prevalent? For example, are there many people who are ineligible for membership yet still motivated to be a member (e.g., females who want to play football)?

Critical Thinking

Think of a group to which you belong. Look at the six-category typology of nonmembers. Is there a nonmember category that influences or affects your group in some way?

Key Terms

audience reference group

normative reference group

comparison reference group

reference group

Ingroups and Outgroups

Objective

You will learn the conditions under which the presence of an outgroup unifies those who belong to an ingroup.

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance
Cpl. Scott M. Biscuiti



Todd Mozers

Think of a group to which you belong. How does that group distinguish itself?

These young men pictured are part of a break dancing group. What binds them together is an ability to break dance and a love for that activity. This break dancing group also distinguishes itself by the way its members fold their arms when posing and even by the way they gaze into the camera. The break dancers' identities derive from *not* belonging to other types of dance groups, such as Irish dancers.

A group distinguishes itself by the symbolic and physical boundaries its members establish to set it apart from nonmembers. Examples of physical boundaries may be gated communities, special buildings, or other distinct locations. Symbolic boundaries include membership cards, colors, or dress codes such as a uniform. A group also distinguishes itself by establishing criteria for membership including a certain ancestry, a particular physical trait, or some accomplishment (e.g., a specified level of education, passing a test, qualifying for a team, paying dues, buying certain attire). The boundaries and membership criteria are ways groups distinguish “us” from “them.”

Ingroup-Outgroup Dynamics

Sociologists use the terms *ingroup* and *outgroup* in reference to intergroup dynamics. An **ingroup** is the group to which a person belongs, identifies, admires, and/or feels loyalty. An **outgroup** is any group to which a person does *not* belong. Obviously, one person's ingroup is another person's outgroup. Ingroup formation is built on established boundaries and membership criteria. Ingroup members think of themselves as "us" in relation to some specific or even amorphous "them" (Brewer 1999). Examples of specific ingroup-outgroup pairings include rival gangs such as the Bloods and the Crips or the teams formed for a reality television show such as *Survivor*. More amorphous ingroup-outgroup pairings include Christians and Muslims, Republicans and Democrats, Steelers versus Bengals fans, Obama supporters and detractors, and the far left and far right. Amorphous means that members, while very different, share a specific characteristic such as a party or religious affiliation that binds them together despite those differences.



© Ed Kashi/Corbis

▲ Ingroups and outgroups are everywhere. This woman begging for money is keenly aware of the ingroup social class of which she is a part when she seeks donations from an outgroup social class whose members drive SUVs.

Depending on the circumstances, ingroup and outgroup dynamics may be characterized as indifferent, cooperative, competitive, or even violent. When sociologists study ingroup and outgroup dynamics they ask: "Under what circumstances does the presence of an outgroup unify an ingroup and create an 'us' versus 'them' dynamic?" Four such circumstances are described.

1. *An ingroup assumes a position of moral superiority.* **Moral superiority** is the belief that an ingroup's standards represent the only way. In fact, there is no room for negotiation and there is no tolerance for other ways (Brewer 1999). Moral superiority can express itself in a variety of ways, including refusing to interact with or show interest in an outgroup, establishing laws segregating an ingroup from an outgroup, or engaging in violence toward an outgroup.



T4c: Roberts, May 5, 1945

▲ Feelings of moral superiority characterize the caste-like status system that places students among the popular or unpopular. It also figured prominently and tragically in the event known as the Holocaust. The photograph shows some of the wedding bands, salvaged for their gold, that Germans removed from Jews held in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

2. *An ingroup perceives an outgroup as a threat.* In this situation ingroup members believe (rightly or wrongly) that an outgroup threatens its way of life. The ingroup holds real or imagined fear that the outgroup is seeking

- political power,
- control of scarce and valued resources,
- a larger share of the “pie,”
- retribution for past wrongs, or
- return of lost power.

► Real or imagined belief fuels fear and hostility. The motel owner is using an ingroup-outgroup dynamic of American- versus foreign-owned to advertise his motel to potential customers. The suggestion is that “American-owned” is in danger of disappearing. In the United States an estimated 50 percent of all motels are owned by people of Indian (as in India) origin. Of course, that owner may still be a U.S. citizen or even American-born (Varadarajan 1999; Asian American Hotel Owners Association 2009).



Chris Cabeira

3. *An ingroup seeks to distinguish itself from an outgroup.* When an ingroup and an outgroup share and pursue the same purpose and values, the potential for conflict increases. Recall that ingroup identity depends on distinguishing itself from those in outgroups, even those outgroups similar in purpose. Those efforts inevitably become competitive when the advantaged ingroups seek to maintain their edge over outgroups or accentuate their superior status, and disadvantaged ingroups, on the other hand, seek to close the gap in status (Brewer 1999).



Sgt. John Hoellwarth

◀ The Marines, Air Force, Army, and Navy are distinct branches of the U.S. military that share the same values and goals: to defend America and its interests. The four groups often gather to “prove” which branch is superior. They hold tug-of-war competitions or compete against one another in sports such as football, track and field, basketball, weightlifting, and bodybuilding.

4. *Ingroup-outgroup tensions may be evoked for political gain.* Those with political ambitions may deliberately evoke ingroup-outgroup tensions as a strategy for mobilizing support for some political purpose (Brewer 1999). Thus, a candidate running for elected office may declare an outgroup such as undocumented workers or gays a threat to the American way of life as a strategy for rallying support for his or her campaign.

Multiple Ingroup Identities

Any one person belongs to many ingroups, including those organized around a racial or ethnic heritage, a religion, an occupation, a neighborhood, a sports team, and so on. Because the typical person identifies with many ingroups, it reduces dependence on any one group membership as the source of identity. For example, people are likely to know others whom they consider part of their ingroup (e.g., classmates) but also part of an outgroup (e.g., a different religious affiliation). The cross-cutting nature of ingroup-outgroup affiliations reduces the chances of people developing polarizing loyalties and increases tolerance for difference. Multiple ingroup affiliations mean that people, as a matter of routine, participate in any number of conflicts with those in outgroups, none of which can be all-encompassing. In fact, one could argue that the variety of ingroup-outgroup conflicts in which the typical person is routinely embroiled acts as a balancing mechanism so that one conflict does not become all-encompassing (Brewer 1999).

Critical Thinking

Give a specific example of an ingroup-outgroup conflict of which you are a part.

Key Terms

ingroup

moral superiority

outgroup

Applying Theory: Phenomenology

5.7

Objective

You will learn to apply the theory of phenomenology to understanding ways people construct reality.



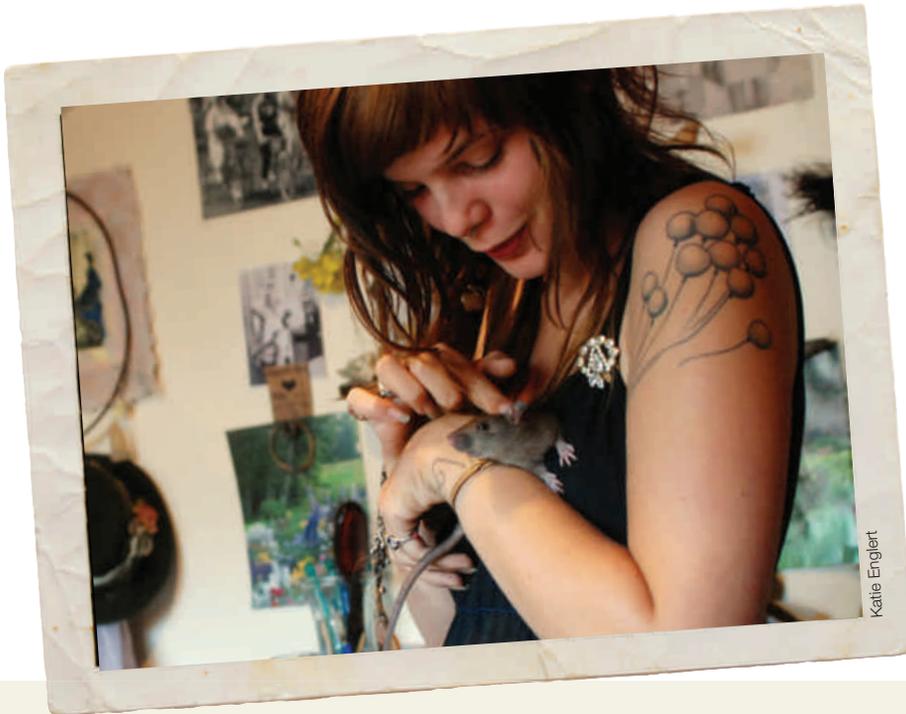
Imagine you are the parents of these transgender children, pictured, with the anatomy of a boy who insist that they are girls. How would you react to and make sense of the situation? More importantly, how do these children make sense of it?

The social construction of reality (the process by which people make sense of the world) fits within the theoretical tradition known as **phenomenology**, an analytical approach that focuses on the everyday world and how people actively produce and sustain meaning (Appelrouth and Edles 2007).

The Social Construction of Reality

Sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) wrote what is now considered a classic book, *The Social Construction of Reality*. The two sociologists offer a “sociological analysis of the reality of everyday life” that emphasizes the knowledge people draw on to create the reality upon which they act (p. 19). Berger and Luckmann argue that, for the most part, ordinary people do not question that reality or the knowledge they use to create that reality. Berger and Luckmann are interested in understanding the forces that determine how the world appears to people; it does not matter if that world is “real.” In this regard Berger and Luckmann made a number of points about how people construct reality.

1. ASSIGNED MEANINGS. For the most part, everything going on around us has been named and assigned meaning before we arrived on the scene. We live in a geographic location that has a name and a reputation, and we use tools with names like “can opener” and “computer.” We are part of a web of human relationships, including teacher-student, employee-coworkers, mother-daughter, and so on. Our world is already ordered and assigned meaning through the language we learn.



▲ We take for granted that most of the things in the world we inhabit day-to-day have a name and a meaning, until we encounter something that has a name and/or meaning with which we are not familiar. Most Americans have assigned a meaning to a rat, but that meaning rarely evokes “pet.”

2. ZONE PROXIMITY. Berger and Luckmann divide the reality of everyday life into a continuum of zones. At one end of the continuum are the zones closest to us: the zones in which we actually live our lives—home, work, school, neighborhood—and experience directly. At the other end of the continuum are the

zones that are most remote and farthest from our direct experience. People give greatest attention to the zones closest to them because their interest is heightened by “what they are doing, have done or plan to do in it” (p. 22). Typically, people are less interested in the remote zones because what is going on there does not directly affect them and is perceived as less urgent than what is going on in the zones closest to them.



DOD photo by Fred W. Baker III

▲ This image in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti is just one of many images portraying the devastating events that happen around the world each year. If we reflect on this scene, we realize that more than one million were left homeless and hundreds of thousands died. But the remoteness of Haiti to most people’s everyday lives makes the devastation hard to comprehend and typically elicits fleeting sympathy from most not directly affected.

3. ROUTINE. Everyday life can also be divided into a continuum of sectors, from the most routine to very problematic. The **routine** includes the usual ways of thinking and doing things. The *very problematic* includes any unanticipated disruption to routine that challenges “reality.” As long as the routine is not disrupted, there is no need to question reality. Berger and Luckmann caution, however, that when the so-called routine is disrupted people search for routine explanations and thus try to keep their sense of reality intact. One illustration comes from the situation of transgender children. Many parents of these children report receiving advice from others that assume things could get back to “normal” “if you would stop letting your kid dress like a girl, it wouldn’t act like a girl” (Kirchner and Wyker 2009). Such advice fails to recognize that routine explanations do not apply. As one parent of a transgender child put it: “It’s not some obsessive craziness, it’s not some mania. It’s not something he saw on television and decided to imitate. This is something that every morning he wakes up and he’s living it, he’s experiencing it. This is his experience; this is what’s going on inside his brain and soul . . .” (Kirchner and Wyker 2009).

4. BARRIERS TO CHALLENGING “REALITY.” It is not easy to challenge reality if only because the language we use to describe and think about it reinforces that reality. While the existence of transgender people challenges established reality, the language we have to think about the transgender experience supports a binary reality of male and female. So in talking about their situation, a transgender child can only reference being a boy or girl in thinking through this situation: “I’m mad at God because I’m a girl, but I’m not” (Kirchner and Wyker 2009).

5. MENTAL FRAMEWORKS. We draw upon typificatory schemes to organize the world and our relationships. **Typificatory schemes** are systematic mental

frameworks that allow people to place what they observe into pre-existing social categories with essential characteristics. For example, we meet a person and learn that he is a “man,” “Asian,” and “athlete.” Using typificatory schemes, it may never cross our mind that this Asian male athlete might be a basketball or football player. This thought seems obvious only until that person shows evidence that he is not typical.

◀ Generally, most people do not associate dunking a basketball with Asian athletes. Upon seeing an Asian athlete dunk, many would immediately label him atypical or an exception to the rule, as a way of keeping their guiding assumptions intact. It is unlikely that they would think about the social forces that may have interfered with Asians as a group not developing this talent.

6. OBSERVATIONS FROM CLOSE AND FAR. The social reality of everyday life can be conceptualized as a continuum of experiences.

At one end of the continuum are those with whom we frequently and intensively interact—our inner circle. Those who exist within our inner circle are in the best position to challenge typifications we might hold of them—the more experience we have with them, the more likely that a typification will not hold. At the other end of the continuum are those anonymous others with whom we will likely never interact; they have almost no power to alter typifications we hold about them because we observe them from afar primarily through the lens of the media.

7. IMAGINING PAST AND FUTURE. Typifications are not just applied to those who exist in the present. We also apply typifications to those who have preceded and will follow us in history. We relate to our predecessors through



© Kimberly White/Reuters/Corbis Date Photographed December 15, 2005

typifications that are often projections of an imagined reality; that is, we may describe our great-grandparents as immigrants who worked hard to realize the American dream. Those who will follow us are typified in even more anonymous ways such as great-great-great-grandchildren or as future generations who might never suffer a particular illness because of a likely medical breakthrough. Typifications made about future generations are the projections of a current generation's hopes and worries (we may think that future generations will likely resent something we did such as running up the national debt and leaving them to pay it down). When some people talk about the effects of global warming, they often evoke images of those yet to be born by presenting a "nameless" baby making a plea to those in the current generations to conserve.

8. BIOLOGICAL CLOCK. We create reality by locating ourselves in time. All humans possess a biological (inner) clock and all societies impose time constraints on events that result in people waiting until they are old enough. (In the United States a child must wait until he or she is 16 to drive.) Each life is a finite episode in an infinite stream of time. Time existed before we were born and will exist after we die. We expect to live a certain amount of time and yet realize that our expectations of having a certain lifespan might not come to pass. The knowledge that we will die elicits an anxiety that increases as we age.

➤ The public fascination with American Dara Torres, at age 40 the oldest woman to participate in an Olympic swimming competition, was enhanced by the biological reality that we cannot endlessly pursue an activity, if only because time forces us all to move on. Torres defied "time" not only by competing in the 2008 Olympics but also by winning an Olympic medal. It is also likely the last occasion in which she will participate at this level of competition.



9. TIME. The clock and calendar give us a decisive sense of our time in history (born on a particular day, graduated from high school in a particular year, joined the army at a particular point). Whether we know it or not, this sense of time informs our daily reality. Consider how those who wake from a coma are

compelled to locate themselves in time and “re-enter the reality of everyday life” by asking what day it is, and what year. Others help by filling them in on key events that occurred. Imagine what you would say to 38-year-old Sarah Scantlin, a woman who fell into a coma in 1985 after a car accident and awoke in 2005. Among other things, her family made her aware of her age, as Sarah believed she was still 18. The family also filled her in on events such as September 11, 2001, that have transformed the reality Sarah knew before the coma (Brown 2005).

Key Terms

phenomenology

routine

typificatory schemes

Summary: Putting It All Together

The process by which people make sense of the world is known as the social construction of reality. When people observe something, they assign a meaning, informed by past experiences. That meaning becomes the basis for a response. The Thomas Theorem specifies the link between assigned meaning and response: “if men define situations as real they are real in their consequences.” However, when people assign false definitions to a situation it can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Most people form judgments about cause and take action without complete information. When people try to explain something, they tend to focus on one of two types of causal factors: dispositional (forces over which people are supposed to have control) and situational (forces outside a person’s control). Usually people stress situational factors to explain their own failures and dispositional factors to explain others’ failures. With regard to their own success people point to dispositional factors but to situational factors to explain others’ successes.

The dramaturgical model offers insights about the role people play in constructing reality and in managing impressions. That model views social encounters as if they were theater and the involved parties as if they were actors performing roles on a stage. Like actors, they must manage impressions and convince their “audience” that they are who they appear to be or who they say they are. Other related concepts include front stage, back stage, and team.

Ethnomethodology is an investigative and observational approach that gives attention to how people make sense of everyday social activities and experiences and collaborate with others to create, give, and sustain order to social life. To understand what holds social order together, ethnomethodologists disrupt that order and then observe how the participating parties respond to that disruption.

Social groups play important roles in helping people assign meanings. In particular people use reference groups to evaluate personal achievements, aspirations, or circumstances. Reference groups encompass three types: normative, comparison, and audience. Ingroup and outgroup dynamics also play key roles in helping people to construct reality. When sociologists study ingroup-outgroup dynamics they ask, “Under what conditions does the existence of an outgroup create a ‘we’ versus ‘them’ dynamic?”

[Can You Top This Photo?]

Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit two photos with a caption to illustrate an example of an ingroup and an outgroup.

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Scott M. Biscuiti



Todd Mozes

THE SATURDAY EVENING
POST

OCTOBER 23, 1943

10¢



**We Must Save
Free Enterprise**
By VICE-PRESIDENT WALLACE

Burma Bomber
By PETE MARTIN

Courtesy of Linda Sama, UCLA School of Nursing

6 CHAPTER

DEVIANCE

- 6.1** Defining Deviance
- 6.2** Mechanisms of Social Control
- 6.3** Labeling Theory
- 6.4** Differential Association
- 6.5** Structural Strain Theory
- 6.6** Medicalization of Deviance
- 6.7** Crime
- 6.8** Applying Theory: Post-Structural Theories
- Summary** Putting It All Together

This 1943 magazine cover would be unthinkable today because clearly any nurse who encouraged a hospital patient to smoke would be considered deviant. While one might be tempted to argue that smoking is now deviant for good reasons, this argument fails to consider that negative health effects of smoking, even secondhand smoke, were known as early as 1900. Yet those warnings were not seriously heeded for almost 80 years. The then prevailing voices of tobacco advertisers convinced men and eventually women that smoking was healthy, even liberating. Sociologists are interested in the process by which behavior gets defined as deviant; that process is usually not a simple one.

Defining Deviance

Objective

You will learn how sociologists define deviance and how almost any behavior or appearance can be defined as deviant depending on context.



Chris Caldeira

If you saw a child under age five riding a motorbike with a parent on a busy road wearing no helmet and no restraining device, how would you react?

Such a scene attracts little, if any, attention in countries such as Vietnam, where the major mode of transportation out of economic necessity is the motorbike. In the United States, a country of automobiles and laws about child safety, this scene would very likely be met with harsh stares. If police officers noticed this behavior, their reaction would vary by state. Illinois police officers might notice but could do nothing because it is not illegal there. Washington state police officers, on the other hand, could issue a ticket because in that state it is illegal to transport a small child on a motorbike (Eikenberry and Holcomb 1984; Piwowar 2005). The fact that a child on a motorbike with no helmet has different meanings—in this case legal meanings—points to the challenges sociologists face when defining deviance.

Defining Deviance

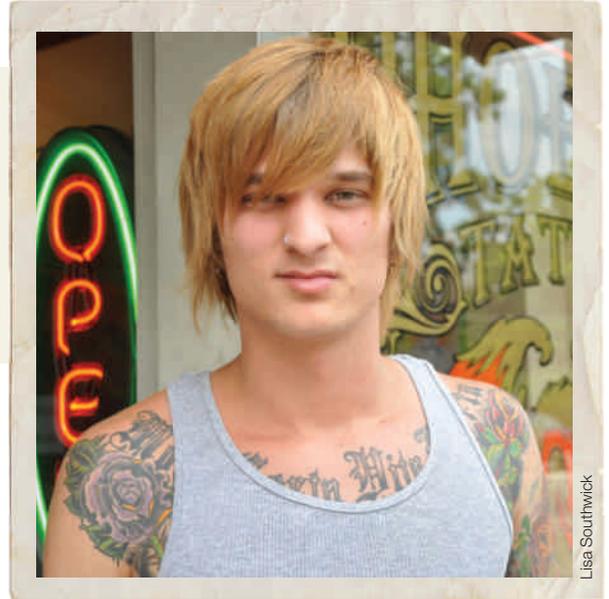
Deviance is any behavior or physical appearance that is socially challenged and/or condemned because it departs from the norms and expectations of some group. **Norms** are rules and expectations for the way people are supposed to behave, feel, and appear in a particular social situation. Norms exist for virtu-

ally every kind of situation: how many times a day to eat, how to greet a friend, what to wear to school, how to handle the American flag, and when to use a gun.

Norms can vary according to whom they apply and according to whether people (1) know they exist, (2) accept them, (3) enforce them uniformly, (4) think them important, (5) back them up with the force of law, and (6) adhere to them in their public *and* private lives (Gibbs 1965). Consider speed limits, which are backed by the force of law. Most people know the speed limits from observing posted signs but, depending on setting, do not find it important to follow them to the letter of the law. In fact, most drivers exceed posted limits by 10 or 15 miles per hour without getting caught and, when caught, are not always cited for the exact number of miles they were driving over that limit.

► Norms vary by group. Some people, depending on the groups with which they identify, celebrate tattoos as a normal or expected rite of passage; other people treat tattoos as a broad indicator of some character flaw and believe those getting them will come to regret it as they age.

There may be seemingly valid reasons that a norm exists—for example, to prevent harm to self and/or others. But there are just as many examples of norms in place for which there seems to be no valid reason. People often overlook behavior that is objectively deviant, such as corporate misconduct, but take sharp notice of behavior that is for all practical purposes harmless, such as a certain appearance, way of dressing, or way of expressing sexuality (Erikson 1966).



Lisa Southwick

The Sociological Perspective

The definition of deviance above suggests that what makes something deviant is the presence of a social audience that regards a behavior or appearance as deviant and takes some kind of action to discourage it. Deviance is not inherent to a specific behavior. Marrying a first cousin is not in itself deviant; if so, that behavior would be deviant everywhere in the world. Deviance is something that is conferred. For sociologists the critical factor is not the individual who violates norms *per se*, it is the social group's response that ultimately determines whether a behavior is deviant. Thus we can say that that deviance exists in relation to norms in effect at a particular time and place.

The sociological contribution to understanding deviance lies not with studying the deviant individuals *per se*, but with studying the context under which something is deemed deviant. Sociologists note that almost any behavior or appearance can qualify as deviant under the right circumstances. How is it that anything can be defined as deviant? Émile Durkheim offers an intriguing explanation. Durkheim (1901) argued that ideas about what is deviant vary but that deviance is present in all societies. He defined deviance as those acts that offend collective norms and expectations.

The fact that, always and everywhere, some acts offend collective sentiments led him to conclude there is no such thing as a society without deviance. According to Durkheim, deviance will be present even in a “community of saints” (p. 100). Even in a seemingly perfect society, acts that most persons would view as insignificant or minor may offend, create a sense of scandal, or be treated as crimes. To explain this, Durkheim (1901) drew an analogy between a society populated with seemingly exemplary people and the “perfect and upright” person.

Just as “perfect and upright” people judge their own smallest failings with a severity that others reserve for the most serious offenses, so too do those who belong to groups considered exemplary. In such societies, some act will offend, simply because “it is impossible for everyone to be alike if only because each of us cannot stand in the same spot” (p. 100). Thus, what makes an act or appearance deviant, even criminal, is not so much the act itself or its consequences, but rather the fact that the group has defined it as something dangerous or threatening to its well-being.



LCPL Bryson K. Jones, USMC



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Adaeucus Brooks

▲ Military boot camp represents a setting in which acts that most people would view as minor offenses, if that, are treated as crimes. A tiny bit of hair on the face, or the butt of a gun slightly off angle, takes on critical significance as if such acts were crimes.

Durkheim argued that the ritual of identifying and exposing a wrongdoing, determining a punishment, and/or carrying it out is an emotional experience that binds together the members of a group and establishes a sense of order and community. Durkheim argued that a group that went too long without noticing deviance or doing something about it would lose its identity as a group. Perhaps that is why people often define the ways of other cultures as “deviant” because the act of doing so solidifies their national or cultural identity. Some observations from international students follow; each illustrate how noticing departures from group standards builds cultural identity.

In Ghana when students address professors they never call them by their first name as some Americans do. You address them as “doctor,” “sir,” or “m’am”—no exceptions. The same applies to anyone who is older. It is inappropriate to hear a child address an adult by a first name.

Life is very different in India. Parents, teachers, and elders actually hit kids—even kids who are not their own—when they misbehave.

Who Defines What Is Deviant?

In answering the question “Who defines what is deviant?” sociologists focus on the ways in which specific groups (such as undocumented workers), behaviors (such as child abuse), conditions (such as teenage pregnancy, infertility, or pollution), or artifacts (such as song lyrics, guns, art, or tattoos) become defined as problems. In particular, sociologists examine claims makers and claims-making activities.

Claims makers are those who articulate and promote claims and who tend to gain in some way if the targeted audience accepts their claims as true. Claims makers include government officials, advertisers, scientists, professors, and other stakeholders. Claims-making activities are actions taken to draw attention to a claim—actions such as “demanding services, filling out forms, lodging complaints, filing lawsuits, calling press conferences, writing letters of protest, passing resolutions, publishing exposés, placing ads in newspapers, . . . setting up picket lines or boycotts” (Spector and Kitsuse 1977, p. 79).

Studying claimsmaking activities can help us understand why today, smoking in public places has been largely banned in the United States. Before 1980, people could freely smoke in public. In fact professors and students smoked during class without raising an eyebrow from nonsmokers. Today such behavior would be unthinkable.



▲ While one might be tempted to argue that there are now good health-related reasons to justify public smoking bans, that argument fails to consider that negative health effects were claimed as early as 1900, as evidenced by this poster (left) showing a skeleton rising from the smoke of a burning cigarette. However, other claims makers (right) argued successfully for decades that because even doctors smoke, it must be safe.

The success of a claims-making campaign depends on a number of factors: claims makers' access to the media; available resources; position in society; and skill at fund-raising, promotion, and organization. When sociologists study the process by which a group or behavior is defined as deviant or the process by which a problem is defined as no longer deviant, they focus on who makes claims, whose claims are heard, when claims are made, and how audiences respond to them (Best 1989).

Sociologists also pay attention to any labels that claims makers attach to a behavior or appearance and the examples they use to illustrate it (describing a behavior, for example, in medical, moral, genetic, or educational terms). Labels and examples are important because they tend to evoke a particular cause of a problem and a particular solution to it (Best 1989). For example, labeling an addiction—whether it be to gambling, credit card use, prescription drugs, or alcohol—as a medical problem is to locate the cause in the biological workings of the body or mind and to suggest that the solution rests with a drug, a vaccine, or surgery. Labeling an addiction as a personal failing, on the other hand, is to locate the cause in the character of the person, such as an inability to delay gratification or a lack of discipline.

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption that describes Durkheim's ideas about deviance in exemplary communities.

Write a caption here



Hints: In writing this caption

- review Durkheim's theory of deviance, and
- think about what Durkheim would say about a community of monks who are allowed to collect, receive, and consume food only between dawn and noon and who must not consume food at other times or store food.

Critical Thinking

Describe something that your parents say was deviant in their lifetime but is no longer the case today, or something that is deviant today and was not so in the past.

Key Terms

claims makers

deviance

norms

Mechanisms of Social Control

Objective

You will learn the mechanisms groups use to elicit conformity and punish deviance.



Do you think the threat of 24-hour security surveillance and the offer of “free room and board” in jail is enough to deter would-be shoplifters?

This monitoring activity is one example of what sociologists call **mechanisms of social control**, strategies people use to encourage, often force, others to comply with social norms. Ideally, from society’s point of view, people should want to conform. When conformity cannot be achieved voluntarily, mechanisms of social control are employed. Methods of social control include positive and negative sanctions, surveillance, censorship, and authority and group pressure.

Sanctions

Sanctions are reactions of approval or disapproval to behavior that conforms to or departs from group norms. Sanctions can be formal or informal and positive or negative. **Formal sanctions** are reactions backed by laws, rules, or policies specifying the conditions under which people should be rewarded or punished for specific behaviors. By contrast, **informal sanctions** are spontaneous, unofficial expressions of approval not backed by the force of law or official policy. **Positive sanctions** are expressions of approval for compliance. In contrast, **negative sanctions** are expressions of disapproval.



▲ Police officers employ negative formal sanctions when they arrest people suspected of breaking the law. Teens use informal sanctions when they share images via cell phones with the intent of inviting people to praise or ridicule a particular person's behavior.

Censorship and Surveillance

Censorship is an action taken to prevent information believed to be sensitive, unsuitable, or threatening from reaching some audience (e.g., children, voters, employees, prisoners, or others). Censorship relies on censors—people whose job it is to remove the information deemed problematic from movies, books, letters, e-mail, TV, the Internet, and other media. A Harvard Law School study identified China as the country with the most extensive Internet censorship in the world. The study found that Chinese government censors blocked access on some level to 50,000 of the world's 200,000 most popular websites, including *Time* magazine and links to topics such as “Tiananmen Square,” “Falun Gong,” “Tibet,” “Taiwan,” and “democracy” (Kahn 2002; Barboza 2006).

Surveillance, another mechanism of social control, involves monitoring the movements, conversations, and associations of those believed to be or about to be engaged in some wrongdoing and then intervening at appropriate moments. Surveillance activities include telephone tapping, interception of letters and e-mail, observation via closed-circuit television, and electronic monitoring.



◀ With the widespread availability of handheld technologies that can record voice and capture images, there is no situation in which a person is potentially free from the possibility of surveillance.

Sociologist Kingsley Dennis (2008) describes the rise in new forms of decentralized surveillance in which people are able to monitor others through personal and portable devices such as cell phones. Dennis cites 1992 as the year this technology came of age. In that year a bystander videotaped Los Angeles police officers brutally beating Rodney King, a black man who led police on a 100-mile-per-hour car chase and, after being stopped, appeared to disobey police commands to lie down. The tape also showed that officers appeared to use

excessive force. The acquittal of three participating officers triggered five days of rioting in South Central Los Angeles, resulting in dozens of deaths, thousands of injuries, and \$900 million in property damages.

Dennis (2008) points out that in the hands of responsible parties personal recording devices can be liberating tools allowing the public to record wrongdoing. In the wrong hands, such devices can also be used to harass, stalk, intrude, and otherwise ruin lives. Dennis offers one example of what he calls virtual vigilantism that occurred in South Korea after a girl who became known as the “Dog Shit Girl” failed to pick up after her dog when it defecated on the floor of a subway train. A bystander used his mobile phone to photograph the girl, dog, and droppings and posted them online to mobilize the Internet-based community to humiliate her as punishment. The photo became a globally shared story. The girl eventually issued an apology over the Internet saying, “I know I was wrong, but you guys are so harsh. I regret it, . . . if you keep putting me down on the Internet I will sue all the people and at the worst I will commit suicide” (p. 350).

Obedience to Authority

In his now classic study, social psychologist Stanley Milgram (1974) wanted to learn why some people obey an authority figure’s command to behave in ways that conflict with their conscience. Milgram designed an experiment to see how far people would go before they would refuse to conform. He placed an ad in a local paper asking for volunteers. When participants arrived at the study site—a university—they were greeted by a man in a laboratory jacket who explained to them and another apparent volunteer that the study’s purpose was to find out whether the use of punishment improves a person’s ability to learn. Unknown to each participant, the apparent volunteer was actually a confederate—someone working in cooperation with the investigator. The participant and the confederate drew lots to determine who would be the teacher and who would be the learner. The draw was fixed, however, so that the confederate was always the learner and the real volunteer was always the teacher.



Photo: M. Daniel Sanchez

◀ In Milgram’s experiments, the learner was strapped to a chair and electrodes were placed on his or her wrists. The teacher, who could not see the learner, was placed in front of an instrument panel containing a line of shock-generating switches. The switches ranged from 15 to 450 volts and were labeled accordingly, from “slight shock” to “danger, severe shock.” The researcher explained that when the learner made a first mistake, the teacher was to administer a 15-volt shock; the teacher would then increase the voltage with each subsequent mistake. However, unknown to the teacher-participant, the learner was a confederate and was not actually being shocked.

At one point the learner even said that his heart was bothering him and went silent. If a volunteer expressed concern, the researcher firmly said to continue administering shocks. In each case, as the strength of the shock increased, the learner expressed greater discomfort. Although many of the volunteers protested, a substantial number (65 percent) obeyed and continued “no matter how painful the shocks seemed to be, and no matter how much the victim pleaded to be let out” (Milgram 1987, p. 567). The results of Milgram’s experiments are especially significant when one considers that the participants received no penalty if they refused to administer the shocks. If this level of obedience is possible under the circumstances of Milgram’s experiments, one can imagine the level that is possible when disobedience brings severe penalties or negative consequences such as the loss of a job, a failing grade, or the withholding of privileges.

► In Milgram’s experiment, obedience was founded simply on the firm command of a person with an assumed status (university-based researcher) and supporting symbols (white lab coat) that gave minimal authority over the participant. The authority was rated as minimal because the research participants were under no obligation to be involved in the experiment.



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Milgram’s study offers insights as to how events such as the death of 6 million Jews during the Holocaust, the death of 1.7 million Cambodians under Pol Pot, and more recently, prisoner abuse by U.S. military at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq could have taken place. These kinds of events require the cooperation of many people. This fact raises important questions about people’s capacity to obey authority. Milgram concluded that “behavior that is unthinkable in an individual who is acting on his own may be executed without hesitation when carried out under orders” (Milgram 1974, p. xi).

As a case in point, Staff Sergeant Ivan L. Frederick II was caught up in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. Abu Ghraib, one of the world’s most notorious prisons under Saddam Hussein, was converted to a U.S. military prison after he was removed from power. Frederick faced charges of cruelty toward prisoners, maltreatment, assault, and indecent acts. He was sentenced to eight years in prison. Letters and e-mail messages that Frederick wrote to family members asserted that he was simply carrying out orders (Hersh 2004).

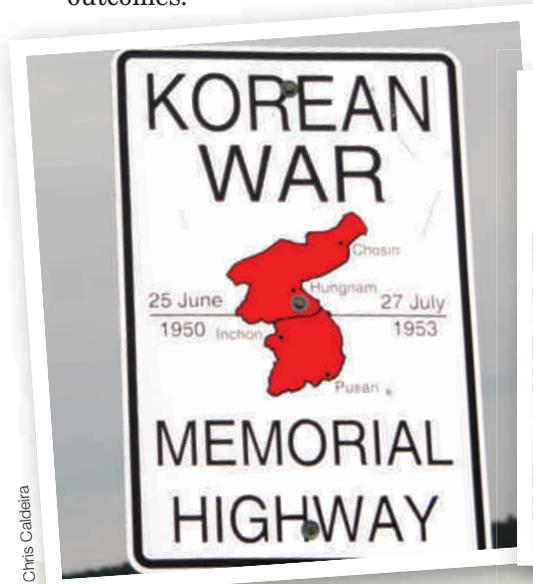


AP Photo

◀ In January 2004, Frederick wrote, “I questioned some of the things that I saw, . . . such things as leaving inmates in their cell with no clothes or in female underpants, handcuffing them to the door of their cell—and the answer I got was, ‘This is how military intelligence [MI] wants it done.’”

Group Pressure

Social psychologist Irving Janis (1972) coined the term **group think**, a phenomenon that occurs when a group under great pressure to take action achieves the illusion of consensus by putting pressure on its members to shut down discussion, dismiss alternative courses of action, suppress expression of doubt or dissent, dehumanize those against whom the group is taking action, and/or ignoring the moral consequences of their actions. Group think is most likely to occur when members are from similar backgrounds, do not seek outside opinions, and unquestionably believe in the rightness of their cause. The concept of group think grew out of Janis's research on the group dynamics underlying the making of foreign policies with disastrous consequences and comparing them to the group dynamics underlying the making of foreign policies with successful outcomes.



Chris Caldera

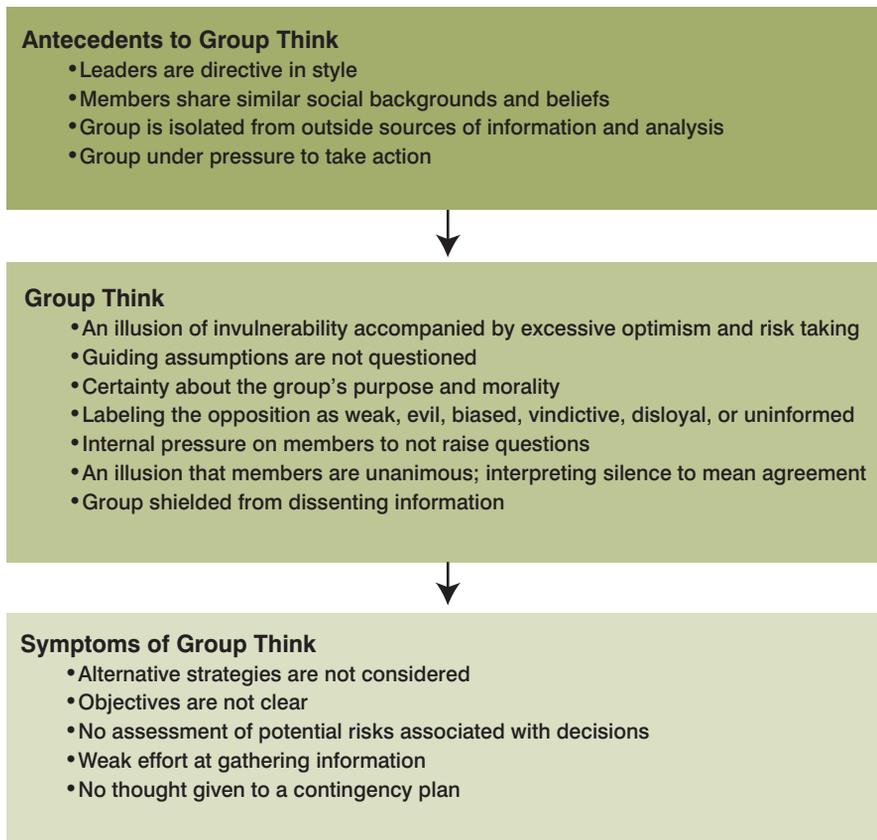


Capt. F. L. Scheiber

▲ One disastrous decision Janis investigated was a 1950 decision ordering U.S. soldiers to cross the 38th parallel into North Korea, a line established after WWII separating North from South Korea. (Note that the North Korean army had crossed into South Korea, almost taking it, but Americans and South Korean soldiers pushed the North Korean army back. But then instead of stopping at the line, Americans decided to invade North Korea.) That decision had the effect of prolonging the Korean War another three years. In the end 2.5 million civilians and 2 million soldiers on both sides died; North and South Korea were reduced to rubble; and neither side gained territory.

Janis and other researchers have applied group think theory to group dynamics underlying other historical events with disastrous results, including the Watergate break-in, Iran hostage crisis, Kent State massacre, and space shuttle *Challenger* explosion (Esser 1998). There have also been attempts to simulate group think in laboratory settings. Group think is analogous to a syndrome, in that not all (just some) of the antecedents, elements, and symptoms must be present to achieve an illusion of consensus (Esser 1998; see Figure 6.2a).

Figure 6.2a Group Think: Its Antecedents, Elements, and Symptoms



Critical Thinking

Can you think of a setting in which your behavior is routinely monitored? Describe that setting.

Key Terms

ensorship

formal sanctions

group think

informal sanctions

mechanisms of social control

negative sanctions

positive sanctions

sanctions

surveillance

Labeling Theory

Objective

You will learn that labeling theorists define a deviant as someone who is noticed and punished.



Lisa Southwick

Have you ever cheated on an exam? Did you get caught?

When I asked my students to answer these questions anonymously, almost everyone indicated that they had cheated on an exam at some point in their educational career but less than 10 percent said they had been caught. The students caught received

a zero on the relevant exam and some failed the course. This example raises questions about the nature of deviance, but especially questions about who gets caught. Such questions are at the heart of labeling theory.

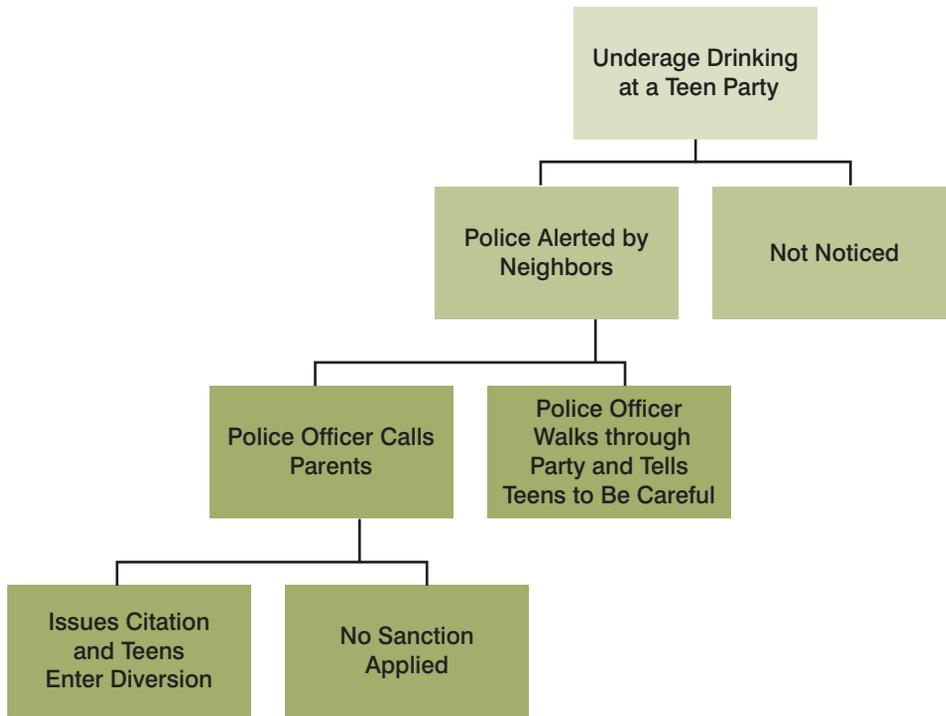
Labeling Theory

In *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, sociologist Howard Becker (1963) states the central thesis of labeling theory: “All social groups make rules and attempt, at some times and under some circumstances, to enforce them. When a rule is enforced, the person who is supposed to have broken it may be seen as a special kind of person, one who cannot be trusted to live by the rules agreed on by the group.” That person is “regarded as an outsider” (p. 1).

As Becker’s statement suggests, labeling theorists are guided by two assumptions: (1) rules are socially constructed; that is, people make rules, and (2) rules are not enforced uniformly or consistently. Labeling theorists maintain that whether an act is deviant depends on whether people notice it and, if they do notice, on whether they label it as a violation of a rule and then proceed to apply sanctions. In other words, simply violating a rule does not automatically make someone deviant. From a sociological point of view, a rule breaker is not deviant unless someone notices the violation and then decides to take corrective action (see Figure 6.3a).

Figure 6.3a Process by Which a Behavior Is Labeled as Deviant

This chart illustrates how labeling theorists conceptualize deviance. A behavior—whether it be underage drinking, murder, or wearing a head scarf—must be noticed, labeled a violation of group norms, and then punished. The critical factor in defining deviance is not the behavior per se, but whether someone takes notice and, if so, whether the offender is “punished.”



Categories of Conformists and Deviants

Labeling theorists point out that for every rule a social group creates, four categories of people exist: conformists, pure deviants, secret deviants, and the falsely accused. The category to which someone belongs depends on a combination of two factors: whether a rule has been violated and whether sanctions are applied (see Table 6.3a).

Table 6.3a: Labeling Theory: Typology of Deviance and Conformity

The table summarizes the four categories of people as they relate to a particular social norm or law.

	Noticed and Sanctions Applied	Not Noticed, or If Noticed, Sanctions Not Applied
Engaged in Offending Behavior	Pure Deviant	Secret Deviant
Did Not Engage in Offending Behavior	Falsely Accused	Conformist

From Table 6.3a we can see that **conformists** are people who have not violated the rules of a group and are treated accordingly. **Pure deviants** are people who have broken the rules and are caught, punished, and labeled as outsiders. **Secret deviants** are people who have broken the rules but whose violation goes unnoticed or, if it is noticed, no sanctions are applied. Becker maintains that no one really knows how many secret deviants exist, but he is convinced that the number is sizable, many more than “we are apt to think” (1963, p. 20). The **falsely accused**, on the other hand, are people who have not broken the rules but are treated as if they have.

Becker claims that the number of secret deviants is quite sizable, and a survey of crime victims in the United States substantiates his contention. The U.S. Department of Justice (2008) has found that each year about 25.2 million crimes are committed in the United States. Of the victims, 58.2 percent do not report the crime to police, which means that from the perspective of law enforcement at least 58 percent of crimes are committed by people who remain secret deviants.

THE FALSELY ACCUSED. The ranks of the falsely accused include victims of eyewitness errors and police cover-ups; they also include innocent suspects who make false confessions under the pressure of interrogation. For their book *In Spite of Innocence*, sociologist Michael L. Radelet and colleagues (1994) reviewed more than 400 cases of innocent people convicted of capital crimes and found that 56 had made false confessions. Apparently, some innocent suspects admitted guilt, even to heinous crimes, to escape the stress of interrogation (Jerome 1995). As with secret deviance, no one knows how often false accusations occur, but it probably occurs more often than we imagine. Moreover, the taint of guilt lingers even after the falsely accused is cleared of all charges. Such cases lead us to ask a larger question: Under what circumstances are people most likely to be falsely accused?



Mark Graham / The New York Times

◀ James Waller (center) was falsely convicted of raping a 12-year-old boy in 1982. He spent 25 years in prison and on parole before he was ruled innocent in 2007. Waller is one of hundreds of people exonerated by DNA testing. He is shown here with Barry C. Scheck (right), cofounder of the Innocence Project, a legal initiative that works to free those falsely accused of crimes (Blumenthal and Kovach 2007).

Sociologist Kai Erikson (1966) identified the situation under which people are likely to be falsely accused of a crime—when the well-being of a country or a group is threatened. The threat can take the form of an economic crisis (such as a depression or recession), a moral crisis (such as family breakdown), a health crisis (such as AIDS or H1N1), or a national security crisis (such as war). At times like these, people need to identify a clear source of the threat. Thus, whenever a catastrophe occurs, it is common to blame someone for it. Identifying the threat gives an illusion of control. In such crises, the person blamed is likely to be someone who is at best indirectly responsible, someone in the wrong place at the wrong time, or someone who is viewed as different. This defining activity can take the form of a witch hunt.

WITCH HUNTS. **Witch hunts** are campaigns to identify, investigate, and correct behavior that has been defined as undermining a group. In actuality, a witch hunt rarely accomplishes these goals, because the real cause of a problem is often complex, extending far beyond the behavior of a targeted person or category. Often people who are identified as the cause of a problem are simply being used to make the problem appear as if it is being managed. These dynamics help explain how, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Muslim and Arab Americans were “caught up in the biggest criminal investigation in

U.S. history” (Kaye 2001). Although the FBI did not keep statistics on the ethnicity or religious affiliation of the people questioned about the attacks, it is believed that most people interrogated were or appeared to be Muslim or Middle Eastern. Many federal agents, haunted by the September 11 attacks, acted on “information from tipsters with questionable backgrounds and motives, touching off needless scares and upending the lives of innocent suspects” (Moss 2003, p. A1).

The Status of Deviant

The status of deviant can be primary or secondary in character. **Primary deviants** include those people whose rule breaking is viewed as understandable, incidental, or insignificant in light of some socially approved status they hold. For example, it is unlikely that employees who use a company-provided cell phone for personal calls or who take office supplies for personal use will be branded a thief. Similarly, a woman who kills a male partner because she fears for her physical safety has a greater chance of being labeled as suffering from battered person syndrome than being labeled a murderer. A male who kills a female partner claiming that he feared for his physical safety is likely to be labeled a cold-blooded murderer (Pfuhl and Henry 1993).

Secondary deviants include those whose rule breaking is treated as something so significant that it cannot be overlooked or explained away. In this situation, the “secondary deviant is a person whose life and identity are organized around the facts of deviance” (Lemert 1967, p. 41). Secondary deviants assume a **master status of deviant**, an identification that “proves to be more important” than most other statuses that person holds, such that he or she is identified first and foremost as a deviant (Becker 1963, p. 33). A master status of deviant is linked to an expected set of auxiliary statuses. An abusive spouse (master status) is expected to be male and young to middle-aged (auxiliary statuses); the shoplifter (master status) is expected to be young (auxiliary status); criminals (master status) are expected to be black or Hispanic, or high school dropouts (auxiliary status); prostitutes (master status) are expected to be young and women (auxiliary statuses). Expected auxiliary statuses are often what allow the secret deviant to remain undercover. An 80-year-old shoplifter may escape detection because store security is focused on those who possess the expected auxiliary statuses of a shoplifter (Pfuhl and Henry 1993).

Critical Thinking

Can you think of situations in your life when you assumed the status of falsely accused, secret deviant, and/or pure deviant? Explain.

Key Terms

conformists

primary deviants

secret deviants

falsely accused

pure deviants

witch hunt

master status of deviant

secondary deviants

Differential Association

6.4

Objective

You will learn the meaning of differential association and the role it plays in putting people in contact with deviant influences.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Christopher S. Wilson

Have you ever been part of a youth mentorship program? Why do you think such programs exist?

Ideally, mentors act as role models and guides to those who may be struggling in school or with family life. Mentors offer a positive influence to counter the negative influences that can draw youth into trouble.

The principles of mentoring relate to a theory of socialization known as differential association.

Coined by sociologists Edwin H. Sutherland and Donald R. Cressey (1978), differential association explains how deviant behavior, especially juvenile delinquency, is learned. This theory states that it is exposure to criminal patterns and isolation from anti-criminal influences that put people at risk of turning criminal. These criminal contacts take place within deviant subcultures.

Deviant Subcultures

Deviant subcultures are groups that are part of the larger society but whose members share norms and values favoring violation of that larger society's laws. People learn criminal behavior from closely interacting with those who engage in and approve of law-breaking activities. It is important to keep in mind, however, that contact with deviant subcultures does not by itself make criminals. Rather, there is some unspecified tipping point of exposure in which criminal influences offset exposure to law-abiding influences (Sutherland and Cressey 1978).

If we accept the premise that criminal behavior is learned, then criminals constitute a special type of conformist in that they are simply following the norms of the subculture with which they associate. The theory of differential

association does not explain how people make initial contact with a deviant subculture or the exact mechanisms by which people learn criminal behavior, except that the individual learns the deviant subculture's rules the same way any behavior is learned.

Sociologist Terry Williams (1989) offers one example of how teenagers can make contact with a deviant subculture. He studied a group of teenagers, some as young as 14, who sold cocaine in the Washington Heights section of New York City. These youths were recruited by major drug suppliers because, as minors, they could not be sent to prison if caught. Williams argues that the teenagers were susceptible to recruitment for two reasons: they saw little chance of finding high-paying jobs, and they perceived drug dealing as a way to earn money to escape their circumstances. Williams's findings suggest that once teenagers become involved in drug networks, they learn the skills to perform their jobs the same way everyone learns to do a job. Indeed, success in an illegal pursuit is measured in much the same way that success is measured in mainstream jobs: pleasing the boss, meeting goals, and getting along with associates.

Differential Opportunity

Williams's research suggests that criminal behavior is not simply the result of differential association with criminal ways. There are other factors at work, including what he terms **illegitimate opportunity structures**, social settings and arrangements that offer people the opportunity to commit particular types of crime. In the case of Williams's study, drug suppliers recruited 14-year-olds because as minors they would not go to prison. The larger society offers minors an opportunity structure that allows them to engage in criminal activity without risking the full penalties of the law. Opportunities to commit crimes are shaped by the environments in which people live or work (Merton 1997). For someone to embezzle money, another person has to have entrusted a would-be embezzler with a large sum of money; the act of entrusting money has to occur before the embezzler can set money aside for some unintended purpose.



U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class David Didier



Lance Cpl. Cindy G. Alejandre

▲ Illegitimate opportunity structures figure into the type of crimes people commit. Working as a pharmacist offers the opportunity to steal prescription drugs to sell or to feed a personal or friend's addiction. For addicts without money, the only option available to them is to hold up a pharmacy.

White-collar and corporate criminals also benefit from differential opportunity. **White-collar crime** consists of "crimes committed by persons of respectability and high social status in the course of their occupations" (Sutherland

and Cressey 1978, p. 44). **Corporate crime** is committed by a corporation in the way that it does business as it competes with other companies for market share and profits. In the case of white-collar crime, offenders are part of the system: they occupy positions in the organization that permit them to carry out illegal activities discreetly. In the case of corporate crime, everyone in the organization contributes to illegal activities simply by doing their jobs. Both white-collar and corporate crimes are often aimed at impersonal—and often vaguely defined—entities such as the tax system, the environment, competitors, and so on. They are “seldom directed against a particular person who can go to the police and report an offense” (National Council for Crime Prevention in Sweden 1985, p. 13).



Chris Caldeira

◀ In the United States police efforts are largely directed at controlling crimes against individual life and property (crimes such as drug offenses, robbery, assault, homicide, and rape) rather than patrolling office buildings looking for white-collar and corporate criminals. Less than 1 percent of all people sentenced to U.S. federal prisons seem to fall under the category of white-collar criminals, whereas 52 percent are classified as drug offenders (Federal Bureau of Prisons 2009).

White-collar and corporate crimes—such as the manufacturing and marketing of unsafe products, unlawful disposal of hazardous waste, tax evasion, and money laundering—are usually handled not by the police but by regulatory agencies (such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Food and Drug Administration), which have minimal

staff to monitor compliance. Escaping punishment is easier for white-collar and corporate criminals than for other criminals.

The concept of an illegitimate opportunity structure undermines the belief that the uneducated and members of minority groups are more prone to criminal behavior than are those in other groups. In fact, crime exists in all social strata, but the type of crime, the extent to which the laws are enforced, access to legal aid, and the power to sidestep laws vary by social strata (Chambliss 1974).

Critical Thinking

Give an example of an illegitimate opportunity structure that could provide you the means of committing a crime.

Key Terms

corporate crime

illegitimate opportunity structures

white-collar crime

deviant subcultures

Structural Strain Theory

Objective

You will learn how structural strain generates deviant responses.



Lisa Southwick

What is the American dream? Have the owners of this house achieved that dream?

The American dream is grounded in the belief that everyone has the opportunity to achieve material prosperity regardless of social position in life. What does it mean to live in a society in which people are told that they can be anything they want in life if they work hard enough? As we will see, sociologist Robert K. Merton's (1938, 1957) theory of structural strain shows how belief in the American dream is connected to deviant behavior.

The Structure of Strain

Robert K. Merton's theory of structural strain takes two elements of social structure into account:

1. the *goals* a society defines as valuable (such as economic success, upward mobility, home ownership), and
2. the culturally legitimate *means* to achieve those valued goals (such as go to college, work hard), including the actual number of legitimate opportunities available to achieve valued goals (such as the number of jobs paying over \$100,000).

Structural strain is a situation in which there is an imbalance between culturally valued goals and the legitimate means to obtain them. An imbalance exists when

1. the sole focus is on achieving valued goals by any means necessary,
2. people are unsure whether following the legitimate means will lead to success, or
3. opportunities for reaching the valued goals are limited or closed off to a significant portion of the population; that is, there are not enough opportunities to satisfy demand.

Merton (1938) argues that the rate of deviance is likely to be high when structural strain exists because people are susceptible to abandoning or rejecting the valued goals and/or legitimate means to achieve valued goals. Structural strain induces a state of cultural chaos, or **anomie**.

Anomie Applied to Financial Crisis

The ongoing U.S. and global financial crisis grew out of structural strain in which many in banking and financial services focused solely on material gain by whatever means necessary. That focus encouraged a state of anomie in which lenders abandoned the previously legitimate means of making safe loans by lending to borrowers with a good credit history and equity to secure loans. Instead, many lenders arranged terms that exceeded borrowers' actual capacity to pay. Two unregulated financial strategies—securitization and credit default swaps—fueled and encouraged this high-risk lending. *Securitization* involves lenders bundling hundreds, even thousands, of loans and selling them to investors. Upon selling the loans, the lender makes an immediate profit and leaves investors to assume the risk of borrowers defaulting. *Credit default swaps*, an insurance-like system in which investors pay the equivalent of premiums to shift the risk of defaults onto yet another party, allowed investors to feel they couldn't lose even if borrowers defaulted.

➤ American International Group, Inc. (AIG) was a world leader in insurance and financial services with operations in at least 130 countries. However, because of securitization and credit default swaps, AIG collapsed in 2008 when millions of borrowers defaulted on home and other loans.

Securitization and credit default, by fueling easy access to loans, created anomie as illustrated by these facts:

- Homeowners were accepting loans at terms they could not afford, thereby achieving the American dream by whatever means necessary.
- Loan officers made risky loans to meet performance goals; they fabricated borrowers' worth, ignored poor credit histories, and made adjustable rate loans so that clients could afford more expensive homes.
- Homebuilders overbuilt to meet market demand for high-priced housing. Ironically, they did not build affordable homes to coincide with buyers' real incomes. As a result, housing prices fell and a major source of equity and credit collapsed.

AP Photo/Mark Lennihan



The financial crisis must be considered in the context of a society that places great emphasis on economic success and upward social mobility regardless of the circumstances. Such a viewpoint suggests that those who fail only have themselves to blame. Merton (1957) argues that “Americans are bombarded on every side” with the message that this goal is achievable (p. 137). Furthermore, when people do achieve monetary success, at no point can they say they feel secure. “At each income level . . . Americans want just about 25 percent more” and this “‘just a bit more’ continues to operate even after it is obtained” (p. 136).



Lance Cpl. Bryan G. Carfrey

◀ In the years leading up to the financial crisis, many Americans were encouraged to buy homes that they could not afford or, in the case of homeowners, to take out equity loans to advance their standard of living. Many used credit to live beyond their means and as a quick path to visible economic success.

Responses to Structural Strain

Merton identified five ways that people respond to structural strain. The responses involve some combination of acceptance and rejection of the valued goals and means.

Conformity is the acceptance of cultural goals and the pursuit of those goals through legitimate means. This category includes people who did not take out credit to live beyond their means, bank executives who stuck with safe lending practices, and those who invested responsibly during the so-called housing boom years.

Innovation is the acceptance of cultural goals but the rejection of legitimate means to achieve them. For the innovator, success is equated with winning the game rather than with playing by the rules; that is, the innovator seeks to achieve a desired end by whatever means necessary. With regard to the housing crisis, the great innovators were the Wall Street firms that created the investment strategies that supposedly reduced the risk of making bad loans and the loan officers who set up loan schemes and persuaded clients to accept them.

Ritualism involves the rejection of the cultural goals but a rigid adherence to legitimate means of achieving them. This response is the opposite of innovation: the game is played according to the rules despite defeat. Merton (1938) maintains that this response can be a reaction to the status anxiety that accompanies the ceaseless competitive struggle to stay on top or to get ahead. For ritualists, the culturally valued goals, even though valued, are defined as being beyond their reach. Instead of taking out loans during the time when they were easy to secure, ritualists lived within their means even though others may have viewed them as unsuccessful, or at the very least of modest means.

Retreatism involves the rejection of both culturally valued goals and the legitimate means of achieving them. Retreatism is a response of those who have internalized the valued cultural goals but the legitimate means promising success are no longer available to them. According to Merton, retreatists face a mental conflict in that it is against their moral principles to use illegitimate means, yet the legitimate means have failed them.

► Frustrated and handicapped, because they believed they played by the rules yet the system failed them, retreatists find that they cannot cope and decide to drop out. Examples include prominent high-status professionals who thought they did “everything they were supposed to do in life” but whose investments have been wiped out (Kotbi 2009).



Lisa Southwick

Rebellion involves the rejection of both the valued goals and the legitimate means of attaining them. In their place a new set of goals and means emerges. While this response is often confined to a small segment of society, it provides the potential for the emergence of subgroups as diverse as street gangs and the Old Order Amish. When rebellion is the response of a large number of people who wish to reshape the entire structure of society, a great potential for revolution exists. Some critics argue that the worldwide financial crisis represents an opportunity to change the way we live. The culturally valued goals of economic success can no longer be realized through overconsumption. Instead, the culturally valued goal should emphasize sustainability, a lifestyle that minimizes an individual’s or society’s carbon footprint by using less energy and/or renewable energy resources (see Table 6.5a).

Table 6.5a Typology of Responses to Structural Strain

The table summarizes the five responses to structural strain. Which response involves acceptance of culturally valued goals and the rejection of legitimate means to achieve them? Which responses involve rejecting (or abandoning) culturally valued goals?

Mode of Adaptation	Goals	Means
Conformity	+	+
Innovation	+	-
Ritualism	-	+
Retreatism	-	-
Rebellion	+/-	+/-

- + Acceptance/achievement of valued goals or means
- Rejection/failure to achieve valued goals or means

Source: Adapted from Merton (1957, p. 140), “A Typology of Modes of Individual Adaptations.”

Critical Thinking

Use Merton’s typology to explain how someone you know responded during the housing boom or the banking and financial crisis.

Key Terms

- anomie
- rebellion
- ritualism
- conformity
- retreatism
- structural strain
- innovation

Medicalization of Deviance

Objective

You will learn the process by which a deviant behavior or appearance becomes defined as a medical disorder.



Lance Cpl. Cullen J. Tieman Cpl. Will Acosta

When you hear someone has an addiction to alcohol or some other drug, do you trace the cause to a medical problem, to a lack of discipline, or to something else?

Medicalization

If you define the cause of an alcohol addiction in medical terms, then you have medicalized the problem. **Medicalization** is the process of defining a behavior as an illness or medical disorder and then treating it with a medical intervention. In this module we are particularly interested in the behaviors and appearances that have been first defined as deviant and then later medicalized. It does not matter whether the behavior or appearance is one that actually needs medical attention; what matters is that a behavior or appearance once considered deviant came to be defined as a medical condition. In this regard sociologists have written about the medicalization of alcoholism, violence, drug addiction, behavior problems (ADHD), aging, erectile dysfunction, sadness, baldness, obesity, and short stature. Sociologist Peter Conrad (1975, 2005) has laid out a framework for thinking about the medicalization process that includes a list of the major stakeholders promoting medicalization, the stages of medicalization, and its consequences.

Agents of Medicalization

Conrad (2005) has identified at least five interdependent stakeholders involved in the medicalization process: (1) the medical profession, (2) grassroots social movements, (3) the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, (4) consumers, and (5) the managed care industry.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION. The medical profession includes physicians and other professionals, such as nurses and technicians, but it is arguably physicians who have the most power and authority. Sociologists study how the medical profession expands its jurisdiction and control over the human body, and by extension human activity, through medicalization. The rise of developmental-behavioral pediatrics is just one example of a way in which the medical profession has extended its reach. That field emerged in an official sense in 2002, the year the Academy of Pediatrics certified the first physicians in this specialty. The establishment of this specialty expanded physicians' control over areas that were once the domain of social workers, the family, educators, friends, and other caregivers.

► Dr. Harvey Karp, pediatrician and author of the bestseller *The Happiest Baby on the Block*, routinely delivers presentations that advise parents about how to calm crying babies and help them to sleep longer and have fewer tantrums.



GRASSROOTS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS.

Grassroots, or from-the-ground-up, social movements occur when enough people organize to push for recognition and change. Such movements often evolve from difficult circumstances that participants seek to address or alleviate. A case in point is the U.S. government's eventual recognition of a condition known as

Gulf War Syndrome (GWS), which finally came in 2008, almost 20 years after an estimated 175,000 veterans of the 1990–1991 Gulf war fell ill. For years veterans who complained were told the symptoms such as persistent memory and concentration problems, chronic headaches, widespread pain, gastrointestinal problems, and other chronic abnormalities were in their heads.



▲ In 2008 the U.S. government issued a report acknowledging that it is a mistake to treat soldiers with Gulf War Syndrome conditions as deviant. GWS is a serious condition that affects at least one-fourth of the 697,000 U.S. veterans who served in the 1990–1991 Gulf War. A 2008 U.S. government study identified the military's use of pyridostigmine bromide (PB) pills to increase survival after exposure to the nerve agent Soman as a likely cause of GWS (USFDA 2009). The study also named exposure to pesticides as another likely cause of the illness.

PHARMACEUTICAL AND BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES. The pharmaceutical industry promotes pills for a variety of conditions—Ritalin (for hyperactivity), Viagra (for erectile dysfunction), and Paxil (for depression and anxiety), to name but a few. This industry advertises in medical journals, on the Internet, and on television; sends sales representatives to doctors' offices; provides free samples for doctors to distribute to patients; and sponsors medical events such as annual meetings and health fairs. Among other things, the pharmaceutical industry develops and promotes what Conrad (2005) calls “bio-medical enhancement products,” be they to enhance height, memory, speed, or stamina.

CONSUMERS. Those who choose to use and purchase health care services and products are also part of the medicalization process. Among other things, consumers choose a health insurance plan, health care providers, and a hospital. Consumers also decide the medical services for which they are willing to pay out of pocket. As a result, hospitals and medical offices compete against each other for clients. Consumer demand for cosmetic procedures and surgeries, from Botox treatments to liposuction, is one notable example of medicalization. “The body has become a project, from extreme makeover to minor touch ups, and medicine has become the vehicle for improvement. In a sense, the whole body has become medicalized piece by piece” (Conrad 2005, p. 8). In addition, self-diagnosis is something that is becoming increasingly common, where patients present their case to doctors and even insist on a specific treatment.

THE MANAGED CARE INDUSTRY. Over the past 20 years, managed care organizations have come to play increasingly important roles in the kinds of care patients receive. Managed care organizations require doctors to gain pre-approval before embarking on a medical treatment; they also set limits on the number of visits and the kinds of drugs covered. The managed care industry both constrains and promotes certain kinds of medical care. For example, many managed care organizations cover gastric bypass surgery for the morbidly obese with the hope that, in the long run, it will cost less to pay for that surgery than the cost of obesity-induced illnesses such as diabetes, stroke, heart conditions, and muscular skeletal-related problems.

◀ Managed care organizations have significantly limited the number of psychotherapy sessions between doctor and patient, and instead supported treating mental and emotional problems with medications.



Cpl. Nich R. Babo

The Medicalization Process

Peter Conrad and Joseph Schneider (1992) proposed a five-stage model by which a behavior or appearance considered deviant becomes medicalized. In stage 1 (Definition of Behavior as Deviant), the behavior or appearance is defined as deviant before a medical name or definition is applied or before any medical writings on the condition appear. A medical explanation eventually follows that validates and gives scientific support to the existing label of deviant.

Stage 2 (Prospecting) occurs when a condition defined as deviant is presented as needing medical attention. Generally that condition is announced in some formal way through an article or opinion piece published in a medical journal or at a medical meeting or conference. The announcement may include the name of the new disorder, a description of its proposed cause (etiology), and/or recommendations for treating it. Conrad cautions that such announcements do not guarantee that the new diagnosis will become recognized and accepted.

In stage 3 (Claims Making), those with an interest in medicalizing a behavior considered deviant lobby to have it added to the list of conditions that the medical profession treats. A doctor may set up an institute or sponsor a workshop. A citizen's group may establish a blog, lobby a medical organization to pass a resolution, write a position paper, or establish a study group. A pharmaceutical company or a lay organization (such as Alcoholics Anonymous) may engage in a publicity campaign to raise awareness. Whatever the strategy or source, the new medical disorder needs some governmental body to recognize it as a treatable condition.

In stage 4 (Legitimacy), the government gives the medical profession its mandate to treat the condition. It can hold hearings; issue grants and contracts for medical research and care; and approve drugs (such as Botox), treatments (laser), and medical devices (breast implants).

► The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (2009) has approved breast implants as well as Botox and wrinkle filler products, giving legitimacy to products that medicalize breasts and wrinkles that deviate from some ideal standard of beauty.

In stage 5 (Institutionalization), the medical diagnosis and methods of treatment become accepted. The name of the medical condition, a description of symptoms, and recommended treatments assume a place in official medical classification schemes and manuals. Institutionalization also involves the creation of organizations that support and conduct medical research related to the condition with goals such as improving the lives of people affected by it, preventing new cases, and eradicating or curing the condition. Those who treat the medical condition or who work for supporting organizations can become closed to and resist those who challenge their established paradigms.

Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images



Consequences of Medicalization

When a problem is medicalized it changes the way we think about behavior once defined as deviant. Specifically, the behavior is less likely to be considered a “sin or even a moral weakness, it is now a disease” (Conrad 1975, p. 18). A hyperactive child, for example, now has a medical reason for being disruptive and/or disobedient. Conrad argues that medicalization places a humanitarian angle (“they have an illness”) on a situation that was once condemned. The humanitarian angle notwithstanding, there are also some real drawbacks to medicalization.

First, each instance of medicalization represents an advance in medicine’s control over the human body, and by extension human behavior. It places the “deviant” behavior or appearance squarely in the medical domain, which in theory offers a “technical solution administered by disinterested politically and morally neutral experts” (p. 19) and moves it away from ordinary people who previously handled the child who is now considered ADHD or the grandmother who does not want to age.

Second, medical treatment is not just a “cure,” it can also be a form of social control that restrains individuals from behaving or appearing in ways that disrupt, challenge, or offend a dominant value system. Using surgery, psychoactive drugs, drug testing, or other medical interventions to solve the problems assumes that something is wrong with the individual and not the system against which he or she is rebelling.

Third, the medicalization of deviant behavior with its emphasis on fixing the person reinforces what Conrad calls the **individuation of social problems**, a point of view whereby people tend to view the “problem individuals” as the cause and “fixing” them as the solution rather than looking at the social system in which so-called deviant behavior or appearances are embedded.



◀ With medicalization of complex social problems we direct our energy and resources to changing the victims of that system rather than the society in which they live. Medical intervention essentially supports the existing ways of doing things rather than seeing the deviant “behavior as symptomatic of some disorder in the social structure” (p. 19).

Critical Thinking

Give an example of a time when you used the Internet, a home health testing product, or a pharmaceutical advertisement to make a self-diagnosis. Did you share your diagnosis with a physician?

Key Terms

individuation of social problems

medicalization

Crime

Objective

You will learn the meaning of crime and the process by which people are punished for crimes.



© Brant Ward/San Francisco Chronicle/Corbis

Which country in the world has the highest incarceration rate?

Worldwide an estimated 9.0 million people are in prison and jails. The incarceration rate varies by country with the United States having the highest rate in the world at 750 prisoners per 100,000. After the United States are Rwanda (691) and the Russian Federation (611) (International Centre for Prison Studies 2008).

It is important to remember that high rates are not a measure of a criminal justice system's effectiveness. It could be that countries

with the highest rates have the most serious crime problems, are more effective at bringing to justice those who commit crimes, or that they simply can pay for a large prison system (Walmsley 2002). However, it is still important to emphasize that the United States has 4.6 percent of the world's population but holds 26 percent of all incarcerated around the world.

A **crime** is an act that breaks a law. A **law** is a rule governing conduct created by those in positions of power and enforced by entities given the authority to do so, such as police. A law specifies the prohibited behavior, the categories of people to whom the law applies, and the punishment to be applied to violators. Laws apply to virtually every area of life. When sociologists study crime they ask, "Who avoids detection, who gets caught, and who goes to prison?"

Who Goes to Prison?

Going to prison is a multistage process. In studying this process one thing is clear: only a small portion of those who commit crimes are in prison. Why? First, someone must know about the crime and then decide to report it (or self-report it). Department of Justice (2008) victimization studies estimate that only about 40 percent of known crimes are reported to police. Among those reported, only

44 percent lead to an arrest (the equivalent of 16 percent of all crimes). Of those arrested some portion are prosecuted, but not everyone prosecuted is convicted. And not everyone convicted is imprisoned (see Figure 6.7a).

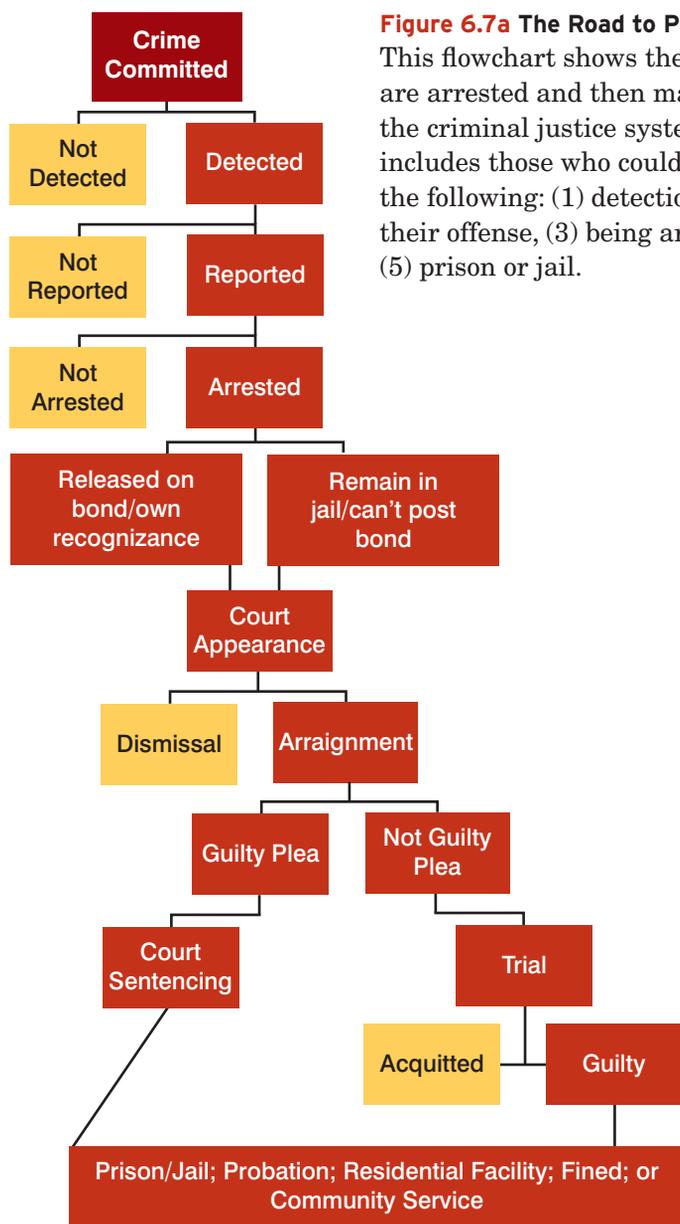


Figure 6.7a The Road to Prison

This flowchart shows the process by which people are arrested and then make their way through the criminal justice system. The prison population includes those who could not avoid one or more of the following: (1) detection, (2) someone reporting their offense, (3) being arrested, (4) arraignment, (5) prison or jail.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice (2008)

When we look at the characteristics of the prison population in the United States, we can gain some clues about which race/ethnic groups seem least able to avoid prison sentences. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2008), 1 in 15 people in the United States will end up in prison at some point in their lifetime. But that rate is particularly high for men classified as black and Hispanic. An estimated 32 percent of all black males and 17 percent of all Hispanic males will spend some time in prison. For white males that percentage is 5.9 percent. If we ask who is under some form of correctional control—on probation, home incarceration, in jail, in a residential facility, performing community service—we see that at any one time 1 in every 31 adults (or about 6.1 million) is involved in some way with the criminal justice system.

Table 6.7a: Sex and Race Characteristics of People Involved with U.S. Correctional System, 2008

Characteristics	Number Involved in U.S. Correctional System
Blacks	1 in every 11
Men	1 in every 18
Hispanics	1 in every 27
All	1 in every 31
White	1 in every 45
Women	1 in every 89

Source: U.S. Department of Justice (2008)

Reasons for High Incarceration Rates

There are many possible explanations for the high rate of incarceration in the United States, including the propensity of elected officials to pass strict crime legislation so they can present themselves as tough on crime. This propensity explains, in part, the long mandated prison sentences handed out to those convicted of drug possession and other nonviolent crimes. In addition, critics claim the United States has a high rate of repeat offenders in prisons because the system places little emphasis on rehabilitating prisoners. Finally, the **prison-industrial complex**—the corporations and agencies with an economic stake in building and supplying correctional facilities and in providing services—fuels an ongoing “need” for prisoners so that companies can maintain or increase profit margins. It should come as no surprise that these private corporations represent a significant lobbying force shaping legislation and correctional policy.

➤ Another incentive for maintaining a large prison population is that local, county, state, and federal governments have come to rely on prison labor. This dependency has increased the incentive to keep the prison population large. Many correctional institutions have short- and long-term contracts with local, city, county, and state government agencies to do road work and other routine maintenance (North Carolina Department of Correction 2009).

© Don B. Stevenson / Alamy



Critical Thinking

How does understanding the process by which people become imprisoned affect your understanding of the prison population?

Key Terms

crime

law

prison-industrial complex

Applying Theory: Post-Structural Theories

Objective

You will learn how being watched—including the possibility of being watched—shapes behavior.

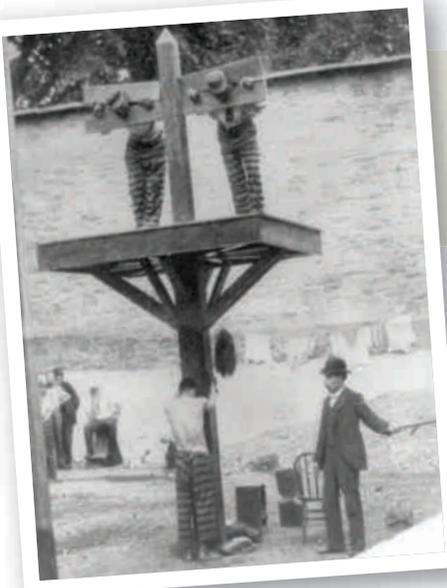


Aizar Baldes/AFP/Getty Images

Have you ever been aware that somebody is watching you from afar?

Most of us know that we are being watched at some point over the course of a typical day, if only by a store or ATM surveillance camera. What does it mean to know that someone is or could be watching you at any time? How does that possibility shape behavior? These are the questions that interested French philosopher and psychologist Michel Foucault (1977). Foucault's work falls under the theoretical category known as post-structuralism, a term we will consider at the end of this module.

Foucault (1977) sought to identify the turning points that make the society we live in today fundamentally different in structure from the society that preceded it. In this regard Foucault identified a historical shift or turning point in the way society punishes people from what he called a culture of spectacle to a carceral culture.



George Grantham Bain Collection/Library of Congress

◀ A **culture of spectacle** is a social arrangement by which punishment for crimes—torture, disfigurement, dismemberment, and execution—is delivered in public settings for all to see.

This very public way of punishing began to change around the time of the prison reform movements in Europe and in the United States (1775–1889), an era that ushered in what Foucault called a **carceral culture**, a social arrangement under which the society largely abandons physical and public punishment and replaces it with surveillance to control people’s activities and thoughts.

Foucault attributes this change not to a rise in humanitarian concern but to a transformation in the technologies available to control others.

To understand the magnitude of this shift, consider that before what we call the prison reform movement in the United States and Europe, the death penalty was applied to any number of crimes, including murder, denying the existence of God, and homosexuality. Severe physical punishments were issued to those who committed less serious crimes. Prisons existed, but they were used to hold those awaiting trial, debtors, and sometimes even witnesses to crime. Everyone, regardless of age, race, or sex, was crowded together in holding pen-like arrangements (Johnston 2009). From Foucault’s point of view, prison reforms—and by extension reforms related to punishment—were connected to the need to establish discipline and order, not to achieve some moral objective.

▶ A crowded quarters facilitated the spread of disease and increased opportunities for prisoners to conspire against the guards and plan an escape. This kind of holding pen also made it difficult to monitor relationships among prisoners.

H.C. White Co./Library of Congress



The Panopticon

The prison reform movement coincides with the period of history in which “a whole set of techniques and institutions emerged for measuring, supervising and correcting” those considered abnormal, including criminals (Johnston 2009, p. 401). The **panopticon** was designed by British philosopher Jeremy Bentham in 1785. *Pan* means a complete view and *optic* means seeing. The design represented his effort to create the most efficient and rational prison—the perfect prison. Foucault (1977) used it as a metaphor for the mentality driving 19th-century society.



Lee Lockwood/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images

◀ The architectural plan had the following features: the guard tower was positioned in the center of the facility inside a circular gallery of cells. The front of each cell was barred and the guard standing in the tower could see into each cell. The side and back walls of each cell were solid so that the prisoners could not see or interact with each other. Under this arrangement one guard could watch the inmates housed in hundreds of cells. Since the inmates could not see the guard in the central tower they

were never sure when or if they were being watched. The threat of surveillance pushed inmates to discipline themselves (Foucault 1977).

The panopticon is a metaphor for what Foucault calls the **disciplinary society**, a social arrangement that normalizes surveillance, making it expected and routine. This disciplinary society that Foucault wrote about in the mid 1970s has been further magnified by the emergence of technologies that allow people to track their own and others' movements and behaviors. Those technologies can be used to reform prisoners, monitor frail elderly people in their homes, follow teens as they drive, treat patients, supervise workers, track Internet use, and monitor public spaces (Felluga 2009).

Post-Structuralism

Foucault is considered a post-structuralist, a theoretical position associated with many influential French thinkers writing in the second half of the 20th century (Appelrouth and Edles 2007). Post-structuralism is a response and challenge to **structuralism**, a framework that portrays social structures as transcending those who constructed them. As such they have a coercive/constraining power over thought and behavior. **Post-structuralists** contend that the behavior-constraining powers of social structures are exaggerated (Appelrouth and Edles 2007). Rather than seeing social structures as simply constraining forces in themselves, post-structuralists emphasize that it is people who enact and apply them. Foucault writes about the disciplinary society, an aspect of social structure that institutionalizes surveillance and fuels an anxiety about being watched—an anxiety that promotes good behavior. In this sense the disciplinary society can be thought of as a coercive social structure. On the other hand, it is people who enact surveillance and who seek and find creative ways not only to impose it on others but also to circumvent or expand its possibilities and uses.

Critical Thinking

Have you ever censored or disciplined yourself because of the possibility that someone was watching?

Key Terms

carceral culture

disciplinary society

post-structuralism

culture of spectacle

panopticon

structuralism

Summary: Putting It All Together

Deviance is any behavior or physical appearance that is socially challenged and/or condemned because it departs from the norms and expectations of a group. Deviance is something that is conferred upon a behavior when people decide that it is necessary to do something about it. Ideally, from society's point of view, people should want to conform. When conformity cannot be achieved voluntarily, other mechanisms of social control are employed to enforce norms. Methods of social control include positive and negative sanctions, censorship, surveillance, authority, and group pressure.

The sociological contribution to understanding deviance lies not with studying deviant individuals per se but with studying the context under which something is deemed deviant. To understand the context, sociologists employ labeling theory, differential association, and structural strain theories.

Medicalization is the process of defining a behavior as an illness or medical disorder and then treating it with a medical intervention. Major stakeholders in the medicalization process are (1) the medical profession, (2) grassroots social movements, (3) the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, (4) consumers, and (5) the managed care industry. Medicalization is a five-stage process: (stage 1) a behavior or appearance is defined as deviant, (stage 2) a formal announcement is made, (stage 3) interested parties lobby to make the behavior a disorder, (stage 4) a government gives the medical profession its mandate to treat it, and (stage 5) organizations emerge to conduct medical research and support those with the condition.

A crime is a subcategory of deviance that involves breaking a law. When sociologists study crimes they ask: "Who avoids detection? Who gets caught? Who goes to prison?" From a global perspective the United States sends the largest proportion of residents to prisons. Still, its prison population includes only a small portion of those people who have actually committed crimes. Prisons include those who did not have the resources, connections, or luck to avoid being detected, noticed, arrested, arraigned, convicted, and sentenced to prison. Based on current rates of first incarceration, an estimated 32 percent of all black males and 17 percent of all Hispanic males will spend some time in prison. For white males that percentage is 5.9 percent. Possible explanations for high rate of imprisonment include the propensity of elected officials to pass tough crime legislation, the long mandated prison sentences handed out to those convicted of drug possession and other nonviolent crimes, the prison-industrial complex, and the fact that prisoners provide low-cost labor to communities.

[Can You Top This Photo?]



Lisa Southwick

Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo that illustrates an informal mechanism of social control.



Lisa Southwick

7

CHAPTER

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

- 7.1** Conceptualizing Social Stratification
- 7.2** Social Class
- 7.3** Global Inequality
- 7.4** Responses to Global Inequality
- 7.5** Inequality
- 7.6** Poverty and Its Functions
- 7.7** The Truly Disadvantaged in the United States
- 7.8** Applying Theory: Critical Social Theory
- Summary** Putting It All Together

When sociologists examine social stratification, they look to see how wealth, income, and other valued resources are distributed unequally among people. Sociologists seek to explain how that distribution came to be and the effects inequality has on *life chances*, the probability that an individual's life will follow a certain path and turn out a certain way. Life chances apply to virtually every aspect of life, including the chances that someone will use a line to dry clothes, plant grass in the backyard, own "private property," and much more.

Conceptualizing Social Stratification

Objective

You will learn about the processes by which societies categorize and rank people on a scale of social worth.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Stephanie Tigner



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Brandon Myrick

Look at the people in these photographs. Imagine that you had to assign a dollar value between \$250,000 (least valued) and \$7.1 million (most valued) to each person's life. Could you do it?

This is what the people administering the Victim's Compensation Fund did—they assigned a monetary value to each of the 2,800 people who died as a result of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. What criteria do you think the managers used to award money? That question speaks to the principles underlying social stratification.

Social Stratification

Social stratification is the systematic process of categorizing and ranking people on a scale of social worth such that one's ranking affects life chances in unequal ways. Sociologists define **life chances** as the probability that a person's

life will follow a certain path and turn out a certain way. Life chances apply to virtually every aspect of life—the chances that someone will survive the first year after birth, complete high school, see a dentist twice a year, work while going to school, travel abroad, major in elementary education, own fifty or more pairs of shoes, or live a long life. **Social inequality** describes a situation in which valued resources such as income and desired outcomes such as a college education are distributed unequally.

Every society in the world stratifies its people. Almost any criterion can be used (and probably has been at one time or another) to categorize people and assign them a status, whether it be based on hair color and texture, eye color, physical attractiveness, weight, height, occupation, sexual preference, age, grade point average, test scores, or many others. People's status in society can be ascribed or achieved. **Ascribed statuses** are social positions assigned on the basis of attributes people possess through no fault of their own—those attributes are acquired at birth (such as skin shade, sex, or hair color), develop over time (such as height or wrinkles), or are otherwise possessed through no personal effort (inherited wealth). **Achieved statuses** are attained through some combination of choice, effort, and ability. That is, people must act in some way to acquire an achieved status. Achieved statuses include earned wealth, income, occupation, and educational attainment.

The various achieved and ascribed statuses hold **social prestige**, a level of respect or admiration for a status apart from any person who happens to occupy it. Social prestige is complicated by **esteem**, the reputation that someone occupying a particular status has acquired based on the opinion of those who know and observe him or her.

► The achieved status of sports fan brings with it a level of social prestige not connected with any person who happens to occupy that status. That level of prestige varies depending on the team's win-loss record and history. Each fan, however, holds a level of esteem. If a fan behaves in ways that disrupt others' ability to enjoy the game, his or her esteem suffers.



U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III

Sociologists are especially interested in the ascribed and achieved characteristics that take on **status value**, a situation in which people who possess one characteristic (white skin versus brown skin, blond hair versus dark hair, high versus low income, married versus single) are regarded and treated as more valuable or worthy than people who possess other characteristics (Ridgeway 1991). The compensation guidelines for the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States show how many factors—age, annual income, occupation, marital status, potential earnings, and family status (with children versus childless)—affected victims' "worth" and the money awarded to survivors. The actual awards ranged from \$250,000 (least valued life) to \$7.1 million (most valued life). One of the "least valued" categories was single, childless persons age 65 and older with an annual income of \$10,000. Under the guidelines, their

survivors were to be awarded a one-time payment of \$250,000. One of the “most valued” categories was married persons age 30 and younger with two children and an annual income of \$225,000. Their survivors were to be awarded a one-time payment of \$3,805,087. The survivors of a person of the same age and marital status with two children but with an annual income of \$101,000 would be awarded only \$694,588 (Chen 2004; September 11 Victim Compensation Fund 2001).

Sociologists are especially interested in any classification system grounded in the belief that ascribed statuses explain certain abilities, such as athletic talent, intelligence, and personality traits (propensity for violence, honesty) and that justify inequalities in wealth, income, and other socially valued items. In this regard sociologists distinguish between systems of stratification that give greater emphasis to ascribed rather than achieved statuses.

Real-world stratification systems fall somewhere on a continuum between two extremes: a **caste system** in which people are ranked according to ascribed statuses and a **class system** in which people are ranked on the basis of their achievements related to merit, talent, ability, or past performance.

Caste Systems

When people hear the term *caste*, India and its caste system often come to mind, especially the system that existed before World War II. India’s caste system, now outlawed in the country’s constitution, consisted of a strict classification of people into four basic categories with 1,000 subdivisions. To appreciate the strictness of this caste system, consider that there were even rules specifying physical distance to be maintained between people of different caste. Sociologists use the term *caste* to refer to any form of stratification in which people are categorized and ranked by characteristics over which they have no control and that they usually cannot change.

A direct connection exists between caste rank and life chances. People in lower castes are seen and portrayed as innately inferior in intelligence, morality, ambition, and many other traits. Conversely, people in higher castes consider themselves to be superior in such traits. Moreover, caste distinctions are treated as if they are absolute and unalterable; that is, their significance is never doubted or questioned. Finally, there are heavy restrictions on interactions between people in higher and lower castes. For example, marriage between people of different castes is forbidden.



Missy Gish

◀ In 1967 (*Loving v. Virginia*) the U.S. Supreme Court struck down what was known as the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, a Virginia law making marriage between whites and nonwhites a felony. That law supported a caste system of stratification.

Class Systems

In theory people in class systems “rise and fall on the strength of their abilities” (Yeutter 1992, p. A13). While class systems contain inequality, it is based on differences in talent, ability, and past performance, not on attributes over which people have no control, such as skin shade or sex. In pure class systems, people assume that they can achieve a desired education, income, or other outcome through hard work. Furthermore, people can raise their class position during their own lifetime, and their children’s class position can differ from (and ideally be higher than) their own. Movement from one social class to another is termed **social mobility** (see Table 7.1a).

➤ President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, represent the ideals of a class system. Both experienced intergenerational upward mobility. Michelle Obama’s father worked at a Chicago city water plant and her mother was a secretary at a Spiegel’s catalog store. Barack Obama’s mother was an anthropologist and his stepfather was an Indonesian oil manager. Michelle Obama is a lawyer and now First Lady; Barack Obama is now president of the United States.

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Mark O’Donald/Released



Many kinds of social mobility exist in class systems of social stratification. Mobility can be vertical or horizontal—**vertical mobility** involves a change in a person’s social situation that involves a gain or loss in social status, whereas **horizontal mobility** is a change in one’s social situation that does not involve a change in social status (see Table 7.1a).

Table 7.1a: Types of Vertical Social Mobility

Type of Social Mobility	Definition	Example
Upward Vertical	A gain in social status	A medical student moves up in rank and becomes a physician
Downward Vertical	A loss in social status	A wage earner loses a job, goes on unemployment
Intragenerational	A loss or gain of social status over the course of a person’s lifetime	A laid-off factory worker takes a job with a lower salary (cashier at a fast food establishment) or a higher status (police officer)
Intergenerational	A loss or gain of social status relative to a previous generation	A son or daughter goes into an occupation that is higher or lower in rank and prestige than a parent’s

Source: *Fortune Magazine* (2008)

Is the United States a Class System?

Neither the class nor the caste system exists in a pure form. Even in the most rigid caste system, some people manage to transcend their positions. Likewise, in class systems people have been denied opportunities based on ascribed statuses. Most Americans believe that they live in a true class system. When given a list of 16 factors that contribute to upward economic mobility, 92 percent of

Americans surveyed ranked “hard work” as the number one factor. The lowest ranked of the 16 factors were race and gender, with only about 16 percent ranking race and gender as essential or very significant factors in achieving upward mobility (Corak 2009). The evidence, however, shows that although there is mobility in the United States, the ascribed characteristics of race and gender do shape life chances (see Chapters 8 and 9).

So how many people born poor become wealthy? While data to answer this question are hard to come by, one study conducted by economist Paul Hertz (2006) followed 4,004 children into adulthood to calculate the odds of changing or maintaining economic status. The researcher averaged the income of each of the 4,004 children’s households for the years 1967 through 1971 and compared it with their household income (averaged over four years, 1997 through 2001) when they were 40-year-old adults. The study found that the chances of moving from the lowest-income category to the highest are actually quite low, but that the chances of remaining in the highest 20 percent income category are quite high (see Table 7.1b). Hertz also found that children from high-income households (top fifth of household income) receive more education and are healthier as adults, factors that surely contributed to maintaining their economic status.

Table 7.1b: Probability of Children Attaining Each Income Quintile Based on the Income Quintile of the Household in Which They Were Born

Hertz divides household income into five categories, or quintiles, and also considers the top five percent. The table shows the relationship between the income category of childhood households (parents’ quintile) and that of their household in adulthood. The bold numbers along the diagonal represent the percentage of adult children who remained in the same income grouping as their parents. To interpret the data in this table, ask the following kinds of questions: What are the chances that someone born in the lowest quintile will achieve a household income that is among the top 5 percent? What are the chances that a person born in the top 5 percent income category will be among the lowest fifth as an adult?

Parent’s Quintile (average household income over four years), 1967–1971)	Adult Children’s Quintile (4-year average household income, 1997–2001)					
	Lowest Fifth	Second Fifth	Third Fifth	Fourth Fifth	Top Fifth	Top 5 Percent
Lowest Fifth	41.5	24.0	15.5	13.2	5.9	1.1
Second Fifth	22.6	25.8	23.1	18.5	10.0	1.5
Middle Fifth	18.7	25.8	24.1	19.6	16.9	1.8
Fourth Fifth	11.1	19.0	20.7	25.1	24.0	5.6
Top Fifth	6.1	11.1	17.2	23.7	41.9	14.2
Top 5 Percent	2.9	9.0	15.5	21.5	51.1	21.7

Source: Hertz (2006)

Hertz’s study also found that children classified as white have advantages over children classified as black with regard to financial mobility. Specifically, 63 percent of black children who grow up in low-income households retain that low-income status as adults, compared with 32.3 percent of poor whites. Black children from the lowest-income households have a 3.6 percent chance of moving into the highest 20 percent income category as adults, compared with 14.2 percent for poor white children.

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption that illustrates how the prestige of the achieved status “basketball player” in the United States is complicated by ascribed statuses.

Write a caption here



Hints: In writing this caption

- review the concept of prestige,
- consider how being disabled or female complicates the status of basketball player, and
- consider what measure you might use to objectively determine prestige (e.g., salary of professional basketball players, size of audience).

Critical Thinking

Assign a monetary value to your life. Explain your rationale. (Do not try to deflect this question by saying it's impossible to put a price tag on anyone's life.)

Key Terms

achieved status

horizontal mobility

social stratification

ascribed status

life chances

status value

caste system

social inequality

vertical mobility

class system

social mobility

esteem

social prestige

Objective

You will learn about the theoretical traditions in sociology that give meaning and significance to the concept of social class.



Can you tell by looking at these dogs the social class of their owners? What clues do you look for to determine that?

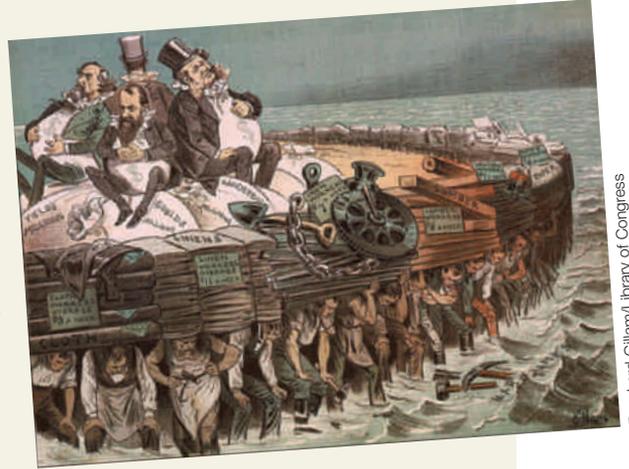
The dogs are **status symbols**, visible markers of economic and social position and rank. Sociologists use the term **class** to designate a person's overall economic and social status in a system of social stratification. They see class as an important factor in determining life chances. In our exploration of the concept of class, we begin with the writings of Karl Marx and Max Weber, who represent the “two most important traditions of class analysis in sociological theory” (Wright 2004, p. 1).

Karl Marx and Social Class

Karl Marx believed that the most important engine of change is class struggle. In *The Communist Manifesto*, written with Friedrich Engels, Marx (1848)

describes how conflict between two distinct social classes propelled society from one historical epoch to another. He observed that the rise of factories and mechanization created two fundamental class divisions: the owners of the means of production (the bourgeoisie) and the propertyless workers (the proletariat), who must sell their labor to the bourgeoisie. The struggle between the two results from the bourgeoisie's relentless drive to lower wages and the proletariat's efforts to resist wage cuts. For Marx, then, the key variable in determining social class is source of income.

➤ This 1883 political cartoon captures Karl Marx's vision of social class. It shows four of the wealthiest people who have ever lived—Cyrus Field, Jay Gould, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Russell Sage. These men were wealthier in real dollars than most of those considered the world's richest today. The four (bourgeoisie) are seated on bags of money atop a large raft that is being held afloat by millions of workers (proletariat) (Klepper and Gunther 2007).



Bernhard Gilliam/Library of Congress

Although Marx pointed to the broad class struggles between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, he identified other class categories.

In the *Class Struggles of France* (1884–1850), Marx named another class, the finance aristocracy, who lived in obvious luxury among masses of starving, low-paid, and unemployed workers. The finance aristocracy includes bankers and stockholders, seemingly detached from the world of work, who speculate in search of wealth. Marx described their income as “created from nothing—

without labor and without creating a product or service to sell in exchange for [that] wealth” (Marx 1856).



U.S. Census Bureau

◀ Marx (1856) would call the New York Stock Exchange and other stock exchanges “temples of speculation.” He argued that the welfare of these exchanges comes before everything.

Max Weber and Social Class

Karl Marx clearly states that social class is based on people's relationship to the means of production, a relationship that determines the sources of their income. For Max Weber (1947), the basis of social stratification extends beyond source of income. He defined a social class as composed of those who hold similar life chances, determined not just by their sources of income, but also by their

marketable abilities (work experience and qualifications), by their access to consumer goods and services, and by their ability to generate investment income. According to Weber, people completely lacking in skills, property, or employment, or who depend on seasonal or sporadic employment, constitute the very bottom of the class system. They form the **"negatively privileged" property class**.

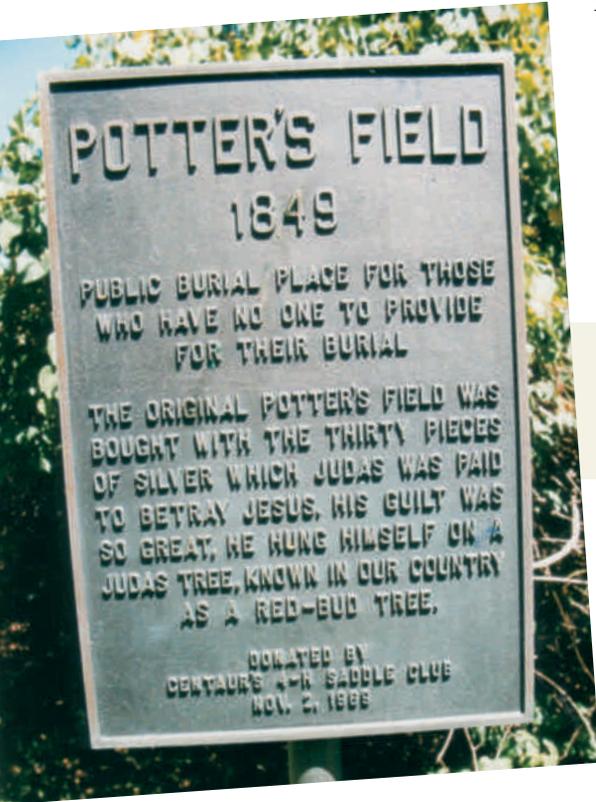
◀ The negatively privileged property class includes people who have no money or skills, who are connected to no one willing to provide enough money for their burial.

Individuals at the very top—the **"positively privileged" property class**—monopolize the purchase of the highest-priced consumer goods, have access to the most socially advantageous kinds of education, control the highest executive positions, own the means of production, and live on income from property and other investments.

Between the top and the bottom of this

social-status ladder is a series of rungs. Weber (1948) argued that a "uniform class situation prevails only among the negatively privileged property class." We cannot speak of a uniform situation regarding the other classes, because people's class standing is complicated by status groups and power. He defines a **status group** as an amorphous group of persons held together by virtue of a lifestyle that has come to be "expected of all those who wish to belong to the circle" and by the level of social esteem and honor others accord them (Weber 1948, p. 187). Weber's definition suggests that people can possess equivalent amounts of income and wealth and yet have very different lifestyles and be accorded different levels of social esteem. While accorded social esteem can be the result of income and wealth, it can also derive from physical attractiveness, a particular talent, race, sex, and so on.

In addition to class and social status, power is the third dimension of social stratification. Weber defined **power** as the probability that one can exercise his or her will in the face of resistance. Power derives from social class and social status but also from the **political parties**, organizations that try to acquire power to influence social action (Weber 1982). Parties are organized to represent people of a certain class or social status. The means of obtaining power can include engaging in violence, canvassing for votes, bribery, donations, and the force of



Raymond Eilers

speech. Examples of political parties are endless. Some examples within the United States include NOW (National Organization for Women), the NRA (National Rifle Association), and AARP (American Association of Retired Persons). Weber also recognized that power derives from occupying a position in a bureaucracy that allows someone to use tools and resources to rule and influence others.



Lisa Southwick



Lance Cpl. Richard Blumenstein

▲ Skateboarders represent a status group, as do these bodybuilders. Status groups are held together by a lifestyle that is expected of all who belong.

Determining Social Class

Sociologist Erik Orin Wright (2009), who has spent his professional career working to clarify the concept of social class and its historical, structural, and personal significance, offers a series of questions that capture some of the ways sociologists approach class.

IS THERE AN OBJECTIVE WAY TO ASSESS THE DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIAL INEQUALITY? Once sociologists settle on the number of class categories relevant to their analysis, they work to identify objective criteria by which to classify people into those categories. If they decide, for example, to categorize class in terms of upper, middle and lower, the next step is to decide how to objectively measure social class: should accumulated wealth or annual income be used to determine one's social class?

Wealth refers to the combined value of a person's income *and* other material assets such as stocks, real estate, and savings minus debt. If we divide U.S. households into four income groups of 28 million households, we see that the top quartile controls 87 percent of the wealth (the equivalent of \$43.6 trillion). The bottom quartile earns 4 percent, the equivalent of \$400 million, and has no wealth (after debts are paid) (Zhu 2007).

Income refers to the money a person earns, usually on an annual basis through salary or wages. Within the United States, the average after-tax income of the richest 20 percent is \$184,400, or 11 times that of the poorest 20 percent, who average \$16,500. That is, for every \$1,000 of taxed income earned by the poorest

one-fifth, the top one-fifth earns \$11,000. When we compare the after-tax income of the top 1 percent with that of the bottom 20 percent, the inequality is even greater. That 1 percent's after-tax income is \$1.2 million, or 73 times greater than the bottom 20 percent (see Table 7.2a).

Table 7.2a: Average After-Tax Income in the United States by Income Group, 1979 and 2006 (in 2006 dollars)

The table compares after-tax income in the United States across six income groups at two points in time—1979 and 2006. Perhaps most striking is that the greatest financial gains during this time period have been made by those in the top fifth, particularly the top 1 percent. The financial gain made by those in the top 1 percent is 540 percent greater than that of the lowest one-fifth. (The 540 percent figure is obtained by dividing the dollar change of the top 1 percent (\$863,200) by the dollar change of the lowest fifth (\$1,600)).

Income Category	1979 Average After-Tax Income	2006 Average After-Tax Income	Percent Change	Dollar Change
Lowest Fifth	\$14,900	\$16,500	11%	\$1,600
Second Fifth	\$30,100	\$35,400	18%	\$5,300
Middle Fifth	\$42,900	\$52,100	21%	\$9,200
Fourth Fifth	\$56,100	\$73,800	32%	\$17,700
Top Fifth	\$98,000	\$184,400	88%	\$86,400
Top 1 Percent	\$337,100	\$1,200,300	256%	\$863,200

Source: Congressional Budget Office (2009)

HOW MUCH INCOME OR WEALTH QUALIFIES SOMEONE TO BE UPPER, MIDDLE, OR LOWER CLASS? There is no agreement on the amount of income or wealth that distinguish the social classes. The Pew Research Center (2008) defines people as middle-income class in the United States if they live in a household with an annual income from 75 to 150 percent of the annual median household income. A person with a household income above that range is upper-income class; a person whose household income is below that range is low-income class. In 2008 the median household income was \$59,494. Seventy-five percent of \$59,494 is \$44,620; 150 percent of \$59,494 is \$89,241. So a middle-class household is one with an annual income between \$44,620 and \$89,241. Of course, this represents just one way to conceptualize social class. In the 2008 presidential elections, the then Democratic candidate for president Barack Obama defined the upper limits of middle-class status as \$250,000 with no lower limit specified.

HOW DO PEOPLE SEE THE CLASS STRUCTURE AND HOW DO THEY GO ABOUT LOCATING THEMSELVES AND OTHERS IN THAT STRUCTURE? Objective measures of social class do not usually correspond with people's self-assessment of their class location. For example, the Pew Research Center found that an objective measure of social class—household income between \$44,620 and \$89,241—would put 35 percent of households in that class. A subjective measure asking people to classify their household as upper, middle or lower resulted in 53 percent defining themselves as middle class.

Pew researchers found that the greater a person's income, the higher the estimate of the amount of money it takes to be middle class. On average, those with

household incomes between \$100,000 and \$150,000 a year believe that it takes an \$80,000 annual income to live a middle class lifestyle. Conversely, those from households earning less than \$30,000 a year maintain that it takes about \$50,000 a year (Pew Research Center 2008, p. 15).

Objective and subjective measures aside, it is often difficult to identify a person's class through observation alone. Some people drive BMWs and wear designer clothes—symbols of solid middle-class status—but work at low-paying jobs, live in low-rent apartments, and have exceeded their lines of credit. According to the U.S. Federal Reserve (2009) 56 percent of U.S. households owe nothing in credit card debt (that is, they have no credit card or they pay off their credit cards each month). However, 44 percent of households carry varying amounts of debt. For such households, their annual disposable income (income derived from earning and other nonloan sources) does not cover the money they spend to maintain their lifestyle.

► Eighty-four percent of college undergraduates have a credit card. Fifty percent of all undergraduates have four or more credit cards. The average college student holds \$2,200 in credit card debt (CreditCards.com 2009).

UpperCut Images/Getty Images



Critical Thinking

Define your social class using concepts from this module.

Key Terms

class

income

negatively privileged
property class

political parties

positively privileged
property class
power

status group

status symbols

wealth

Global Inequality

Objective

You will learn that the distribution of income, wealth, and other scarce and valued resources varies across and within countries.



Norris Jones, CIV, USAOE



Kari Hawkins, Redstone Rocket Staff

To what extent do you think your life has been shaped by the country in which you were born?

Clearly we have no control over which of the world's 200-plus countries we are born in, yet where people are born affects their life chances in dramatic ways. The chances that a child will ride in a toy automobile and aspire to own a car someday are considerably higher in the United States (right) than in Iraq, where this young girl carries water from a community water well to her home, which may be miles away. In assessing global inequality, sociologists look to see how wealth, income, and other valued resources—whether they be toys, cars, or water—are distributed among the 6.6 billion people living in the 243 or so countries on the planet. That distribution is marked by extremes of poverty and wealth.

Poverty and Wealth

It is difficult to define what it means to live in poverty, except to say that it is a situation in which people have great hardship meeting basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing. Poverty can be thought of in absolute or relative terms.

Absolute poverty is a situation in which people lack the resources to satisfy the basic needs no person should be without. Absolute poverty is usually expressed as a living condition that falls below a certain threshold or minimum. For example, the World Bank (2009) has set that threshold at US\$1.25 per day; the United Nations sets it at US\$1.00 per day. According to the UN measure, there are 1.1 billion people who live in a state of absolute poverty.

Relative poverty is measured not by some essential minimum but rather by comparing a particular situation against an average or advantaged situation. Thus one thinks not just about survival needs but about a lack of access to goods and services that have become defined as essential. Today in the United States, for example, although people do not “need” a cell phone or a computer to survive, many can be at a severe disadvantage without them.

In contrast to poverty, **extreme wealth** is the most excessive form of wealth, in which a very small proportion of people in the world have money, material possessions, and other assets (minus liabilities) in such abundance that a small fraction of it, if spent appropriately, could provide adequate food, safe water, sanitation, and basic health care for the 1 billion poorest people on the planet (United Nations 2006). Table 7.3a presents estimates of how many people in the world are extremely wealthy.

Table 7.3a: The Distribution of Global Household Wealth

The table shows various income categories and the estimated number of adults in each category. To be classified as “extremely wealthy,” a person must have a minimum wealth (assets minus liabilities) of \$1 billion. Worldwide, only about 800 adults are categorized as such. To be among the richest 1 percent, a person must have between \$500,000 and \$1 million (excluding the value of his or her home) in wealth. The richest 1 percent holds 40 percent of the world’s wealth. Note that the poorest 50 percent of the world’s adult population—1.9 billion people—possess less than 1 percent of the world’s wealth.

Category	Estimated Number of Adults in Category	Minimum Wealth* (assets – liabilities) to Qualify for Income Category	Percent of Total Household Wealth	Estimated Combined Wealth
Extremely Wealthy	800	\$1 billion	Not known	Not known
Ultra Rich	85,400	\$30 million	Not known	Not known
Richest 0.025%	8.3 million	\$1 million	Not known	Not known
Richest 1%	37 million	\$500,000	40%	\$49.6 trillion
Richest 10%	370 million	\$61,000	85%	\$105 trillion
Middle 40%	1.4 billion	\$2,200	14%	\$17 trillion
Poorest 50%	1.9 billion	Under \$2,200	Less than 1%	\$1.2 trillion

Source: United Nations University (2006)

*Does not include the value of the house in which the person resides

INEQUALITIES ACROSS COUNTRIES. When studying inequalities across countries, sociologists identify a valued resource and estimate the chances of achieving or acquiring it by country. For example, parents everywhere want their children to survive childbirth and beyond, so sociologists compare the chances that a baby will survive the first year of life by country (see Table 7.3b). Infant mortality is considered a key indicator of the overall well-being of a nation, as it reflects maternal health, socioeconomic conditions, and quality of and access to medical care (Centers for Disease Control 2008).



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Elizabeth Casebeer



Official Marine Corps photo by Lt. Philip D. King

▲ A baby born in Japan (right) has one of the best chances of surviving the first year; fewer than 4 of every 1,000 babies born dies before reaching the age of one. A baby born in Afghanistan (left) has one of the worst chances; 160 of every 1,000 babies die within their first year.

Table 7.3b: Countries with the Best and Worst Chances of Infants Surviving the First Year of Life (infant mortality per 1,000 live births)

The chances of staying alive during the first year of life vary from country to country. Infant mortality is the number of deaths in the first year of life for every 1,000 live births.

Worst Chances (deaths per 1,000 live births)		Best Chances (deaths per 1,000 live births)	
Angola	185.36	Singapore	2.29
Sierra Leone	160.39	Sweden	2.76
Afghanistan	160.23	Hong Kong	2.95
Liberia	155.76	Japan	3.24
Mozambique	129.24	Iceland	3.29

Source: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (2010)

Perhaps the most startling examples of how life chances vary across countries emerge when we compare the consumption patterns of the 56 highest-income countries, where approximately 20 percent of the world's people live, against the patterns of the 20 percent of people who live in the poorest countries. People living in the highest-income countries account for 76.6 percent of total private consumption, while the 20 percent who live in the lowest-income countries account for only 1.3 percent (World Bank 2008).

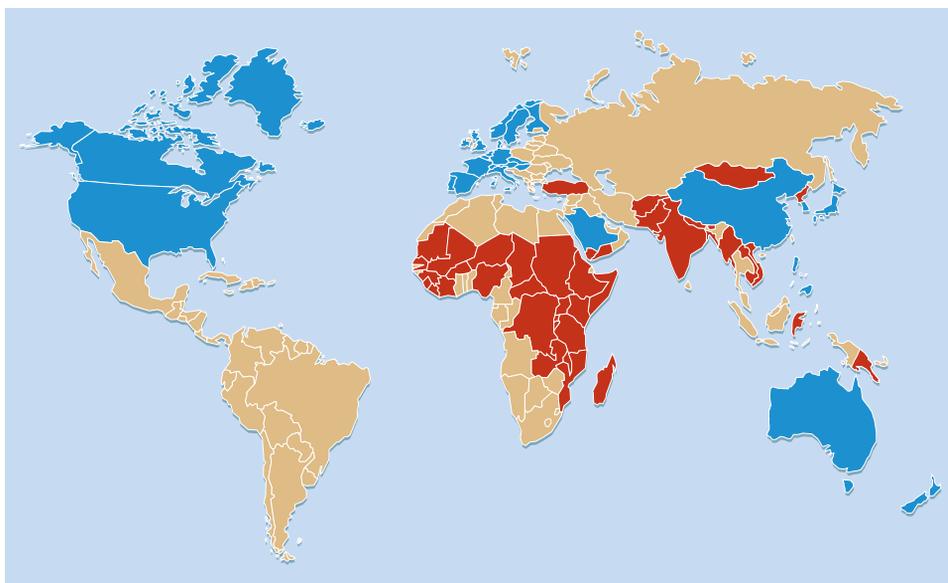
► The chances of consuming large quantities of meat on a regular basis are high in the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (2007), the per capita (per person) consumption of beef in the United States is 110.6 pounds per year. In India the per capita yearly consumption is less than three pounds.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Freddie Coleman



Figure 7.3a The World's Richest and Poorest Economies

The lowest (red) and highest (blue) income economies are highlighted on the following map. The United Nations uses two criteria to determine a country's economic status: (1) annual gross domestic product (GDP) per person, with the poorest countries at \$900 or less and the richest at \$11,000 or more, (2) quality of life measures, such as infant mortality.



Source: United Nations (2010)

INEQUALITIES WITHIN COUNTRIES. Sociologists look within countries to consider how wealth, income, and other valued resources are distributed. They ask questions like what percentage of a country's population lives in poverty? The countries and territories with the lowest poverty rates in the world are Taiwan (0.9%), Lithuania (4%), Belgium (4%), and Bulgaria (4%); those with the highest poverty rates include Zambia (86%), Gaza (81%), Haiti (80%), and Zimbabwe (80%) (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010). Table 7.3c compares the two extreme situations—Taiwan (lowest poverty rate) with Zambia (highest poverty rate)—on a number of characteristics that offer insights about the factors contributing to the amount of poverty within each country.

Table 7.3c: Comparative Overview of Taiwan and Zambia on Selected Characteristics to Understand Poverty Rates

There is no question that a country's economy—the engine of job creation—plays a key role in determining the poverty rates. Taiwan's and Zambia's economies were shaped by their colonial pasts. As a colony, Zambia's economy existed to help Britain meet worldwide demand for mostly extractive resources, such as copper, gold, zinc, and other metals. Japan created a very diverse economy in Taiwan, which it drew upon to support Japan's ambitions to compete as a world power. Upon gaining independence from Japan, Taiwan benefited from the existence of a diverse economy. Zambia, on the other hand, was left with a vulnerable extractive economy.

	Taiwan (less than 1% poverty)	Zambia (86% poverty)
Colonial History	Former colony of Japan, 1895–1945	Former colony of Britain, 1923–1964
Economy Developed under Colonialism	Japan created a diverse economy with an agricultural and manufacturing sector and an infrastructure because of its ambitions to be a world power.	Britain created a mining economy to exploit national resources, including copper, cobalt, zinc, lead, coal, emeralds, gold, silver, uranium, and hydropower.
Social Welfare Policies	Low-income households are entitled to a range of government-provided benefits, including emergency funds, job assistance, child care, education, childbearing benefits, home help, and medical subvention subsidies.	Relief organizations and government offer health and education services for a fee. The majority lives on less than \$1 per day and cannot afford those fees.
Exports	Electronic and electrical products, metals, textiles, plastics, chemicals, auto parts	Copper, zinc, cobalt, lead, tobacco

Source: Tai (2006); Marriage and Family Encyclopedia (2008); Wang (2006)

There are essentially two views on why some countries remain poor or underdeveloped. One view—modernization theory—is that poor countries are poor because they have yet to develop into modern economies and that their failure to do so is largely the result of internal factors. Another view—dependency theory—holds that for the most part poor countries are poor because they are products of a colonial past.

Modernization Theory

Modernization is a process of economic, social, and cultural transformation in which a country “evolves” from an underdeveloped to a modern society. A country is considered modern when

1. a high proportion of the population lives in and around cities;
2. the energy to produce food, make goods, and provide services does not come primarily from physical exertion (human and animal muscle) but from inanimate sources such as burning oil;
3. goods and services are widely available;
4. people have a voice in economic and political affairs;
5. literacy is widespread and there is a scientific orientation to solving problems;
6. a system of mass media and communication is in place that offsets the influence of the family and local cultures as the source of information;
7. large-scale, impersonally administered organizations, such as government, businesses, schools, and hospitals, reduce dependence on family for child care and education and serve as a safety net; and
8. people feel a sense of loyalty to a country rather than an extended family and/or tribe (Naofusa 1999).

➤ This village school in Afghanistan enrolls over 600 students. It has no modern conveniences and the children may attend on the condition that their fathers allow them. Modernization theorists would argue that a country will not modernize until such decisions are government-mandated and not left in the hands of a parent.



Sgt. Robert M. Storm

Modernization theorists seek to identify the conditions that launch underdeveloped countries on the path to modernization. The road to modernization is a multi-stage and multi-decade process beginning with a tradition-oriented way of life absent the eight qualities previously listed (Rostow 1960) and ending with technological maturity and an economy that can support high mass-consumption. Western countries jump-start modernization in other countries through foreign aid and investments, including technology transfers (e.g., fertilizers, pesticides), contraception programs, loans, cultural exchange, and medical interventions. Ideally, these interventions “shock” the traditional society, setting into motion ideas and sentiments that support a modern alternative. The developing countries can also take steps to hasten modernization through appropriate government reforms and policies (Rostow 1960).

According to modernization theorists, modernization involves a transformation of cultural beliefs and values emphasizing fatalism and group orientation to those emphasizing a work ethic, deferred gratification, future orientation, ambition, and individualism (important attitudes and traits believed to be essential to the development of a free market economy or capitalism). As the country modernizes, “the idea spreads, not merely that economic progress is possible, but that economic progress is a necessary condition for some other purpose . . . be it national dignity, private profit, the general welfare, or a better life for the children” (Rostow 1960).

Dependency Theory

Dependency theorists reject the basic tenet of modernization theory—that poor countries fail to modernize because they reject free-market principles and because they lack the cultural values that drive entrepreneurship. Rather, dependency theorists argue that poor countries are poor because they have been, and continue to be, exploited by the world’s wealthiest countries and by the global and multinational corporations headquartered in those wealthy countries. This exploitation is an extension of **colonialism**, a form of domination in which a foreign power uses superior military force to impose its political, economic, social, and cultural institutions on an indigenous population so it can control their resources, labor, and markets (Marger 1991). The age of European colonization began in 1492 with the voyage of Christopher Columbus.

Consider that during the 20th century, 130 countries and territories gained political independence from their colonial masters. The process of gaining political independence from a colonizing power is known as **decolonization**. That process can be a peaceful one by which the two parties negotiate the terms of

independence, or it can be a violent disengagement involving armed struggle. Once independence is achieved, civil war between rival internal factions often takes place as each seeks to secure the power once wielded by the colonizer. Some scholars argue that the Americas (which include the United States, Canada, and Central and South America) are technically still colonized lands because the indigenous peoples did not revolt and declare independence; rather, it was the colonists and/or their descendants who did so. Those who took power simply continued colonizing and exploiting the land and resources once belonging to indigenous peoples (Cook-Lynn 2008; Mihesuah 2008).

Gaining political independence does not mean, however, that a former colony no longer depends on its colonizing country. In his book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Walter Rodney (1973) argues that the countries of the African continent—90.4 percent of which were once controlled by colonial powers—extract, process, and produce primary products for the West. This continuing economic dependence on former colonial powers is known as **neocolonialism**. In other words, neocolonialism is a new form of colonialism where more powerful foreign governments and foreign-owned businesses continue to exploit the resources and labor of the postcolonial peoples. Specifically, resources still flow from the former colonized countries to the wealthiest countries that once controlled them. Some critics would argue that the U.S. military presence in and around the continent of Africa is a form of neocolonialism.

► In 2007 the U.S. Department of Defense put the continent of Africa under one military command known as AFRICOM. Prior to this, command of the African continent had been split between the European and Pacific commands. Many critics question AFRICOM, calling it a U.S. grab for African resources and the militarization of U.S. foreign policy. The official U.S. position is that AFRICOM “allows the U.S. military to help the Africans help themselves, provide security, and to support the far larger U.S. civilian agency programs on the continent” (United States African Command 2008).



Spic. Jason Nolte

Critical Thinking

Study Table 7.3a, which shows the distribution of global household wealth. Where does your household fall? Does this surprise you?

Key Terms

absolute poverty

extreme wealth

neocolonialism

colonialism

modernization

relative poverty

decolonization

Responses to Global Inequality

Objective

You will learn about a plan to reduce global inequality by 2015.



Sgt. Robert M. Storm



© 2010 Jupiterimages Corporation

Why is there such dramatic inequality in the world? Should we take from the rich and give to the poor?

One obvious way to reduce global inequality is to redistribute wealth by transferring some from the wealthiest to the poorest. While there is no plan in the works to take from rich people per se, there has been a plan in place since 2000 known as the Millennium Declaration to redistribute wealth from the richest countries to the poorest ones. The question is whether that plan can be realized.

Millennium Development Project

The United Nations Millennium Development Project (2000) sets 18 targets to be reached by 2015, including these three:

- Halve the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.
- Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

- Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality rate.

Clearly these are ambitious targets. Their success hinges on at least two major commitments from the world's 22 richest countries:

1. increase current levels of foreign aid by investing seven-tenths of 1 percent of GDP, and
2. develop an open, nondiscriminatory trading system.

INCREASE FOREIGN AID. Under this plan the United States, the richest country as measured by its gross domestic product of \$14.3 trillion, must increase its current level of foreign aid from \$27.5 billion annually (0.22 percent of its GDP) to \$101 billion. In 2009, the 22 richest countries in the world had a combined gross national product of \$41.3 trillion. Under this plan these countries should have increased foreign aid from \$102.6 to \$289 billion (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010; United Nations Millennium Development Project 2000).

While it is true that the United States and other wealthy countries offer assistance in other, less officially recognized forms, including private donations, wage remittances sent home from immigrants, and trade investments, we will focus on how its foreign aid is invested. Jeffrey Sachs (2005), director of the UN Millennium Project, points out that the \$3 billion in financial assistance the U.S. allocates to Africa each year does not all go for that purpose. About \$1 billion of the \$3 billion is applied to emergency food shipments with \$500 million going to those who transport the food. Another \$1 billion goes to relief efforts such as constructing roads and providing clean water. However approximately 80 percent of that billion goes to paying American consultant salaries.



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Peter R. Miller (Released)



DoD photo by Cpl. Thomas Childs, U.S. Army

▲ A review of the \$27.5 billion in foreign aid the United States allocates each year shows that the bulk of the assistance goes not toward development but toward crisis intervention, such as disaster and famine relief (top) and refugee programs, military training (bottom) and financing, and narcotics control (U.S. Department of State 2005). For the UN plan to work, countries must not only increase their foreign aid but also change the type of foreign aid that they give.

END SUBSIDIES, TARIFFS, AND QUOTAS. While the world's richest countries have agreed to eliminate tariffs (taxes) on products imported from the poorest economies in the world, they are acting slowly to dismantle a trade system structured to their advantage (Bradsher 2006). In particular, the 22 richest countries subsidize agriculture and other sectors, such as steel and textiles

manufacturing, so that producers in these countries are paid more than world market value for their products. For example, farmers in the richest countries receive \$250 billion in such support. For the most part, these subsidies go to large agricultural cooperatives such as Riceland Foods, not small farmers (Oxfam 2006; Environmental Working Group 2007).

In addition to subsidies, the wealthiest economies put the poorest ones at a further disadvantage by applying tariffs and quotas to imported goods, making less expensive imported goods cost as much as or more than the domestic versions. Consider sugar. The European Union (EU) protects its sugar industry so that domestic producers earn double, sometimes triple, the world market price. Because of subsidies, six million tons of surplus sugar each year is dumped into the world market at artificially low prices. Other protected commodities include rice, textiles, and steel. Such practices affect not just workers in the poorest countries but also workers in the protected markets. For example, Brach's and Kraft Foods closed their U.S.-based candy plants and outsourced more than 1,000 jobs to Argentina and Canada, where sugar can be purchased at lower world market prices (Kher 2002).

The United Nations estimates that the global system of subsidies, tariffs, and quotas costs poor nations \$50 billion annually in lost export revenue—in effect negating the billions in aid given to these economies each year (Gresser 2002).



Chris Caldeira



Chris Caldeira

▲ The wealthiest countries are not the only ones imposing tariffs on imports. Anyone who visits Vietnam, especially its urban areas, quickly observes that it is a land of motorbikes. The widespread use of motorbikes can be explained in part by the tariffs Vietnam places on imported cars and small trucks, which can be as high as 90 percent. The high tariffs make it difficult to purchase vehicles for many who might otherwise be able to afford them (*Thanh Nien News* 2006).

Criticism of the Millennium Declaration

Critics of the UN plan argue that there are other factors that make it difficult for poor economies to compete in the global economy. As a case in point, employers take advantage of those who will work for less. American retailers, for example, offered Laotian clothing manufacturers the opportunity to cut and sew synthetic-lined winter jackets for \$2.65 per jacket—the same price that the retailers were

offering Chinese manufacturers. The problem was that it cost the Laotian manufacturers \$4.00 to make each jacket. Laotian laborers simply could not compete against their Chinese counterparts, who earn between 36 cents and \$1.00 depending on their location in China. Laos also must compete against Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Vietnam, countries in which workers earn some of the lowest wages in the world (Bradsher 2006).

A second reason why critics say the UN plan is not sufficient relates to **brain drain**, the emigration from a country of the most educated and most talented people, including actual or potential hospital managers, nurses, accountants, teachers, engineers, political reformers, and other institution builders (Dugger 2005). One estimate of brain drain shows that 30 percent (Sri Lanka) to 84 percent (Haiti) of college-educated citizens from the poorest countries live abroad in high-income countries. In addition, the rich economies have facilitated brain drain by implementing immigration policies that give preference to educated, skilled foreigners such as nurses.



U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Don Bray (Released)

◀ The concept of brain drain is particularly relevant to health care workers. In fact, the British Medical Association (2005) has grown so concerned about the shortage of health care workers around the world and the migration of such workers from poor to rich countries that it has called for efforts to reduce this trend. Special immigration policies lure these Indonesian and other nurses away from their home countries to work in the richest countries.

Finally critics argue that more focus should be placed on the hundreds of creative and successful efforts to reduce poverty. One is the Grameen Bank microlending project, which was first piloted in 1976 in Bangladesh, a country whose economy is among the poorest. The goal was to examine the possibility of extending tiny loans to the poorest of rural poor women. The anticipated outcome was to eliminate moneylenders' exploitation of the poor and create opportunities for self-employment among the unemployed rural population of Bangladesh. Today the bank that piloted microlending has 1,175 branches, with an estimated 2.4 million borrowers living in 41,000 villages (about 60 percent of all villages in Bangladesh). An estimated 90 percent of borrowers repay the loans (Grameen 2005).

Critical Thinking

Use the Internet to find a nongovernment organization (NGO) with programs that reduce poverty in some of the world's poorest countries.

Key Term

brain drain

Inequality

Objective

You will learn the sociological perspective on inequality and the ways it is enacted.



Which occupation is more important to society—physician or sanitation worker?

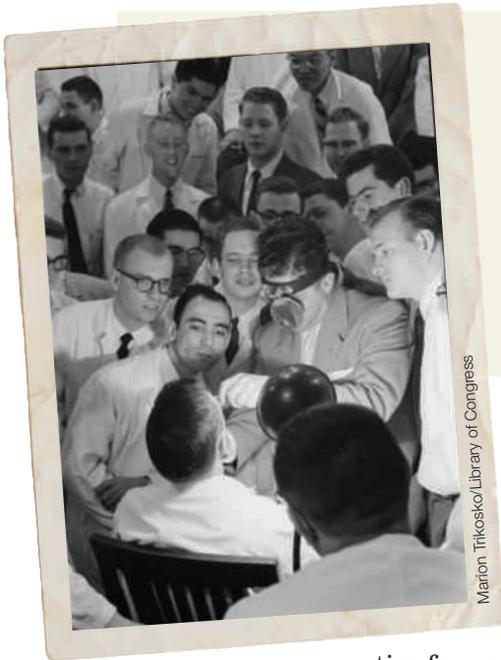
Social inequality is the unequal access to and distribution of income, wealth, and other valued resources. Sociologists draw upon three perspectives to explain inequality and to understand how it is manifested in daily life. Those perspectives are functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interaction.

Functionalist Perspective

Sociologists Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore (1945) argue that social inequality is the device by which societies ensure that the most functionally important occupations are filled by the best-qualified people. That is the reason sanitation workers in the United States earn an average of \$40,000 per year and physicians earn an average of \$180,000 per year. The \$140,000 difference in average salary represents the greater functional importance of the physician relative to the sanitation worker (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008).

Davis and Moore argue that society does not have to offer extra incentives to attract people to the occupation of garbage collector because most can do that job with little training. Society does have to offer extra incentives to attract the most talented people to occupations such as physician that require long, arduous training and a high level of skill. Davis and Moore concede that the stratification system's ability to attract the most talented and qualified people is weakened when

- capable people are overlooked or not granted access to training,
- elite groups control the avenues of training (by limiting admissions), and
- factors other than qualifications are involved in filling positions.



◀ This 1958 photo of all-male medical students at George Washington University Medical School shows that for the most part capable women and nonwhites were denied access to medical schools at that time. As a result few women and minorities applied for medical school and those who did very likely faced rejection. According to Davis and Moore's theory, that practice weakened the stratification system's ability to attract the most talented and qualified people.

Davis and Moore maintain, however, that society eventually adjusts to such shortcomings. Medical schools eventually began admitting people from groups once denied access. In addition, when there are shortages of people to fill functionally important occupations (such as teachers, nurses, and doctors), society acts to increase opportunities for people to enter those occupations and to admit those previously denied entry. If such a step is not taken, the society as a whole will suffer and will be unable to meet its needs.

Conflict Perspective

Melvin M. Tumin (1953) and Richard L. Simpson (1956) challenge the functionalist assumption that social inequality is a necessary device societies use to attract the best-qualified people for functionally important occupations. These sociologists point out that some positions command large salaries even though their contributions to society are questionable. Consider the salaries of athletes. For the 2008–2009 season, the average NBA athlete earned \$5.36 million, with the highest-paid athlete, Kevin Garnett, earning \$24.7 million (InsideHoops.com 2009). We might argue that professional athletes deserve such enormous salaries because they generate income for owners, cities, advertisers, and media giants, but is their contribution more essential than that of teachers, who do not command large salaries? Why not offer teachers higher salaries to attract the most talented and qualified as we do NBA players?

Tumin and Simpson also ask why some workers receive a lower salary than other workers for doing the same job, just because they are of a certain race, age, sex, or national origin. After all, the workers are performing the same job, so functional importance is not the issue. For example, why do women working

full time as registered nurses in the United States earn a median weekly wage of \$930 while their male counterparts earn \$1,011? In fact, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008) data show only 1 of 300 occupational categories in which median weekly earnings for females exceeds those of their male counterparts: database administrators (\$858 versus \$809).

In addition to the issue of pay equity is the question of comparable worth. Why are women who work in predominantly female occupations such as administrative assistant and daycare worker paid less than men who work in predominantly male occupations that are judged to be of roughly the same functional importance—for example, housepainter, carpenter, or automotive mechanic? For example, assuming comparable worth, why should full-time workers at a child daycare center who are overwhelmingly female earn a median weekly salary of \$330 while auto mechanics who are overwhelmingly male earn \$578 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008)?

Conflict theorists also ask if offering high salaries is really necessary to make sure that someone takes the job of CEO over, say, the job of a factory worker. Probably not. In the United States the average base salary of the CEO of a large (top 500) corporation is \$11.4 million; the median salary is \$8.4 million (DeCarlo and Zajac 2009). This average base salary (excluding bonuses, stock options, and other benefits) is 250 times the median household income. If we compare CEO compensation with the wages of workers outside the United States, the inequality is even more dramatic.

► Consider that the Wal-Mart CEO's compensation package in 2006 was \$29.7 million. Aside from the CEO's skills, the company's success can be partly attributed to the fact that it imports about \$18 billion in manufactured goods from the People's Republic of China (China Daily 2005). If the average Chinese factory worker earns about \$1,920 per year, the Wal-Mart CEO earns 15,468 times more than this worker (BusinessWeek.com 2006; Mortiz and James 2007, Noah 2005).



Imaginechina via AP Images

High CEO compensation packages are justified by statements such as, “I created about \$37 billion in shareholder value,” while making no mention of the role employees play in creating shareholder value (Gates and Collins 2003, p. 113).

Finally, Tumin (1953) and Simpson (1956) further criticize the functionalist position by arguing that specialization and interdependence make every position necessary. Thus, to judge that physicians are functionally more important than sanitation workers fails to consider the historical importance of sanitation relative to medicine. Contrary to popular belief, advances in medical technology had little influence on death rates until the turn of the 20th century—well after improvements in nutrition and sanitation had caused dramatic decreases in deaths due to infectious diseases.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

When symbolic interactionists study social inequality, they seek to understand the experience of social inequality; specifically, they seek to understand how social inequality shapes interactions and people's experiences.

In the tradition of symbolic interaction, journalist Barbara Ehrenreich (2001) studied inequality in everyday life as it is experienced by those working in jobs that paid \$8.00 or less per hour. Ehrenreich, a “white woman with unaccented English” and a professional writer with a Ph.D. in biology, decided to visit a world that many others, as many as 30 percent of the workforce, “inhabit full-time, often for most of their lives” (p. 6). Her aim was just to see if she could “match income to expenses, as the truly poor attempt to do everyday” (p. 6). In the process, Ehrenreich worked as a “waitress, a cleaning person, a nursing home aid, or a retail clerk” (p. 9). Ehrenreich learned that “low-wage workers are no more homogeneous in personality or ability than people who write for a living, and no less funny or bright. Anyone in the educated classes who thinks otherwise ought to broaden their circle of friends” (p. 8).

Ehrenreich's on-the-job observations reveal the many ways inequality is enacted. Ehrenreich tells of a colleague who becomes “frantic about a painfully impacted wisdom tooth and keeps making calls from our houses (we are cleaning)

to try and locate a source of free dental care” (p. 80). She tells of a colleague who would like to change jobs but the act of changing jobs means “a week or possibly more without a paycheck” (p. 136); and then there is the colleague making \$7.00 per hour at K-Mart thinking about trying for a \$9.00-per-hour job at a plastics factory (p. 79).



Lisa Southwick

◀ Among the low-wage workers to which Ehrenreich's research applies are the hundreds of thousands of workers who assemble sandwiches and other quick service foods.

Critical Thinking

Which view of social inequality do you find most compelling? Why?

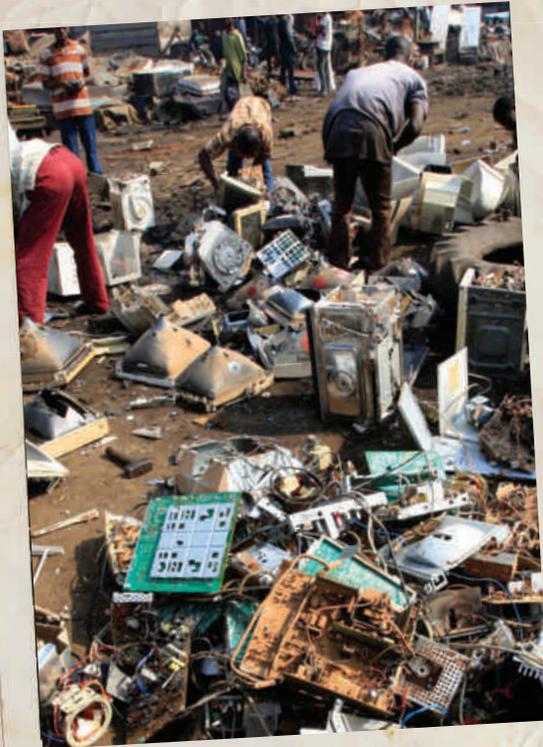
Key Term

social inequality

Poverty and Its Functions

Objective

You will learn what poverty is and who benefits from its existence.



The Times/Newscom

Where do most of the estimated 63 million computers deemed obsolete each year in the United States go?

You might be surprised to learn that most of the obsolete computers are “donated” to poor countries in the name of bridging the digital divide. Each month Nigeria alone receives 400,000 such computers, 75 percent of which are obsolete or nonfunctional and end up in landfills, where toxic materials pollute the surrounding environment, including groundwater

(Dugger 2005). This dumping of computers and other electronics can be considered a function of poverty.

The Functions of Poverty

In his classic essay, “The Functions of Poverty,” sociologist Herbert Gans (1972) asked, “Why does poverty exist?” He answered that poverty performs at least 15 functions, several of which are described here.

FILL UNSKILLED AND DANGEROUS OCCUPATIONS. First, the poor have no choice except to take on the unskilled, dangerous, temporary, dead-end, undignified, menial work of society at low pay. Obviously, the lower the wage, the lower the labor cost needed to make goods and services, and the greater

the employer's profits. Hospitals, hotels, restaurants, factories, and farms draw employees from a large pool of workers who are forced to work, who are willing to work, or who act willing to work at minimum wage or below. In the United States, for example, there are about 500,000 maids and housekeeping cleaners who are overwhelmingly women, immigrants, and minorities whose wages are below poverty level (U.S. Department of Labor 2008).

PROVIDE LOW-COST LABOR FOR MANY INDUSTRIES. The United States and many other economies depend on cheap labor from around the world and within their borders. According to Pew Hispanic Center (2006) estimates, at least 12 million undocumented workers are living in the United States. Of these 12 million, 7.4 million are employed. Twenty-four percent of all farm workers, 17 percent of all cleaning occupations, 14 percent of all construction workers, and 27 percent of all butchers and food processing workers are believed to be unauthorized.



◀ It is low-wage laborers who harvest fruits and vegetables, work as nannies, change beds and launder sheets and towels in hotels, and change diapers and bedpans of those dependent on care (Murphy 2004).

SERVE THE AFFLUENT. Affluent persons contract out and pay low wages for many time-consuming activities, such as housecleaning, yard work, and child care. On a global scale, millions of poor women work outside their home countries as maids in middle- and upper-class homes. Consider that an estimated 460,000 Indonesian women from poor villages work as maids in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia (Perlez 2004). Even the U.S. military depends on low-wage workers from the Philippines. While only 51 Filipino troops served as part of the U.S.-led coalition in the Iraq war, more than 4,000 prepared food, cleaned toilets, and performed other support-related tasks for the American forces (Kirka 2004).

▶ This housepainter from Mexico City hopes to make money in the United States and some day return home. He is one of millions of documented and undocumented immigrants offering services to the affluent at a low cost in the construction, hotel, and agricultural industries.



VOLUNTEER FOR DRUG TRIAL TESTS. The poor often volunteer for over-the-counter and prescription drug tests. Most new drugs, ranging from AIDS vaccines to allergy medicine, must eventually be tried on healthy human subjects to determine their potential side effects (such as rashes, headaches, vomiting, constipation, or drowsiness) and appropriate dosages. Money motivates people to volunteer as subjects for these clinical trials. Because payment is relatively low, however, the tests attract a disproportionate share of low-income, unemployed, or underemployed people (Morrow 1996).

SUSTAIN ORGANIZATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT. Many businesses, governmental agencies, and nonprofit organizations exist to serve poor people or to monitor their behavior, and of course the employees of these entities draw salaries for performing such work. In addition, the labor of some professionals (such as teachers, doctors, and lawyers) who lack the competency to be hired in more affluent areas find employment serving those in low-income communities. Nationwide there are 235,000 such organizations with a combined budget of \$230 billion serving the disadvantaged in mental health/crisis intervention, employment, nutrition, housing, and community improvement (National Center for Charitable Statistics 2009).

PURCHASE PRODUCTS THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE DISCARDED.

Poor people use goods and services that would otherwise go unused and be discarded. Day-old bread, used cars, and second-hand clothes are purchased by or donated to the poor.

➤ If people did not donate clothes to the poor, the estimated 28 billion tons of clothes discarded each year that end up in landfills would be even greater (Reuters 2009). The poor recycle clothes by wearing donated items; by doing so they lessen the burden on landfills.



Chris Caldeira

Gans (1972) outlined the functions of poverty to show how a part of society that everyone agrees is problematic and should be eliminated remains intact: it contributes to the supposed stability of the overall system. Based on this reasoning, the economic system as we know it would be strained seriously if we completely eliminated poverty; industries, consumers, and occupational groups that benefit from poverty would be forced to adjust.

Critical Thinking

Can you think of some ways those who earn poverty-level wages (minimum wage or less) provide services and goods upon which you depend?

The Truly Disadvantaged in the United States

Objective

You will learn about the most disadvantaged groups who live in the United States.



© Rebecca Cook/Reuters/Corbis

What happens to people when a factory closes?

This abandoned Detroit automobile plant, built in 1907, used to employ 40,000 people, enough employees to sustain a department store, two schools, and a grocery store on the premises. What happened to those who worked in the stores and school when the plant closed in 1950? They were among the 130,000 auto manufacturing jobs lost in the Detroit area alone between 1948 and 1967—when the auto industry was restructured by relocating plants to the suburbs and automating its production facilities (Sugrue 2008). Of course, there was a second wave of restructuring and layoffs beginning in the 1970s and continuing through today, as Detroit automakers steadily moved operations to overseas locations and downsized their operations in the United States.

Inner-City Poor

In a series of important studies, sociologist William Julius Wilson (1983, 1987, 1991, 1993) describes how structural changes in the U.S. economy helped create what he termed the ghetto poor, now known as the **inner-city poor**. Since the 1970s a number of economic transformations have taken place, including:

- the restructuring of the American economy from a manufacturing base to a service and information base,
- the rise of a labor surplus marked by the entry of women and the large baby boom segment of the population into the labor market,
- a massive exodus of jobs from the cities to the suburbs, and
- the transfer of millions of manufacturing jobs out of the United States.

These changes, combined with other historical factors, are major forces behind the emergence of the inner-city poor or **urban underclass**—diverse groups of families and individuals residing in the inner city who are on the fringes of the American occupational system and as a result are in the most disadvantaged position of the economic hierarchy (Wilson 1983). Wilson (in collaboration with sociologist Loïc J. D. Wacquant) studied Chicago, but the plight of that city applies to every large city in the United States. In 1954 Chicago was at the height of its industrial power. Between 1954 and 1982, however, the number of manufacturing establishments within the city limits dropped from more than 10,000 to 5,000, and the number of jobs declined from 616,000 to 277,000.

➤ The loss of manufacturing jobs in the inner cities, accompanied by an exodus of working- and middle-class families to suburbs, resulted in the closing of hundreds of local businesses, including drugstores and other service-oriented establishments. These changes profoundly affected the daily lives of the people left behind.



Chris Caldeira

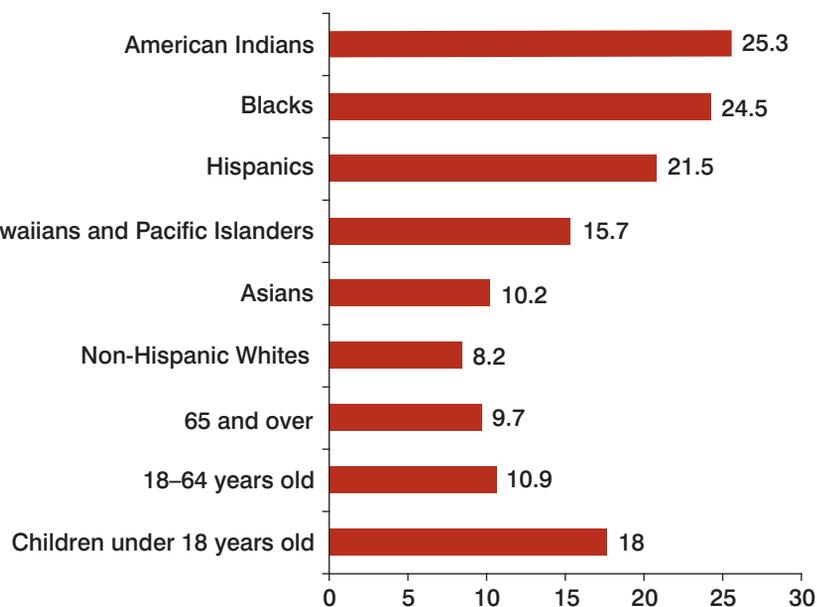
The single most significant consequence of these economic transformations was the “disruption of the networks of occupational contacts that are so crucial in moving individuals into and up job chains.” Inner-city residents lack connections to the stably employed who can offer knowledge about possible job openings and provide contact to employers who are hiring (Wacquant 1989, pp. 515–516).

Poverty in the United States

One in eight people—35 million or 12.5 percent of the population—is officially classified as living in poverty (see Figure 7.7a). To determine the point at which someone lives in poverty, the U.S. Census Bureau sets a dollar value threshold that varies depending on household size and age (under 65 and 65 and over).

If the total household income is less than the specified dollar value, then that household is considered as living in poverty. The poverty threshold for a four-person household with three children is \$21,100 per year (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2009). About 50 percent of those living in poverty have incomes that are less than half the poverty threshold (U.S. Census Bureau 2008).

Figure 7.7a Percentage of Population in Poverty by Selected Characteristics, 2007 Poverty rates vary according to race, ethnicity, age, and sex. What percentage of non-Hispanic whites falls below the poverty thresholds? What percentage of American Indians falls below that threshold? What percentage of children under age 18 does?



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2008)

Because the inner-city poor are the most visible and most publicized underclass in the United States, many Americans associate poverty with urban areas. In fact, the suburban poor outnumber the urban poor. Many of the suburban poor were pushed out of the city when factories and other businesses closed; they headed to the suburbs in search of jobs and low-cost housing (Jones 2006). The rural poor, which includes an estimated 2.6 million children, is another segment of the population that remains largely invisible. Forty-eight of the 50 counties in the United States with the highest child poverty rates are rural. More than two-thirds of the less visible rural poor are white. Like their urban counterparts, the rural underclass is concentrated in geographic areas with high poverty rates.

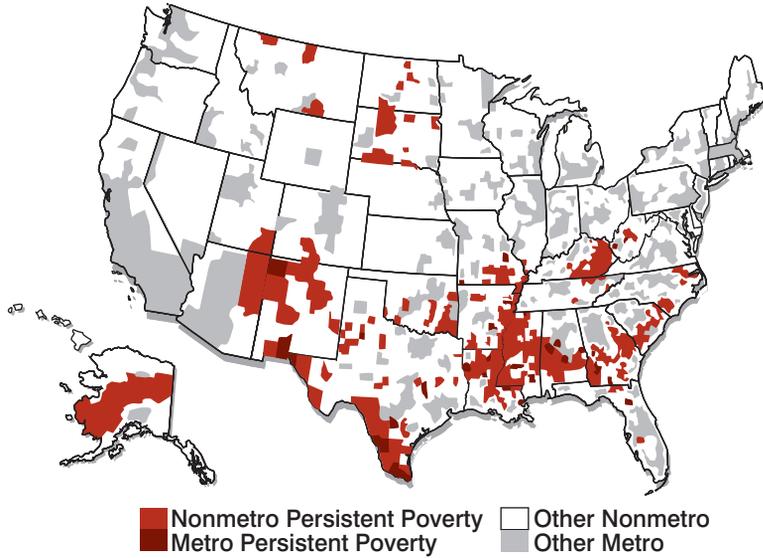
➤ The rural poor also have felt the effects of economic restructuring, including the decline of the farming, mining, and timber industries and the transfer of routine manufacturing out of the United States (see Figure 7.7b).



Lisa Southwick

Figure 7.7b Persistent Poverty Counties in the United States

The map shows the location of counties in the United States characterized by persistent poverty, where the poverty rate has held at 20 percent or more for over 40 years, suggesting that it is chronic and intergenerational. According to this measure, there are 500 persistently poor counties (comprising 16 percent of all counties). Almost 90 percent of these 500 counties ($n = 450$) are rural or not part of a metropolitan area. A metropolitan area includes at least one city of one million or more at the hub of adjoining smaller urban areas and suburbs (Greater Cincinnati or Dallas–Fort Worth).



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (2004)

Critical Thinking

Do you know someone who has been affected by an economic transformation, such as outsourcing? Describe their situation.

Key Terms

inner-city poor

urban underclass

Applying Theory: Critical Social Theory

Objective

You will learn the concept of intersectionality and its importance for understanding life chances.



How are poverty and wealth experienced?

Sociologists look at how the experiences of poverty and wealth are affected by the various categories one occupies in society. How do you think this man in Japan sleeping on the street with his head inside a box experiences poverty? How do you think Tiger Woods experiences wealth in the United States? The answers to these questions speak to issues of intersectionality.

Intersectionality

Over her career as a sociologist, Patricia Hill Collins has made a consistent effort to theorize about **intersectionality**, the interconnections among race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age (generation), nationality, and disability status. Collins (2000) maintains that sociologists must recognize these traits as interlocking categories of analysis that when taken together “cultivate profound differences in our personal biography” and the structure of our relationships (p. 460).

Collins (2006) places her theorizing about intersectionality within the tradition of **critical social theory**, a sociological perspective that examines human constructed categories and institutional practices with the aim of shedding light on the central issues, situation, and experiences of groups differently placed within “specific political, social, and historic contexts characterized by injustice” (p. 15). In her research and writings, Collins applies intersectionality to understanding the experiences of black Americans, a constructed racial category that profoundly shapes the personal biography of those who find themselves in that category. Collins emphasizes that the category “black” does not stand alone; it intersects with other socially significant and constructed categories, including social class, age, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability status, sex, gender, and nation.



▲ To grasp the significance of intersectionality, think about the categories by which others know those pictured. While they are all classified as black men and share the experience of being black and male in the United States, that experience is complicated by other statuses each man holds related to age, occupation, and social class.

The concept of intersectionality helps us to see that (1) no social category is homogeneous, (2) the categories to which some belong place them in a complex system of domination and subordination, and (3) the effects of the categories a person occupies cannot simply be added together to obtain some grand total.

Penalties and Privileges

Collins maintains that each of us derives varying amounts of penalty and privilege from the multiple systems of oppression that frame our lives. **Penalties** include constraints on a person’s opportunities and choices, as well as the price paid for engaging in certain activities, appearances, or choices deemed inappropriate of someone in a particular category. That price may be rejection, ridicule, or even death. A **privilege** is a special, often unearned, advantage or opportunity. We know some categories of people have the privilege of “not being a suspect” when in fact they have committed a crime. A 75-year-old woman who shoplifts is less likely to be noticed because her age (and to some extent her sex) makes her largely invisible to store security.

A **system of oppression** is one that empowers and privileges some categories of people while disempowering other categories. The act of disempowering includes marginalizing, silencing, or subordinating another. We gain insights about these interlocking systems of oppression by thinking about the interlocking categories that shape our own life and interactions. In particular, ask yourself these questions:

- Can you think of times that you have felt constrained by one or more categories to which you belong or have been assigned?
- Can you think of times you felt empowered by one or more of those categories?
- Have you ever resisted being labeled as belonging to one or more of those categories?
- Have you ever taken pride in a category to which you belong or felt superior to someone in another category?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you have experienced the multiple systems of oppression that empower and constrain your life relative to others.

Collins (2006) argues that while most of us have “little difficulty assessing our own victimization within some major system of oppression, whether it be by race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or gender, we typically fail to see how our thoughts and actions uphold someone else’s subordination” (p. 459). Many white feminists, for example, “routinely point with confidence to their oppression as women but resist seeing how much their white skin privileges them. African Americans who possess eloquent analyses of racism often persist in viewing poor white women as symbols of white power. . . . In essence, each group identifies the type of oppression with which it feels most comfortable as being fundamental and classifies all other types as being of lesser importance” (p. 459).

Collins believes that each of us must come to terms with the multiple ways the categories to which we belong shape our lives and relationships through institutionalized practices and symbolic representations. She maintains that each of us carries around the cumulative effects of these multiple structures of oppression and that we enforce that system in the personal choices we make about who to include or exclude in our lives and in the errors in judgment that we make about others who are not like us. One way to assess the extent to which you have been affected by these systems is to ask yourself: “Who are your close friends? Who are the people with whom you share your hopes, dreams, vulnerabilities, fears, and victories? How much are they like you?”

Critical Thinking

Give an example of how systems of oppression (institutionalized, symbolic, or personal) have affected your chances to connect with people in other categories.

Key Terms

critical social theory

penalties

system of oppression

intersectionality

privilege

Summary: Putting It All Together

Social stratification is the systematic process of categorizing and ranking people on a scale of social worth such that the various rankings affect their life chances in unequal ways. Every society in the world stratifies its people according to ascribed and achieved statuses. Associated with each status are varying levels of prestige and esteem. Stratification systems fall on a continuum between two extremes: caste and class systems, neither of which exists in a pure form.

Sociologists use the term *social class* to designate a person's overall status in a system of social stratification. The views of Karl Marx and Max Weber are central to class analysis. For Marx, the key variable in determining social class (and life chances) is source of income. Weber defined social classes as composed of those who hold similar life chances determined not just by their sources of income, but also by their marketable abilities, access to goods and services, and ability to generate investment income. Social class is complicated by status groups (lifestyle) and power. Sociologists often use income and wealth as a measure of social class, but they disagree over the amount of wealth and income associated with various class rankings. They do agree, however, that there are dramatic differences in the ways wealth and income are distributed, with the most dramatic differences between highest and lowest strata.

When sociologists examine social stratification on a global scale, they look to see how wealth, income, and other valued resources are distributed unequally among the 6.6 billion people living in 243 or so countries. The contrasts in wealth, income, and life chances are startling. There are two views on why some countries remain poor or underdeveloped. One view—modernization theory—holds that poor countries are poor because they have yet to develop into modern economies and that their failure to do so is largely the result of internal cultural factors. Another view—dependency theory—holds that, for the most part, poor countries are poor because they are products of a colonial past. In 2000, United Nations member countries endorsed the Millennium Declaration, an ambitious plan to significantly reduce global inequality by 2015.

Sociologists draw upon three perspectives to explain inequality and to understand how it is manifested in daily life. Those perspectives are functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interaction. Sociologists also look to structural changes in the economy to understand how they disrupt networks of occupational contacts, so that large segments of society such as the inner-city poor cannot connect with those who are steadily employed.

[Can You Top This Photo?]



U.S. Army photo by
Sgt. Matthew Clifton

Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo with a caption to illustrate a pattern of overconsumption in the United States.



Lisa Southwick

8

CHAPTER

RACE AND ETHNICITY

- 8.1 Race**
- 8.2 Ethnic Groups**
- 8.3 Classifying Race and Ethnicity**
- 8.4 Minority Groups**
- 8.5 Racism**
- 8.6 Prejudice and Discrimination**
- 8.7 Assimilation, Integration, and Pluralism**
- 8.8 Applying Theory: The Three Perspectives**
- Summary Putting It All Together**

How can biologically related people be classified as different races? The answer is key to understanding both race relations in the United States and the significance that race has assumed in human affairs. On the surface, race may seem like a meaningful way to categorize people, but on close analysis racial categories make no logical sense. Sociologists are interested in how something so illogical has come to be accepted as a meaningful human characteristic and has come to assume such great importance in shaping life chances.

Objective

You will learn why sociologists define race as a social construction.



What race is President Barack Obama?

Obama is considered the first *black* president of the United States. Do you think that odd considering he described his father as a Kenyan immigrant who was “black as pitch” and his Kansas-born mother as “white as milk” (Obama 2006)? Obama’s case helps us to understand why most biologists and social scientists have come to agree that race is not a *biological* fact. The reason is that parents who are considered different racial categories can produce offspring. The offspring, by definition, is a blend of the two races and cannot belong to just one racial category.

Defining Race

Sociologists define **race** as human-constructed categories to which people are assigned. People in each category are connected by shared and *selected* ancestors, history, and physical features and are widely regarded as a distinct racial group. To grasp this definition of race, focus on *selected*. *Selected* means to choose some parts out of a larger whole and ignore other parts. In the case of race,

selected means to acknowledge *some* ancestors and not others, to emphasize *some* physical characteristics (i.e., skin color and hair texture) but not others (i.e., shape of ears, height, or size of feet), and to recognize only *some* parts of history and not others (i.e., a black history *or* a white history but not interconnections between the two).

► Because of his appearance, this baby is seen as belonging to the race of just his mother. Do you see how placing importance on skin color and hair texture dismisses connections the baby has with the history and ancestors associated with his father's "race"?



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Lane McNeal

Race as Illusion

The race we have assigned President Obama requires that we forget about his mother and his connections to her ancestors. While on the surface, race seems like a natural way to categorize people, upon close analysis it has no basis in logic. First, there are no sharp dividing lines specifying the physical boundaries that distinguish one race from another.



Jason Eric Dustin

◀ These four brothers are offspring of the same parents, yet they do not appear to belong to the same race. In fact it is difficult to specify the exact point at which hair texture or skin shade marks one brother as white and another as black. That is because no clear line separates so-called black from white skin or tightly curled hair from wavy or straight hair.

Second, just like the four brothers pictured above, millions of people in the world are products of sexual unions between people

of different races. Obviously, the offspring of such unions cannot be one biological race. Even if we are able to classify each child as a single race, the biological reality does not support this conclusion.

Third, the diversity of people within any one racial category is so great that knowing someone's race tells us little about him or her. For example, in the United States, people expected to identify as Asian include those who have roots in very different places: Cambodia, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Siberia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and dozens of other Far Eastern or Southeast Asian countries. Similar diversity exists within populations labeled as "Black or African American," "White," or "American Indian and Alaska Native."



▲ According to U.S. definitions of race, the category of Asian includes people with ancestors from Indonesia (top left), South Korea (top center), Siberia (top right), Thailand (bottom left), Laos (bottom center), and Vietnam (bottom right). What characteristics do the people pictured share? They do not share a language, a country of origin, or a culture. The only trait those pictured have in common is that each has at least one blood relative considered as being from a country designated as Asian.

Finally, the meaning of race varies by time and place. In Brazil there are as many as 130 terms to describe race, ranging from *azul* (darkest black, bordering on purple) to *verde* (lighter than white) (Fish and Schles 1995). Today in the United States there are five official terms to label someone’s race (see Table 8.1a). In 1890 the U.S. Census Bureau used two categories—black and white—but further divided the black category into four subcategories (black, mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon). For whatever reason, there were no other racial categories counted at that time (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2010).

Table 8.1a: Percent of Total U.S. Population by Official Racial Category

The United States now officially recognizes five racial categories plus “other race.” Almost 80 percent of the 308 million people in the United States self-classify as white. Notice that Hispanic/Latino or Arab/Middle Eastern are not officially considered races in the United States. If someone identifies with a race other than the recognized five, they can check “other.” About five percent of the American population identify as such.

Official Racial Category	Percentage of Population
White	79.1%
Black	12.4%
Asian	4.5%
American Indian/Native American	.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%
Other Race	4.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2008)

Racial Formation Theory

Sociologists are interested in how something that makes no logical sense has come to assume such great importance. They are interested in the strategies people use to make race seem like a valuable categorization tool.

➤ History shows many examples of the ways in which people have tried to make racial categories real. For example, at one time in the United States, some churches used a brown paper bag test, permitting only those with skin shades no darker than the bag to enter.

Sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1986) offer **racial formation** theory as a way to understand the significance of race. Race is clearly not a concrete biological category; in fact, race is a product of the system of racial classification. Racial categories developed gradually and for a reason. An honest look at history reveals that race was a European creation used to justify and explain away grave inequalities and discrimination (see Module 8.6). It is also important to realize that the number of racial categories and the names assigned to racial categories have been challenged and transformed through political struggle (see Modules 8.2 and 8.4).

Omi and Winant argue that for race to exist in its present form, anyone who lives in the United States must learn to see race—that is, they must learn to give arbitrary biological features, such as skin color and hair texture, social significance. Moreover, they must develop what the two sociologists call **racial common sense**, ideas people hold in common about race that are believed to be so obvious or natural they need not be questioned. Racial common sense then relates to unquestioned assumptions held about anyone who possesses certain physical traits that associate with a specific racial category. Most people are reluctant to discuss common sense thinking about race for fear that it will open a minefield of misunderstanding (Norris 2002).



Lisa Southwick



© Chad Batka/Corbis

◀ Through her comedy, Margaret Cho (2002) offers insights about racial common sense as it relates to those classified as Asian American: “when people say ‘where are you from’ it’s a really loaded question because when I answer ‘oh, I’m from San Francisco,’ they always come back with ‘no, uhm, I mean where are you really from?’ And then I have to say well my parents are originally from Korea and then I have to listen to all the stories about the Korean people they know or Korean food that they ate before . . . I just don’t get it. I don’t go up to white people and go ‘Hey, are you from France? I mean, not recently, but a couple hundred years ago? I thought so. I love your fries!’”

Omi and Winant (2002) maintain that racial common sense informs our expectations and interactions that involve race and that this common sense understanding of race persists even when we meet people that defy it. We simply assume that they are exceptions to the rule. So an Asian born in the United States is an exception to the rule, thereby proving the rule exists.

Race as a Social Construction

Sociologists see race as socially constructed. This means that the characteristics we have come to believe define race are products of social beliefs and values imposed by those who had (or have) the power to create the labels and categories. Once those labels and categories were put in place, it became easy to reify them. Reify means to treat them as if they are real and meaningful and to forget that they are made up. When we reify categories, we act as if people are those categories. When people do things or appear in ways that don't fit their assigned category, we act as if something is wrong with them or that they are exceptions to the rule rather than questioning the category scheme. Sociologist Charles A. Gallagher (2009) puts it this way: "race exists because we say it exists" (p. 2). There are other ways to sort people than to use hair texture, skin color, or eye shape. "We could create a category based on the size of people's feet. People with shoe sizes between 3 and 7 would be labeled the Petite Race, those between 8–11 would be designated the Bigger Race, and the 12–15 shoe size would be categorized as the Monster Foot Race. Those with feet smaller or larger than the existing sizes would be the 'Other' Race" (p. 2).



Sarah Leen/National Geographic Stock

▲ Like foot size, skin shade tells us little about a person that really matters. There is a continuum of skin shades and not everyone thought to belong to the same race shares one skin shade. However, people have managed to use skin shade as an indicator of race, thereby reifying racial categories and making the experience of race real.

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption relating Omi and Winant's racial formation theory to the situation of this father and daughter.

Write a caption here



DoD photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephanie Tigner, U.S. Navy

Hints: In writing this caption

- think about how we have been taught to see this little girl and her father in a racial sense,
- consider what physical features we draw upon and ignore to classify the child and her father, and
- ask yourself whether it is likely that the two see themselves (or at least know that others see them) as belonging to different racial categories.

Critical Thinking

Think of your living and deceased relatives on both sides of the family. Can you identify anyone who is considered a different race from you? Explain.

Key Terms

race

racial common sense

racial formation

Ethnic Groups

Objective

You will learn the processes by which ethnicity assumes social and personal significance.



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Alvin Williams/Released

Can you tell this man's ethnicity by looking at him? If yes, what clues did you use to make that determination?

If you guessed that this man is Samoan, then you have correctly named the ethnicity with which he identifies. This man, a member of the U.S. Navy, announces his ethnicity to all by performing a Samoan dance at a cultural celebration. Sociologists are interested in the processes by which ethnicity takes on personal and social significance.

Defining an Ethnic Group

An **ethnic group** consists of people who share, believe they share, or are believed by others to share a national origin; a common ancestry; a place of birth; or distinctive social traits (such as religion, style of dress, or language) that set them apart from other ethnic groups. Distinguishing between race and ethnicity is complicated because racial and ethnic identities are intertwined. In the United States, for example, Samoans are considered to belong to the racial category "Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders."

It is impossible to list all the ethnic groups that exist in the United States and elsewhere in the world. It is also difficult to specify the unique social

characteristics and markers that place people into a particular ethnic group. For example, does performing a Samoan dance make someone Samoan? Or is it the ability to speak Samoan? Because language and cultural traditions are imprecise markers of ethnicity, one way to determine someone's ethnicity is to simply ask, "What is your ethnicity?" Self-identification is problematic, too, because people's sense of ethnicity can range in intensity from nonexistent to all encompassing (Verkuyten 2005).

In claiming ethnicity, people may point to ancestors they have never met (e.g., my great-grandfather was from Ireland) or to a distinct community to which they feel a deep connection (e.g., growing up I lived in American Samoa). For some, ethnicity is based on a sentimental connection that may manifest itself in rooting for a particular soccer team (i.e., the Italian soccer team). For others, ethnicity is a complete lifestyle that involves being born in a particular place, speaking the language, dressing a particular way, and interacting primarily with others in that ethnic group.

Ethnic identity is also affected by **selective forgetting**, a process by which people forget, dismiss, or fail to pass on a connection to one or more ethnicities. This decision is affected by larger societal forces. For example, in the United States, some races have more freedom than others in claiming an ethnic identity. Americans classified as white have a great deal of freedom to claim an ethnic identity associated with the category of white. But it is difficult for people who appear white to claim an ethnicity associated with races considered non-white. Americans classified in racial terms as black have less choice; they are expected to identify as simply "black" or as of African descent, even though they know they have ancestors of specific African and other ethnicities or feel a special connection to ancestors from countries other than Africa (Waters 1994).

► We almost never think of people who appear something other than white as belonging to an ethnic heritage that is European. For example, many people might dismiss any connection this girl of Indian descent (India) has to an Irish ethnic heritage.

Involuntary Ethnicity and Ethnic Renewal

Then there is the phenomenon of **involuntary ethnicity**. In this situation, a government or other dominant group creates an umbrella ethnic category and assigns people from many different cultures and countries to it. The category becomes the label by which these diverse peoples are known and with which they are forced to identify. In the United States, Hispanic is such an umbrella ethnicity. This ethnic category created in 1970 includes anyone who has roots in a Spanish-speaking country, of which there are at least 19. In contrast to the United States, China recognizes 56 different ethnic groups, including the Han (which encompasses 92 percent of the population), Tibetans, Uighur, and Yoa (Lilly 2009).



© Peter Marshall / Alamy

Finally, people's sense of ethnicity, even when they are free to define it, can shift through a process known as **ethnic renewal**. This occurs when someone discovers an ethnic identity, as when an adopted child learns about and identifies with newly found biological relatives or a person learns about and revives lost traditions. Ethnic renewal includes the process by which people take it upon themselves to find, learn about, and claim an ethnic heritage.



Pic: Roger L. Nelson



Sgt. David J. Hecher/United States Marine Corps

▲ A person may seek to connect to his Samoan heritage by getting a tattoo. Similarly a person may work to keep alive an ethnic culture, history, or tradition as in the case of this artist (a member of the Jawoyn tribe) participating in Aboriginal Culture Awareness Day, a celebration of Australia's indigenous peoples. This artist offers spectators a chance to see how aboriginal art is made.

In light of the information presented thus far, is it any wonder sociologist Max Weber (1922) argued that “The whole conception of ethnic groups is so complex and so vague that it might be good to abandon it altogether.” So why study ethnicity? One answer is that sociologists are interested in studying the processes by which people make ethnicity important (or not important).

Dominant Group Ethnic Identity

Sociologist Ashley W. Doane (1997) defines a **dominant ethnic group** as the most advantaged ethnic group in a society; it is the ethnic group that possesses the greatest access to valued resources, including the power to create and maintain the system that gives it these advantages. Dominant status is achieved over a long history that includes conquest, colonialism, and forced and invited labor migrations. Those who are part of the dominant ethnic group, however, tend to dismiss that history as irrelevant to any of its advantages. In the United States, the dominant ethnic group began as Anglo Americans, then expanded to encompass Protestant European Americans and eventually to encompass European Americans. In comparison to other ethnic groups, Americans from European ancestries are the least able or willing to identify with an ethnic group, in spite of a professed wish by many to have such an identity. Those in the dominant ethnic group are also the least likely to recall incidents in which they faced prejudice, discrimination, or disadvantage because of ethnicity or race. In other words, because ethnicity is viewed as largely insignificant to their lives, they don't have one. It is important to clarify that everyone who is part of the dominant ethnic group does not hold a powerful or advantaged status. The term *dominant*

refers to the fact that European Americans are overrepresented among those holding such statuses.

Doane (1997) refers to the dominant ethnic group as possessing a **hidden ethnicity**, a sense of self that is based on no awareness of an ethnic identity because its culture is considered normal, normative, or mainstream. In the case of the United States, European standards dominate the form and content of its educational and judicial systems and permeate its mass media and political institutions. The normalization of the dominant culture promotes the belief that European Americans are cultureless; they are simply playing by the rules and conforming to the standards that make one American. Normalization creates a framework that makes it difficult for those in subordinate ethnic groups to challenge the existing system. Specifically, those who work to hold on to their ethnicity are portrayed as unwilling to give up a “foreign” culture. This failure to let go is labeled as undesirable and something that must be shed in order to become American. Those—even Native Americans—who seek to retain their cultural identity, advocate for cultural pluralism, or ask that their cultural experiences be incorporated in the mainstream culture are viewed as divisive or guilty of political correctness, or as asking for special treatment.

Critical Thinking

Is there an ethnicity with which you identify? Explain. How do you express your ethnicity?

Key Terms

dominant ethnic group

ethnic renewal

involuntary ethnicity

ethnic group

hidden ethnicity

selective forgetting

Classifying Race and Ethnicity

Objective

You will learn that a society's system of racial classification is the lens through which we view our own and others' race.



Lance Cpl. Chris Kutlesa

What race is celebrity Lady Gaga?

You likely classified Lady Gaga as white. But what if you lived in Brazil? Which one of the following do you think might apply?

- *Loura*: whiter-than-white, straight blond hair, blue or green eyes, narrow nose, and thin lips

- *Branca*: light skin color, eyes of any color, hair that is not tightly curled, a nose that is not broad, and lips that are not thick
- *Sarara*: tightly curled blond or red hair, light skin, light eyes, broad nose, and thick lips (adapted from Fish and Schles 1995)

These are just 3 of the 134 terms that Brazilians use to label someone's race. The terms fall anywhere between *azul* (darkest black, bordering on purple) and "green" (lighter than white). Other labels include *moreno claro* (light-skinned, dark-haired person of primarily European ancestry) and *mulatto claro* (light-skinned person of mixed African and European ancestry), *branco como a neve* (snow white), *canela* (cinnamon), *café com leite* (coffee with milk), and *torrado* (toasted) (Reeve 1977; PBS 2007; Fish and Schles 1995).

A **system of racial classification** is the process by which people are divided into racial categories that are implicitly or explicitly ranked on a scale of social worth. Emphasis should be placed on *system*, as most societies, if not all, have created racial categories and rules for placing people in those categories. Keep in mind that when subjected to scrutiny, these systems rarely make sense.

Official U.S. Racial Categories

The U.S. government recognizes five official racial categories plus a sixth category, “other race”—the category of last resort for those who resist identifying, or cannot identify, with one of the five official categories:

- *American Indian or Alaskan Native*—a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North, Central, or South America and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment
- *Asian*—a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent
- *Black or African American*—a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa
- *Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander*—a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands
- *White*—a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa

It is significant that “Black or African American” is the only racial category that does not refer to *original peoples*. Notice for that racial category the words *original peoples* are replaced with *Black racial groups of Africa*. If the words *original peoples* were included in the definition of Black or African American, every person in the United States would have to claim this racial category. We know from archaeological evidence that all humans evolved from a common African ancestor.

To further critique the five official racial categories, ask yourself if there is any group of people for which there appears to be no category. For example, where would people known as Hispanic/Latino or Middle Eastern fit? The U.S. government does not consider Hispanic to be a race; it considers it an ethnic group and maintains that Hispanics can be of any race. As for those of Middle Eastern ancestry, the U.S. government places them in the category white.



Jim Gordon, CIV

U.S. Census Bureau

▲ To which one of the five official racial categories would you assign this brother and sister from Iraq (left)? In the United States, the two would be officially classified as white. Do you think people from the Middle East identify as white? To which of the racial categories (right) would you assign this family who identifies as Hispanic, knowing that Hispanic is an ethnic, not racial, category in the United States? Recall that in the U.S., Hispanics can be of any race.

Changes to U.S. Census Question

Until the 2000 census, the U.S. system of racial classification required that an individual identify with only *one* of its official racial categories. While Americans have always acknowledged racial mixture unofficially by using (often derogatory) words like “mixed,” “mulatto,” “half-breed,” “mongrel,” and “biracial,” the government still forced anyone who has more than one racial background to choose only one racial category.



◀ This 1910 photograph shows a man who appears white but is considered mulatto and an assumed son or grandson. At that time 20 percent of the “Negro” population in the United States was believed to be mulatto (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Mulatto was a term used to describe someone with one parent of African descent and another parent of some other racial descent—in this man’s case, white. Legally this man was considered “Negro.”

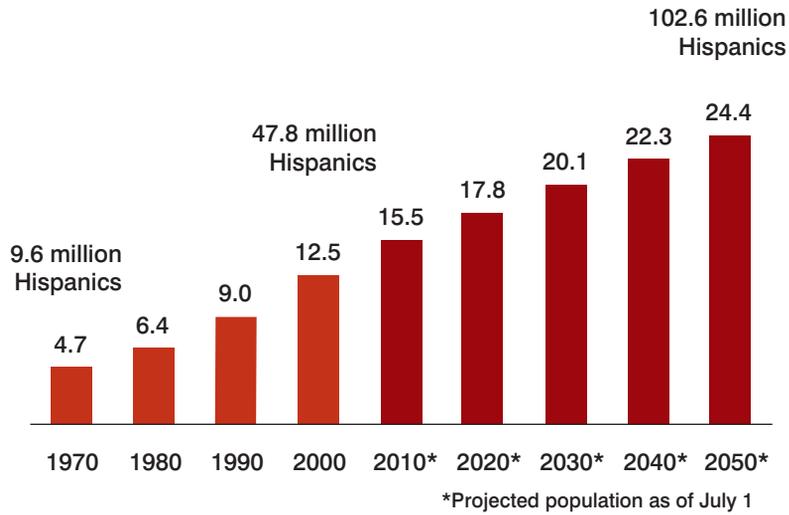
This practice of forcing people to choose one racial category changed with the 2000 Census, when for the first time in its history, the United States allowed people to identify with two or more of its official racial categories. This change is monumental because until the 2000 Census, the United States had never officially recognized intermixture. While the U.S. government now allows people to identify with more than one official race, it has yet to decide what to call people who do so. One thing is clear, to date the government has stated that it will not classify them as multiracial (Schmid 1997). It also appears that, even when given the choice to identify with more than one racial category, 98 percent of Americans still identify with only one. Because the U.S. government now allows people to identify with more than one race, there are officially 63 single- and multiple-race categories, including the 6 official racial categories and 57 combinations of those official categories (e.g., “Black-Asian,” “White-Black-Asian”).

The Hispanic Ethnic Category

In the mid-1970s, the U.S. government chose to count two official ethnicities: (1) Hispanic or Latino, and (2) Not Hispanic or Latino. The U.S. government defines Hispanic/Latino as “a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American culture or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race” (U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2007). Today there are approximately 43 million Hispanics living in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2008). Almost half of those classified as Hispanic identify as white; 42 percent identify as “other,” and 2 percent identify as black (see Chart 8.3a).

Chart 8.3a Percent of the Total Population in the United States Classified as Hispanic/Latino: 1970 to 2050

The U.S. Census Bureau first classified the Hispanic population in the 1970s, when it represented less than 5 percent of the total population. Today that ethnic category includes 15.5 percent of the population and is expected to eventually account for 24.4 percent of the total U.S. population.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2006)

► The U.S. government asks people to choose one ethnicity: Hispanic or non-Hispanic. In other words, those with one Hispanic and one non-Hispanic parent cannot claim both ethnicities. This little girl’s father identifies as Dominican, which puts him in the ethnic category Hispanic. The girl’s mother is non-Hispanic. What ethnicity is the child?

When people have a Hispanic and a non-Hispanic parent the U.S. government considers them to be the mother’s ethnicity. If the mother happens to be both Hispanic and non-Hispanic, the child is assigned to the first ethnic category named when describing the mother.

Billy Santos



The Origins of the Term *Hispanic*

Most people we think of as Hispanics have to learn to define themselves as such (Novas 1994). In addition, many so-called Hispanics reject the label because it forces them to identify with conquistadors and settlers from Spain, who imposed their culture, language, and religion on them. “For Latin Americans, who, like North Americans, fought hard to win their independence from European rule, identity is derived from their native lands and from the heterogeneous cultures that thrive within their borders” (Novas 1994, p. 2).

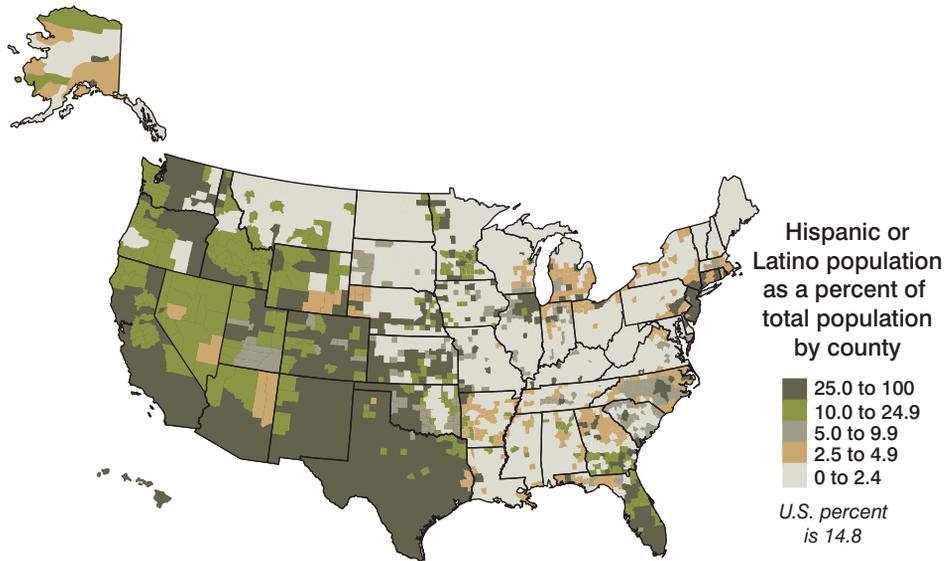
Panethnicity is a process by which various people with distinct histories, cultures, languages, and identities are lumped together and viewed as belonging to one catchall category, such as Hispanic/Latino. We have also seen that the United States government groups people with many ethnicities into specific racial categories. For example, it classifies 2,000 tribes, each with distinct cultures, as Native American. The United States has always grouped diverse peoples into broad racial and ethnic categories for administrative, statistical, surveillance, and other purposes. The people classified as such often do not see the grouping as natural and must learn to see themselves as belonging to a government-imposed category. Sometimes, as a result of widespread discrimination in the society, a significant number of members of this imposed category identify with the label, transcend differences, and organize as a political force to advocate for political inclusion, needed services, and basic rights.

The term *Hispanic/Latino* applies to people from, or with ancestors from, 19 Central and South American countries (excluding Brazil) that were once under Spanish control. To complicate matters even further, the history of these 19 countries is intertwined with that of Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. As a result, each country consists of many ethnic and racial groups with multiple histories, cultures, and languages. The point is that diverse people from 19 countries have been forced into one panethnic category (Toro 1995).



Figure 8.3a Hispanic or Latino Population as a Percent of Total Population by County, 2006

The diverse population known as Hispanic or Latino is distributed unevenly across the United States, with the heaviest concentrations in the southwest part of the country. Keep in mind that California, Nevada, Texas, Utah, and parts of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming were once part of Mexico.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2006)

Critical Thinking

How do you think the United States' and Brazil's systems of racial classification have shaped ideas of family in the two countries?

Key Terms

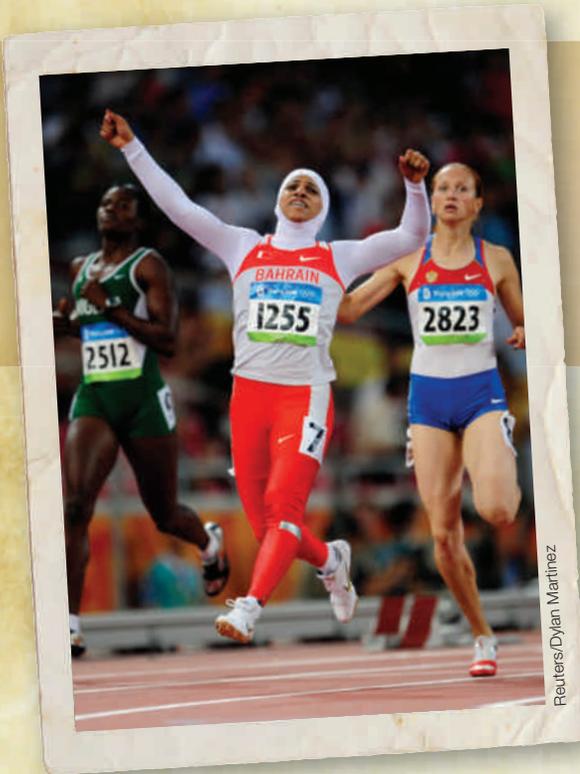
panethnicity

system of racial classification

Minority Groups

Objective

You will learn the criteria sociologists use to determine minority group status.



Can you identify the minority in this photograph? What criteria did you use to make your selection?

Minority groups are subpopulations within a society that are regarded and treated as inherently different from those in the mainstream. They are systematically excluded (whether consciously or unconsciously) from full participation in society and denied equal access to power, prestige, and wealth.

Characteristics of Minority Groups

Many groups can be classified as minorities, including some racial, ethnic, and religious groups; women; those in the LGBT community; the very old and the very young; and the physically impaired. Although we focus on ethnic and racial minorities, the concepts described here can apply to any minority. Sociologist Louis Wirth (1945) identified a number of essential traits that are characteristic of disadvantaged status: involuntary status, lack of control of valued resources, exclusion from societal advantages, isolation from dominant group, and minority group status overshadowing individual characteristics.



Kevin Stabinsky (USAG Fort McPherson)

◀ According to Wirth, membership in minority groups is involuntary. In fact, people are generally born into them. He argues that as long as people are free to join or leave a group, they do not constitute a minority.

Involuntary membership as a criterion for defining a minority group is controversial because the meaning of being free to join or leave is unclear. For example, one could argue that Muslim women who wear headscarves are not a minority because they can choose to remove them. The problem is that for many removing the scarf also means violating some deeply held religious convictions.

Second, minority group designation is not necessarily based on numbers; that is, a minority may be the numerical majority in a society. The key to minority status, then, is not size but access to and control over valued resources. In the United States, legally recognized racial minorities are the ethnic category Hispanic and the four nonwhite racial groups—American Indian, Asian, Black, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. From a national perspective all five are numerical minorities. However, there are geographic areas of the country where a nonwhite group is the numerical majority.

Third, minority groups are excluded from full participation in the larger society. That is, minorities do not enjoy the advantages that members of the dominant group take for granted. **Advantaged** refers to symbolic opportunities (positive images) and valued resources that are disproportionately held by a particular group relative to another. When one group possesses a disproportionate advantage in some area, it means that another group(s) is disproportionately disadvantaged (Wooddell and Henry 2005). In such situations, discriminatory practices are likely explanations of the inequalities (see Table 8.4a).

Table 8.4a: Differences in Life Chances by Race and Sex (United States)

Life chances are a critical set of potential opportunities and advantages, including the chance to survive the first year of life, to grow to a certain height, to receive medical and dental care, to avoid a prison sentence, to graduate from high school, to live a long life, and so on (Gerth and Mills 1954). Why do you think Asian females live almost 17 years longer on average than black males? This dramatic difference speaks to the way in which race affects life chances.

Chance of . . .	Highest Chance	Lowest Chance	Difference
Living a long life (average life expectancy)	Asian Female 86.7 years	Black Male 69.8 years	16.9 years
Dropping out of high school*	Black 44%	White 22%	22%
Going to prison	Black Male 32.5%	White Female 1%	31.5%
Earning a high median weekly income (average salary working full time)	Asian Male \$966	Black Female \$501	\$465 per week
Dying before reaching one year of age	Black Male 1,410.2 per 100,000	Asian Female 427 per 100,000	983.2 babies per 100,000
Living in poverty*	Native American/Black 24.5%	White (non-Hispanic) 8.2%	16.3%
Having no health insurance	Native American 35%	White 11.9%	23.1%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009); Murray et al. (2006); U.S. Department of Justice (2007); U.S. Census Bureau (2009)

*Data not available for sex categories

In addition, minorities do not enjoy the freedom or the privilege to move within the society the way those in the dominant group do. Peggy McIntosh (1992), professor of women's studies, has identified a number of such **privileges**, special taken-for-granted advantages and immunities or benefits enjoyed by a dominant group relative to minority groups, including the following:

- Most of the time—when I am at school, work, or just out walking—I am in the company of people of my race or ethnic group.
- I feel confident that I can rent or purchase housing in any area in which I can afford to live.
- I can go shopping and not worry that I am being followed or targeted for surveillance by store detectives.
- I can do poorly on a test without worrying that my classmates or professor will attribute it to my race or ethnicity.
- Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the perception that I am financially reliable.
- If I perform well at some activity that is associated with my racial or ethnic group, people will still recognize my hard work and not attribute my success to natural abilities. (McIntosh 1992, pp. 73–75)



Carolyn Erikson



Brian Frechtel

▲ If, as you look at these photographs and think that blacks are naturally good dancers and Asians are naturally good scientists, then you fail to acknowledge the hard work that goes into being a dancer or scientist. You also fail to acknowledge the larger social forces that push people to “choose” careers that are more open to and expected of those in specific racial categories.

Wirth's fourth essential trait characteristic of minorities' disadvantaged status is that minorities are socially and spatially isolated from those in the dominant group. This social and spatial isolation manifests itself

- in segregated residential arrangements (ethnic neighborhoods and/or gated communities),
- in the portrayal of specific minorities as particularly dangerous,

- in laws prohibiting certain racial/ethnic groups from marrying those in dominant groups (miscegenation),
- in acts of profiling that target minority groups for special surveillance (Wooddell and Henry 2005), and
- in underrepresentation of minorities in key political and economic positions.



Michaela McNichol

▲ Clearly, Muslims are not represented in key political positions in the United States. Keith Ellison made history in 2007 when he became the first Muslim congressman in U.S. history. Ellison is also one of 40 blacks in the House of Representatives. Blacks also are underrepresented in Congress. This minority group constitutes 12.9 percent of the population but accounts for 9 percent of all representatives.

The fifth trait is that people who belong to minority groups are “treated as members of a category, irrespective of their individual merits” (Wirth 1945, p. 349). In other words, people outside a minority group focus on those characteristics that are presumed to identify someone as belonging to a minority. Those characteristics are considered so important to the individual’s identity that it overshadows other characteristics that person might possess.

The five characteristics of minority group status apply especially to the situation of **involuntary minorities**, those who did not choose to be a part of a country (nor did their ancestors); rather, they were forced to become part of it through enslavement, conquest, or colonization. Those of Native American, African, Mexican, and Hawaiian descent are examples. Unlike those who voluntarily immigrated to the United States expecting to improve their way of life, those who were forced to become part of the United States had no such expectations. In fact, their initial forced incorporation involved a loss of freedom and status (Ogbu 1990).



AP Photo/FPBS



AP Photo/Victor Jose Cabo

▲ Native Hawaiians represent a minority group who were pulled into the United States against their will. In 1993 Congress issued the Apology Resolution in which it acknowledged that “the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii occurred with the active participation of agents and citizens of the United States” and that “the Native Hawaiian people never directly relinquished to the United States their sovereignty as a people over their national lands.” The Queen of Hawaii in 1893 at the time of the overthrow was Liliuokalani (left). The Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement shown demonstrating on the right considers the 1993 Apology Resolution an important step toward eventual self-determination.

Critical Thinking

Describe a specific situation in which you were a minority. Use Wirth’s characteristic to inform your description of the experience.

Key Terms

advantaged

life chances

privileges

involuntary minorities

minority groups

Racism

Objective

You will learn that racism relies on flawed logic to explain and justify differences and inequalities.



Mass Communication Specialist 1S

Do you view one of these players as possessing more natural talent for the game of basketball?

Are your predictions based on a belief that blacks are superior athletes by nature and that Asians and whites are just not as good at basketball? Such a prediction is the result of racist thinking.

Racism is a set of beliefs that uses biological factors to explain and justify inequalities between racial and ethnic groups. People who embrace racist ideology believe that something in the biological makeup of an ethnic or racial group explains and justifies its subordinate or superior status. People who hold racist beliefs do not challenge or subject those beliefs to scrutiny. Rather, they accept them as accurate accounts and explanations of the way things are. On closer analysis, however, race-based explanations usually fall apart. Racism is structured around three notions:

- People can be classified into racial categories according to physical traits such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape;
- A close correspondence exists between physical traits and achievements such as intelligence, income, occupation, and athletic ability.
- Physical attributes are deemed so significant that they are used to explain and determine behavior and inequalities. There is no other possible explanation for these inequalities.

Origins of Racism

Racism as a way of explaining differences between groups of people has probably always existed. Modern racism, however, emerged as a way to justify European exploitation of people and resources in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Between 1492 and 1800, Europeans learned of, conquered, and colonized much of North America, South America, Asia, and Africa and set the tone for international relations for centuries to come. Among other things, this exploitation took the form of enslavement and **colonialism**. This occurs when a foreign power

uses superior military force to impose its political, economic, social, and cultural institutions on an indigenous population in order to control their resources, labor, and markets (Marger 1991).



◀ Under colonialism Europeans forced local populations to cultivate and harvest crops and to extract minerals and other raw materials for export to the colonists' home countries. Racism helped justify this

exploitation of nonwhite peoples and

their resources by pointing to the so-called superiority of the white race. More precisely, the exploitation was justified by **scientific racism**, the use of faulty science to support systems of racial rankings and theories of social and cultural progress that placed whites in the most advanced ranks and stage of human evolution.

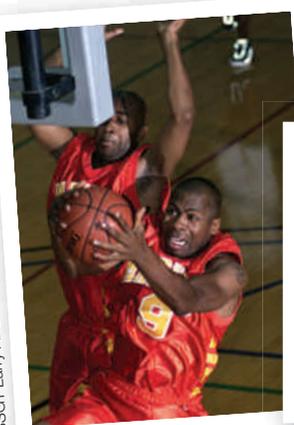
When Europeans' labor needs could not be met by native-born populations, the colonists imported slaves from Africa or indentured workers from Asia and Europe. In fact, an estimated 11.7 million enslaved Africans survived their journey to the Americas between the mid-fifteenth century and 1870 (Chaliand and Rageau 1995). After slavery ended, the Europeans colonized the African continent. By 1914, nearly all of Africa had been divided into European colonies. Also by that year, 84 percent of the world's land area had been affected by colonization (*Random House Encyclopedia* 1990).

Flaws in Racist Arguments

Anyone who takes the time to look will find that race-based explanations of differences among people fall short. To take one example, people who argue that blacks are naturally superior athletes usually point to physiological differences that give black athletes an advantage over other athletes. As evidence that such differences exist, they point to the disproportionate number of blacks participating in the money sports—the most visible, best-paid, and most televised sports (basketball, football, and boxing). Such evidence does not convince sociologists that blacks are naturally superior athletes.

What about hockey, gymnastics, swimming, soccer, cycling, sailing, rowing, archery, volleyball, skiing, and other less lucrative sports dominated by athletes of other races? Can we explain white dominance in swimming, or Asian dominance in martial arts, as only products of natural talent? While it is true that blacks have fewer opportunities than whites, for example, to participate in such sports, those who do generally do not rank among the top athletes. If blacks actually are superior athletes, then that generalization should hold for any sport in which they played.

SSGT Lamy A. Simmons, USAF



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jennifer A. Villalobos



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Sarah M. Maynard

▲ Can we make the case that black basketball players are really better athletes than white swimmers or Asians who excel in martial arts? Are speed, strength, and quick reflexes qualities that swimmers and those in the martial arts also possess?

In evaluating the argument that blacks are superior athletes, we must also ask why black athletes from African countries do not dominate international competitions, such as the Olympic Games. In fact, athletes from western and west-central African countries have competed in the Olympics for more than 50 years, and during that time, they have won a total of 22 Olympic medals. American athletes classified as black earn more than twice that number during each Summer Olympics alone (Darmoni 2005).

Sociologists look to the social processes that channel athletic participation by sport. First, note that athletes and entertainers have always been the most highly publicized black achievers, and they have arguably been just as influential in shaping black identity as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and other black leaders. That high visibility has surely played some role in channeling black athletes' talent toward the money sports (Hatfield 2005).

Sociologists would also point to other factors that channel black, white, and other athletic talents toward particular sports and away from others. Those factors include financial resources to pay for equipment, lessons, and playing time; encouragement from parents and peers; perceptions that a sport "belongs" to a particular race; and geographic location related to warm and cold weather sports.

Critical Thinking

Imagine you are a parent, teacher, or some other authority figure. A child asks why black athletes dominate the game of basketball. How will you answer such a question?

Key Terms

colonialism

racism

scientific racism

Prejudice and Discrimination

Objective

You will learn about prejudice and discrimination and their consequences.



Lisa Southwick

Look at these children. Who do you think is the best at math? The best athlete? From a single family? From the inner city? From a suburb? Will end up in prison? Will drop out of high school?

Prejudice

A **prejudice** is a rigid and, more often than not, unfavorable judgment about a category of people that is applied to *anyone* who belongs to that category. Prejudices are supported by **stereotypes**—generalizations about people who belong to a particular category that do not change even in the face of contradictory evidence. Stereotypes give holders an illusion that they know the other group and that they possess the right to control images of the other group (Crapanzano 1985).

Stereotypes are supported and reinforced in a number of ways. First, in **selective perception**, prejudiced persons notice only the behaviors that support their stereotypes. These people use stereotypes as facts supported by their own observations (Merton 1957). Many people stereotype Asians as being naturally good at math and sciences, and that that natural ability in turn explains why they dominate engineering in the United States. And yet, these same people do not point to natural ability to explain why almost all airline pilots in the United States are white.



◀ Likewise, blacks account for 12.4 percent of the total U.S. population. It is clearly a mistake to think all blacks live in the inner city. Blacks are disproportionately concentrated in cities, accounting for 21 percent of all those living there. But blacks also account for 8.2 percent of all those living in suburbs and rural areas.

Second, stereotypes persist in another way: when a prejudiced person encounters a person in the stereotyped category who contradicts associated stereotypes, the former sees the latter as the exception to the rule, rather than questioning the merits of the stereotype.

Third, prejudiced individuals keep stereotypes alive when they evaluate the same behavior differently depending on the race or ethnicity of those involved (Merton 1957). For example, incompetent behavior of racial and ethnic minority members is often attributed to innate flaws in their biological makeup; in contrast, incompetence exhibited by someone from the advantaged group is almost always treated as a personal shortcoming.

► Look at the photos of these men listed on the “Crime Alert” page. Do you find yourself explaining terrorist charges by noting an assumed Muslim connection or explaining drug charges by noting a Hispanic background? Do you apply that same standard to the white man wanted for child sexual assault? After all, a disproportionate number of those wanted by the FBI (2009) or crimes against children appear white.



Finally, stereotypes flourish through a process known as the **self-fulfilling prophecy** (Thomas and Thomas 1928, p. 572). A self-fulfilling prophecy begins with a false definition of a situation that is assumed to be accurate. People behave as if it were true. In the end, the misguided behavior produces responses that confirm the false definition (Merton 1957). With regard to race, a self-fulfilling prophecy occurs when teachers, coaches, and parents channel a child’s interests in areas that they believe are appropriate to that child’s race. Over time, real differences in quantity, quality, and content of instruction create seemingly race-based differences in talent. The cycle of self-fulfilling prophecies can be broken only by questioning the original assumption and redefining the situation.

Discrimination

In contrast to prejudice, which is an attitude, discrimination is a behavior. **Discrimination**, intentional or unintentional, is the unequal treatment of racial or ethnic groups without considering merit, ability, or past performance.

Discrimination blocks access to valued experiences, goods, and services. Sociologist Robert K. Merton argues that knowing whether people are prejudiced does not help predict whether they will discriminate. This is because prejudiced people do not always discriminate and unprejudiced people sometimes do. To illustrate this point, Merton describes four types of people.

1. **Nonprejudiced nondiscriminators** (all-weather liberals) accept the creed of equal opportunity, and their conduct conforms to that creed. They represent a “reservoir of culturally legitimized goodwill” because they not only believe in equal opportunity but also take action against discrimination (Merton 1976, p. 193).
2. **Nonprejudiced discriminators** (fair-weather liberals) accept the creed of equal opportunity but discriminate because they simply fail to consider discriminatory consequences or because discriminating gives them some advantage. For example, whites decide to move out of their neighborhood after a black family moves in—not because they are prejudiced against blacks per se, but because they are afraid of declining property values.
3. **Prejudiced nondiscriminators** (timid bigots) reject the creed of equal opportunity but refrain from discrimination, primarily because they fear possible sanctions or being labeled as racists. Timid bigots rarely express their true opinions about racial and ethnic groups, and often use code words such as *inner city* or *those people* to camouflage their true feelings.
4. **Prejudiced discriminators** (active bigots) reject the notion of equal opportunity and profess a moral right, even a duty, to discriminate. They derive significant social and psychological gains from the conviction that anyone from their racial or ethnic group is superior to other such groups (Merton 1976).

➤ Prejudiced discriminators are the most likely to initiate hate crimes, actions aimed at humiliating someone in the target group or destroying their property or lives. Nonprejudiced discriminators are vulnerable to going along with this suggestion.



Bill Pugliano/Getty Images

Sociologists distinguish between individual discrimination and institutionalized discrimination. **Individual discrimination** occurs when a person acts to block another’s opportunities or does harm to life or property. A guidance counselor, for example, may hold low expectations of students in a particular racial or ethnic category and channel those students away from difficult subjects, such as mathematics and science, and toward subjects that do not prepare them for higher-paying jobs. **Institutionalized discrimination** is the established, customary way of doing things in society—the unchallenged laws, rules, policies, and day-to-day practices established by a dominant group that keep minority groups in disadvantaged positions (Davis 1978). Such discrimination is difficult to identify and rectify because the discrimination results from simply following established practices that seem on the surface to be impersonal and fair or part of the standard operating procedures.



▲ One example of institutional discrimination relates to federal sentences issued to those convicted of trafficking in crack cocaine (right) versus powder cocaine (left). Crack and powder cocaine have the same physiological and psychotropic effects but are handled very differently for sentencing purposes. On average, sentences for crack offenses are three to six times longer than those for offenses involving equal amounts of powder. Approximately 85 percent of defendants convicted of crack offenses in federal court are black, whereas 78 percent of defendants in powder cocaine cases are white; thus, the severe sentences are imposed “primarily upon black offenders” (*Kimbrough v. United States* 2007).

Redlining

Redlining refers to systematic and institutionalized practices that deny, limit, or increase the cost of services to neighborhoods because residents are low-income and/or minority. Redlining can affect access to financial services (loans, checking accounts, credit cards, mortgages), insurance, health care, and grocery stores. The term *redlining* refers to a 1960s practice when banks actually marked red lines on maps, highlighting the communities in which they would not invest. The term was later applied to systematic discrimination against a geographically based population because as a group they possess a characteristic labeled as not good for business. The practice has even been applied to people who are of a particular race, ethnic, or other minority group, regardless of residence. While redlining is illegal, there are many documented examples that indicate the practice is widespread.

One of the most publicized cases of redlining relates to the housing foreclosure crisis in the United States, which was precipitated in part by mortgage institutions engaging in unfair and deceptive lending practices. Among other things, some lenders used lower teaser interest rates to lure borrowers into choosing adjustable rate mortgages that rose after the first two or three years, substantially increasing monthly mortgage payments. They also issued loans at high-interest rates to subprime borrowers (those with less than optimal credit histories). The lenders deliberately ignored the fact that subprime borrowers, by definition, were more likely to fail, even as they issued loans with monthly payments that were clearly beyond the borrowers' means. A 2008 study by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition found that African Americans and Hispanics were at the greatest risk for having signed up for such loans.

- In 71 percent of the 165 metro areas studied, middle- and upper-income blacks were at least twice as likely as their white counterparts to receive high-interest loans (such as 9.25 percent versus a low-interest rate of 6.25 percent).

- In 22 percent of the 165 metro areas studied, middle- and upper-income Hispanics were at least twice as likely as their white counterparts to receive high-interest loans.
- In 47.3 percent of the 165 metro areas studied, lower-income blacks were at least twice as likely as their white counterparts to receive high-interest loans.

Table 8.6a: Monthly and Total Home Mortgage Payments by Interest Rates

This table shows the economic consequences of discriminatory lending patterns. A \$140,000 30-year mortgage financed at 6.25 percent translates to an \$862 monthly payment, or \$310,320 over the life of the loan. By contrast, a 30-year loan at 9.25 percent translates to a \$1,152 monthly payment and a total of \$415,000 over the life of the loan (National Community Reinvestment Coalition 2008).

Cost of House	Interest Rate	Monthly Payments	Total Payments After 30 Years
\$140,000	6.25%	\$862	\$310,000
\$140,000	8.25%	\$1,052	\$379,000
\$140,000	9.25%	\$1,152	\$415,000

Source: National Community Reinvestment Coalition (2008)

Segregation

Racial and ethnic **segregation** is the physical and/or social separation of people by race or ethnicity. Segregation may be legally enforced (*de jure*) or socially enforced without the support of laws (*de facto*). The segregation may be spatial or hierarchical. Spatial segregation occurs when racial or ethnic groups attend different schools, live in different neighborhoods, and use different public facilities, such as restaurants and even drinking fountains. It also occurs when people of different racial or ethnic groups are in the same buildings but sit in different places for lunch or work on different floors or rooms (in the kitchen versus dining area of a restaurant). Segregation is hierarchical when people in advantaged categories occupy the most prestigious positions while those in the disadvantaged categories are concentrated in the least prestigious positions, such as servants, maintenance workers, and laborers.

In the United States, the Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation from 1880 to 1964 between whites and nonwhites. These laws resulted in the establishment of separate but unequal race-specific bathrooms, recreational facilities, hospitals, and drinking fountains.

➤ While segregation in public spaces is no longer supported by law in the United States, we must acknowledge that segregation exists in fact. For most Americans, all of the important and meaningful primary relationships—including those with church members and classmates—are confined largely to people within the same racial/ethnic group (Gordon 1978, p. 204).



Lisa Southwick

Ethnic Cleansing

Ethnic cleansing is an extreme form of forced segregation. It is a process by which a dominant group uses force and intimidation to remove people of a targeted racial or ethnic group from a geographic area, leaving it ethnically pure, or at least free of the targeted group. Ethnic cleansing also involves the destruction of cultural artifacts associated with the targeted groups, such as monuments, cemeteries, and churches. One example of ethnic cleansing was the forced removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands. The Cheyenne and Arapaho, unable to resist white settlement of their land in southeast Colorado, were captured by General Custer's army in 1868, marched through snow, and eventually relocated to a reservation in central Wyoming.

Genocide is the calculated and systematic large-scale destruction of a targeted racial or ethnic group. The destruction can take the form of killing an ethnic group en masse, inflicting serious bodily or psychological harm, creating intolerable living conditions, preventing births, "diluting" racial or ethnic lines through rape and forced births, or forcibly removing children to live with another group (United Nations 1948). Genocide is more often than not state-sponsored, in that a dominant group uses state apparatus (police, military, surveillance) to eliminate those targeted. By one estimate, 38 million people died in the 20th century as a result of genocide (Oberschall 2000).

➤ In the 1990s in Rwanda ethnic Hutus killed hundreds of thousands of their Tutsi neighbors (and moderate Hutus as well). This genocide was the basis for the film *Hotel Rwanda*.



MSGT Rose Reynolds

Critical Thinking

Consider sociologist Robert K. Merton's four categories relating prejudice and discrimination. Can you think of an example when you fit one these four types? Explain.

Key Terms

discrimination	nonprejudiced	selective perception
ethnic cleansing	nondiscriminators	self-fulfilling prophecy
genocide	prejudice	stereotypes
individual discrimination	prejudiced discriminators	
institutionalized discrimination	prejudiced nondiscriminators	
nonprejudiced discriminators	redlining	
	segregation	

Assimilation, Integration, and Pluralism

Objective

You will learn about the process by which racial and ethnic distinctions disappear, blend, or coexist.



Cumberland County Historical Society



Cumberland County Historical Society

Study these before-and-after photographs. Do you see the changes as merely physical or do you think this man has changed as a person?

Before

After

These before-and-after photographs capture what sociologists call **assimilation**, a process by which ethnic, racial, and/or cultural distinctions between groups disappear because one group is absorbed, sometimes by force, into another group's culture or because two cultures blend to form a new culture. Two main types of assimilation exist: absorption assimilation and melting pot assimilation.

Types of Assimilation

In **absorption assimilation**, members of a subordinate ethnic, racial, and/or cultural group adapt to the ways of the dominant group, which sets the standards to which they must adjust (Gordon 1978). According to sociologist Milton Gordon, absorption assimilation has at least seven levels in which a subordinate group

1. abandons its culture for that of the dominant group,
2. enters into the dominant group's social networks and institutions,
3. intermarries and procreates with the dominant group,

4. identifies with the dominant group,
5. encounters no widespread *prejudice* by those in the dominant group,
6. encounters no widespread *discrimination* by those in the dominant group, and
7. has no value conflicts with those in the dominant group.

A subordinate group is completely absorbed into the dominant group once all seven phases are achieved. Gordon maintains that level 1 assimilation is likely to take place before the other six are achieved. He also states that even when a group abandons its culture (level 1), it does not always lead to the other levels of assimilation.



▲ These before-and-after photos show a Native American people, the Chiricahua Apaches, upon arrival at the Carlisle Indian Boarding School in 1900, where the goal was to make them “white.” The boarding school policies sought to achieve level 1 assimilation—that is, to force students to abandon their cultures. The school removed students from their homes and communities, cut their hair, assigned them “white” names, and required them to speak only English.

Gordon proposes that if those in the subordinate group are able to join advantaged social circles on a large enough scale (level 2 assimilation), a substantial number of interracial or interethnic marriages are bound to occur (level 3 assimilation) because of social interactions between the groups (Gordon 1978). Of the seven levels of assimilation, Gordon believes that gaining access to the dominant group’s social networks and institutions is the most important; if that occurs, the other levels of assimilation inevitably follow. Yet, in practice, gaining such access is very difficult.

Assimilation need not be a one-sided process in which a minority group is absorbed into the dominant group. Ethnic and racial distinctions can also disappear through amalgamation or **melting pot assimilation** (Gordon 1978). In this process, previously separate groups accept many new behaviors and values from one another, intermarry, procreate, and identify with a blended culture.

► The term *Blackanese* is used in reference to those who seek to identify as both black and Japanese. Those who see themselves as Blackanese seek to embrace both cultures and maintain that each culture has equal influence in their lives.



Robert Williams

Integration

Assimilation, by definition, involves some level of integration. The term *integration* is often used in conjunction with the legal term **desegregation**, the process of ending legally sanctioned racial separation and discrimination. Desegregation often involves removing legal barriers to interaction and offering legal guarantees of protection and equal opportunity. **Integration** occurs when two or more racial groups interact in a previously segregated setting. That integration may be court-ordered, legally mandated, or the natural outcome of people crossing the “color line” once legal barriers have been removed.



PA2 Jennifer Johnson, USCG

◀ When people celebrate the entry of a minority into social circles previously closed off to them, they are celebrating a first and necessary step toward integration (i.e., first Muslim elected to the House of Representatives, first black chosen Miss America, first Asian selected as a first round draft pick in the NFL). Shown here is Coast Guard Lt. Jeanine McIntosh, the first female African American to successfully complete flight training.

When evaluating the extent of integration in society, it is important to ask this question: “With whom do you live, learn, pray, celebrate, and mourn?” If the answer to this question involves only people of a single race or ethnicity, then one must conclude that, in fact, he or she lives a segregated life. Many Americans classified as white believe that racial and ethnic integration has been realized and that the United States is a color-blind society. This belief may be the result of a phenomenon known as **virtual integration**, in which simply seeing other racial groups on television and in advertisements gives “the sensation of having meaningful, repeated contact with other racial groups without actually having it” (Lynch 2007).

Pluralism is a situation in which different racial and ethnic groups coexist in harmony; have equal social standing; maintain their unique cultural ties, communities, and identities; and participate in the economic and political life of the larger society. These groups also possess an allegiance to the country in which they live and its way of life. In a pluralistic society, there is no one race or ethnic group considered as the standard to which other races should aspire. Rather, cultural differences are respected and valued.

Although it is difficult to find an example of a country that practices pluralism in every way, it is possible to find descriptions of that ideal. The United States presents its ideal of pluralism as a melting pot in which the country welcomes immigrants from all over the world who bring a vitality and energy to the country's way of life.

➤ Arguably the best example of pluralism in action is the United States military, which recruits people from every racial and ethnic group into its ranks.

The melting pot analogy overlooks the complex history of the United States. That history involved the European conquest of Native American peoples; the enslavement of African peoples; the annexation of Mexican territory, along with many of its inhabitants (who lived in what is now New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California, and Texas); and an influx of voluntary and involuntary immigrants from practically every part of the world. In addition, Puerto Ricans, American Samoans, Hawaiians, and other peoples all became part of the United States through a form of domination known as conquest or colonialism. The most celebrated group is voluntary immigrants—the millions of people who more or less chose to move to the United States.

One of the most interesting, significant, and long-lasting aspects of this global story is the U.S. government's establishment of a racial and ethnic classification scheme that applied to all who lived in and immigrated to the United States. The categories to which people were assigned reflected and reinforced the prejudices and discrimination of the times and set the tone for race relations then and far into the future. Perhaps as many as 2,000 distinct groups of Native American peoples, speaking seven different language families, were placed in a single category: "Indian." The millions of voluntary and involuntary immigrants from Europe eventually became "white." The peoples from all of Latin America became "Hispanic." Those from the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent were lumped into the category "Asian." The peoples from Hawaii and other Pacific islands (such as American Samoa and Guam) were eventually lumped into the category of "Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander." Those of African descent became "black."

The Civil Rights Movement

Shortly after slavery was abolished in the United States, a state-sanctioned system of racial discrimination, known as Jim Crow (1877), was put into place. Under Jim Crow, blacks (and other minorities) were denied the right to vote and sit on juries; subjected to racial segregation (separate and unequal facilities); disadvantaged with regard to employment opportunities; and subjected to widespread, systematic discrimination, including violence against person and property. After decades of struggle and resistance, that system was overturned with

Sgt. Jasmine Chopra



the ratification of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. The civil rights movement was a response to that systematic discrimination, not just in the South but across the nation. The civil rights movement reached its most organized phase in the late 1950s and 1960s. It encompassed other related movements as well, including the American Indian Movement, La Raza Unida (the Unified Race), the antiwar (Vietnam) movement, and the women's movement.

► The civil rights movement was waged by hundreds of thousands of people, many of whom put their lives on the line in the name of equality and justice. The activists pictured here are part of the 1963 March on Washington, demanding integrated schools, decent housing, and an end to racial bias.



Warren K. Leffler/Library of Congress

In the popular imagination the civil rights movement involved confronting blatant white supremacists such as the Ku Klux Klan. However, activists also confronted institutional discrimination as embodied in local, state, and federal agencies, judicial systems, and legislative bodies, including police, the National Guard, judges, and all-white citizens' town/city councils. Most notably, police departments, especially in the South, arrested civil rights activists on false or trumped-up charges, and all-white juries found whites who murdered blacks not guilty. Some officials, such as Alabama Governor George Wallace, used the National Guard and state police to prevent school integration.

The black churches played a key role in the civil rights movement. In an atmosphere of profound discrimination and inequality, the black church had become not just a place to worship but also served as a community clearinghouse, a credit union, a support group, and center of political activism (National Park Service 2009). Churches were the context for the emergence of key civil rights leaders such as reverends Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph Abernathy, Bernard Lee, and Fred Shuttlesworth.

◀ College and high school students played key roles in the civil rights movements as well. They participated in bus boycotts, sit-ins, freedom rides, and school integration.



Dick DeMarsico/Library of Congress

Church and student groups founded organizations to coordinate their efforts. They included the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Congress of Racial Equality, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the National Urban League.

► This photograph was taken in 1960, when four black students sat down at Woolworth's department store lunch counter to eat. They were refused service but continued to sit at the lunch counter while white onlookers poured sugar, mustard, and ketchup over their heads, and pulled them out of their chairs.



The Selma-to-Montgomery March was an especially significant moment for the civil rights movement, because ABC television broadcasted it, making it the first event of the activist movement to be televised. What Americans saw created enough outrage to lend national support to the movement. It began on what is known as Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965, when state and local law enforcement agents stopped 600 demonstrators six blocks into the march and attacked them with clubs and tear gas. Civil rights leaders sought protection from the courts to march and it was granted. The escalating intensity of this movement pushed the federal government to become involved. Most notably, President John F. Kennedy used the power of his office to enforce desegregation in schools and public facilities. Attorney General Robert Kennedy filed suits against at least four states to secure the right to vote for blacks. When Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed them into law knowing that it might cost him the next presidential election and severely weaken the Democratic Party's chance of winning in the next election cycle. Of course, federal and Supreme Court judges also played key roles in ruling against segregation and discrimination (National Park Service 2009).

Critical Thinking

Assess the degree to which your life is integrated with people of other races and ethnicities by asking: "With whom do I live, learn, pray, celebrate, and mourn?" Does your life experience best identify with assimilation, integration, or pluralism?

Key Terms

absorption assimilation

integration

virtual integration

assimilation

melting pot assimilation

desegregation

pluralism

Applying Theory: The Three Perspectives

Objective

You will learn how the three theoretical perspectives help us think about racial classification.



© Jose Luis Pelaez, Inc./Blend Images/Corbis

With what race do you identify? Is it American Indian/ Native American, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, or some other race?

Every 10 years the U.S. Census Bureau requires that someone in each household across the United States indicate the race of every person living in that household. Why does the United States do this? Each of the three theoretical perspectives—functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interaction—offers a framework for thinking about this U.S. policy. Keep in mind that while the United States now allows people to identify with more than one race, less than 3 percent of the population does so (U.S. Census Bureau 2008).

Functionalist Perspective

Functionalists ask: “What are the anticipated and unanticipated effects of a part on order and stability?” To answer these questions they apply the concepts of manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions. In this case, the part we are

analyzing is the U.S. system of racial classification. One anticipated or manifest function is that racial classification is a tool the U.S. government uses to count and manage its population. The government's official reason for classifying people and collecting data on race is that various federal programs require such data. Those programs include the Federal Affirmative Action Plans, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, Community Reinvestment Act, and Public Health Service Act. The federal government uses this data to assess successes or failures at combating discrimination against racial groups and their communities.

An unanticipated or latent function of the U.S. system of racial classification is that asking people to declare their race actually reinforces the racial reality the government has constructed. Recall that 95 percent of the population sees itself as belonging to just one racial category. Despite evidence to the contrary, the system stays in place at least in part because people apply it to themselves and others.

► One manifest dysfunction of the U.S. system of racial classification is that the act of declaring a race separates people into racial categories, even people to whom they are biologically related, such as this mother and son. At the very least, people see this white-appearing baby as having a black mother and a white father. And the mother must establish a relationship with her child in the context of a society that treats each race as a distinct category.



Finally, a latent dysfunction of the U.S. system of racial classification is that it offers people a vocabulary and a set of assumptions for thinking about the self and others. This U.S. system of racial classification was built on the illusion that there is no overlap between racial categories. When it divides the 309 million residents of the United States into five racial categories, it reinforces difference and competing interests. The small percentage of residents who identify with more than one race often feel pressure to declare loyalty to or sympathy for one race over others.

Conflict Perspective

Conflict theorists seek to identify advantaged and disadvantaged groups, document their unequal access to scarce and valued resources, and identify the practices that advantaged groups establish to promote and protect their interests. Conflict theorists ask, “Who benefits from classifying people by race and at whose expense?” Conflict theorists also identify the ways that dominant groups disguise and justify a system that gives them an advantage.

Conflict theorists would point out that today's system of racial classification cannot be separated from its historical roots, which can be traced to exploitation of people and resources in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Racism and the racial categories that form the cornerstone of racist thinking helped to justify this exploitation of nonwhite peoples and their resources. Therefore, conflict theorists would not believe that the primary reason we classify people by race is to check for patterns of discrimination and to monitor progress toward equal opportunity.



© Visions of America, LLC / Alamy

◀ Conflict theorists maintain that racial classification is used to divide nonwhite peoples into competing racial categories, thereby diluting their numbers and power in society. For example, conflict theorists question why the U.S. government maintains that Hispanics can be of any race and why Hispanic is the only recognized ethnic category in the United States. If, for example, Hispanics were classified as black, then together the

two would represent 25 percent of the population. Separately, however, they represent 13 and 12 percent, respectively.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Symbolic interactionists ask: “How do people experience, interpret, influence, and respond to what they and others are saying and doing?” Symbolic interactionists ask how race shapes these processes. The system of racial classification gives people racial identities. During social encounters that involve people of different races, each party imagines how their race figures into the way others are viewing and evaluating them as persons and interpreting their words, actions, and motives. Symbolic interactionists study social interaction with particular emphasis on the interpretive and negotiating processes.

► Symbolic interactionists are particularly interested in the ways in which people’s race affects the course and outcome of social interactions. Specifically, the U.S. system of racial classification gives people categories in which to place themselves and those with whom they are interacting.



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Jack Braden

Critical Thinking

Which of the three theoretical perspectives do you find most compelling for explaining why the United States classifies people by race? Explain.

Summary: Putting It All Together

Sociologists make a distinction between the concepts of race and ethnicity. Race is grounded in a physiologically based classification scheme in which each category is associated with certain physical traits, such as hair texture and skin shade. Racial categories have been assigned extraordinary social and political significance. An ethnic group consists of people who share, believe they share, or are believed by others to share a national origin; a common ancestry; a place of birth; and/or distinctive social traits that set them apart from other ethnic groups. Ethnic identification is not just a matter of individual choice. People selectively remember and forget some ethnicities that make up their heritage. Some racial groups have more freedom than others in claiming or disclaiming an ethnic identity. Sometimes ethnicity is imposed and sometimes it is revived and renewed. The United States recognizes six official racial categories and two ethnicities. Like all such classification schemes, the U.S. systems are characterized by fatal flaws in logic.

Disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups are considered minority groups. Among other things, people considered minorities do not choose that status. The disadvantaged status is justified and perpetuated by racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Prejudice, discrimination, and racism are the cornerstones of segregation, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.

Assimilation is a process by which ethnic and racial distinctions between groups disappear because one group is absorbed into another group's culture (absorption assimilation) or because two cultures blend to form a new culture (melting pot assimilation). Assimilation, which involves some level of integration, is facilitated by desegregation. Pluralism is a situation in which different racial and ethnic groups coexist in harmony; have equal social standing; maintain their unique cultural ties, communities, and identities; and participate in the economic and political life of the larger society.

[Can You Top This Photo?]



Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo with a caption that illustrates the idea that a parent and his or her biological offspring can be classified as different races.



David Hancock/AFP/Getty Images

9

CHAPTER

GENDER

- 9.1 Sex and Gender**
- 9.2 Gender Polarization and Life Chances**
- 9.3 Gender Stratification**
- 9.4 Gender Socialization**
- 9.5 Sexuality and Sexual Orientation**
- 9.6 Sexism and Feminism**
- 9.7 Applying Theory: The Three Perspectives**
- Summary Putting It All Together**

This photograph is striking in that it shows men and women with comparable physiques. It is unusual because most people invest considerable time, money, and effort to distinguish themselves from the other sex. That effort relates to the concept of gender, a socially created and learned distinction specifying the physical, behavioral, mental, and emotional traits believed to make one masculine or feminine. There is no fixed line separating masculine from feminine traits, yet for the most part we act as if there is. Sociologists seek to uncover the ways in which gender shapes life chances and are interested in why some people embrace these socially created distinctions while others resist and even challenge them.

Objective

You will learn that sex is an anatomical distinction and that gender is a social construction.



This is the same baby dressed in pink and blue. Can you guess the baby's sex?

The decision to dress the baby in pink or blue relates to the concept of gender, a society's beliefs about what boys, girls, women, and men should be. While this baby does not seem to care whether it is dressed in pink or blue, color does matter to most parents. The baby will eventually learn the social importance of the two colors.

Sex

A person's **sex** is based on **primary sex characteristics**, the anatomical traits essential to reproduction. Most cultures classify people into two sex categories—male and female—based on what are considered to be clear anatomical distinctions. Biological sex is not clear-cut, if only because some babies are born intersexed. The medical profession uses the broad term **intersexed** to classify people with some mixture of male and female primary sex characteristics. Although we do not know how many intersexed babies are born each year, one physician who treats intersexed children estimates that number to be one in every thousand (Dreifus 2005).

► When South African runner Caster Semenya easily won the 800-meter World Championship in August 2009, her sex was challenged. While one might think it would be easy to determine whether Semenya is a man or woman, the so-called gender test took several weeks to complete and involved a medical examination and reports from a gynecologist, an endocrinologist, a psychologist, an internal medicine specialist, and an expert on gender (Dreger 2009).



AP Photo/Anja Niedringhaus

If some babies are born intersexed, why does society not recognize an intersexed category? In the United States and many other countries, no such category exists because parents of such children collaborate with physicians to assign their newborns to one of the two recognized sexes. Intersexed infants are treated with surgery and/or hormonal therapy. The rationale underlying medical intervention is the belief that the condition “is a tragic event” about which something must be done (Dewhurst and Gordon 1993, p. A15).

Consider those who are transgender as further evidence that no clear line separates male from female. **Transgender** refers to people whose primary sex characteristics do not match the gender they perceive themselves to be. Some are motivated to undergo a sex change to reconcile the conflict between the gender they believe themselves to be and the gender we associate with anatomy. By one estimate, 1 in 30,000 people born male and 1 in 100,000 people born female are transgender (Barton 2005).



Anatomical Travelogue / Photo Researchers, Inc.

◀ Why does no clear line exist to separate everyone into one of two categories, male or female? One answer lies in the biological sequences of events that occur in the first weeks after conception, at which point the human embryo develops the potential to form either ovaries or testes. Approximately eight weeks into development, the ovaries *or* the testes disintegrate. About a week later the outer appearance we come to associate with male or female begins to develop. This complex chain of events does not always occur as theorized (Lehrman 1997, p. 49).

In addition to using primary sex characteristics to distinguish one sex from another, we use **secondary sex characteristics**, physical traits not essential to reproduction such as breast development, quality of voice, distribution of facial and body hair, and skeletal form, that supposedly result from the action

of so-called male (androgen) and female (estrogen) hormones. We use the term *so-called* because all people produce androgen and estrogen (Garb 1991). Like primary sex characteristics, there is no clear line to mark any secondary sex characteristic as distinctly male or female. For example, there is no line that separates a male voice from that of a female.

Gender

Gender is the socially created and learned distinctions that specify the physical, behavioral, and mental and emotional traits characteristic of males and females. The terms **masculinity** and **femininity** refer to traits believed to be characteristic of males and females. Gender is something that is taught, learned, emulated, and enforced (Lorber 2005). Masculinity and femininity are often expressed in terms of **gender ideals**. Ideal in this context means a standard against which real cases can be compared. A gender ideal is at best a caricature, in that it exaggerates the characteristics that are believed to make someone the so-called perfect male or female. Keep in mind that very few people achieve a gender ideal; even those who meet the ideals cannot usually sustain them, if only because they age. In

fact, some gender ideals may be so difficult to achieve that they may not exist in reality. Consider that few, if any, women have 4–6 inch long feet. Yet at one time that was considered the *ideal* foot size for women in China—an impossible standard that no female could achieve without enduring foot binding as a young girl.



AP Photo/Frank Franklin II

◀ Few grown women have 18-inch waists, and yet at one time in the United States, that was the ideal. Women in the United States and elsewhere have worn corsets and removed lower ribs to achieve that impossible standard.

To grasp that gender is a culturally conceived reality, we must note that no fixed line separates masculinity from femininity. Often we mistakenly attribute differences between men and women to nature, when in fact that difference is socially created. In the United States, for example, norms specify that females present themselves as having no facial or body hair. It is deemed acceptable for women to have eyelashes and well-shaped eyebrows but certainly not to have hair above their lips, under their arms, on their inner thighs, or on their chin, shoulders, back, chest, breasts, abdomen, legs, or toes. We fail to consider how hard women must work to achieve these cultural standards. Women's compliance makes males and females appear more physically distinct in terms of hair distribution than they are in reality.

To this point, we have shown that gender is a social construction, and that gender ideals are impossible to realize and maintain. Moreover, the two categories of male and female do not include everyone, so it should not surprise us to learn that some societies recognize (although they may not completely accept) a third gender.



United States Navy/Paul Farley

◀ Just as women strive to meet gender ideals, so do men. However, if we simply think about most people we can see that they fall short in meeting gender ideals. Still, these ideals are used as standards by which to judge ourselves and others. Then there are those who refuse to do the work required to fit into one of two categories and they work to create and be part of a category with which they feel more comfortable.

A Third Gender

In her research on *fa'afafine* Jeannette Mageo (1992) describes the guests attending a wedding shower in Samoa. Of approximately 40 women, 6 were *fa'afafine*—people who are not biologically female but who have taken on the “way of women” in dress, mannerism, appearance, and role. During that wedding shower, the *fa'afafine* staged a beauty contest in which each sang and danced a love song. Such beauty contests are well known in Samoa, and the winner “is sometimes the ‘girl’ who gives the most stunningly accurate imitation of real girls, such that even Samoans would be at a loss to tell the difference; sometimes the winner is the most brilliant comic” (Mageo 1998, p. 213). Often *fa'afafine* imitate popular foreign female vocalists, such as Britney Spears, Madonna, or Kelly Clarkson.

► Transgender women from Asia-Pacific countries (of which American Samoa is one) have formed the Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN) with the goal of saying “no” to discrimination and marginalization and of championing transgender women’s health, legal and social rights.

Mageo (1998) argues that *fa'afafine* could not have become commonplace unless something about Samoan society supported gender blurring. She notes that “Samoans do not distinguish sharply between men and women, boys and girls.” For example, “boys and girls take equal pride in their skills in fights . . . personal names are often not marked for gender, and outside school little boys and girls still wear much the same clothing” (1998, p. 451). Another factor relates to a decline in male status; men were once treated as the “strength of the village,” acting as the village police force or army reserve (Mageo 1992, p. 444; Mead 1928). The introduction of mass education, a shift away from an agriculture-based economy to a wage-based one, and the introduction of new labor-saving technology eventually reduced the community’s reliance on male strength, leaving men with few socially approved options. Men’s status was further undermined by an unemployment rate exceeding 12 percent and employment opportunities limited to working in tuna canneries or for the Samoan government (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). This transformation in status and limited opportunities left the average Samoan male without a clear sense of status in his society. For some men in American Samoa, becoming a *fa'afafine* gives them the status of well-known female impersonators.



ILGA/Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN)



Peter Read Miller/Sports Illustrated/Getty Images

◀ Other socially approved options for Samoan men include joining the military or becoming football players for the U.S., Canadian, or European leagues. In fact, 41 players of Samoan descent are listed on NFL team rosters. An estimated 15 percent of all male high school graduates in Samoa leave their country to play college or junior college football in the United States (Saslow 2007).

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption to connect these action figures to gender ideals.

Write a caption here



Lisa Southwick

Hints: In writing this caption

- review the concept of gender ideals;
- consider what young boys playing with these toys might imagine themselves to be.

Write-a-Caption exercises for other modules can be found at www.SeeingSociology.com.

Critical Thinking

Can you think of a time in your life when you worked particularly hard to achieve a gender ideal or to resist conforming to a gender ideal?

Key Terms

femininity

gender

gender ideals

intersexed

masculinity

primary sex characteristics

secondary sex characteristics

sex

transgender

Gender Polarization and Life Chances

Objective

You will learn the extent to which a person's gender determines his or her life chances.



How much time do you spend on a typical day working to present yourself as a particular gender?

The life chances of boys and girls are very different. Sociologists define **life chances** as the probability that an individual's life will turn out a certain way. Life chances apply to virtually every aspect of life—the chances that a person will be an airline pilot, play T-ball, major in elementary education, spend an hour or more getting ready for work or school, or live a long life.

Gender Polarization

Sociologists use the term **gender polarization** to describe the process by which being male or female increases the probability that a person's life will be a certain way. Gender, or ideas about what men and women should be, shape every aspect of life, including how people dress, the time they wake up in the morning, what they do after they wake up, the social roles they take on, the things they worry about, and even ways of expressing emotion and experiencing sexual attraction (Bem 1993).



▲ While the movie *White Chicks* starring Shawn Wayans and Marlon Wayans is a comedy, it allows us to consider how two men with a change of clothes, wigs, makeup, and transformed body language can present themselves as females. Simply looking at photos offers clues to how people's lives change as a result of the gender they present to the world.

To understand the power of gender to shape life chances, we consider the now-classic research by Alice Baumgartner-Papageorgiou (1982) on elementary and high school students who were asked how their lives would be different if they were members of the other gender. Their responses reflected culturally conceived and learned ideas about sex-appropriate behaviors and appearances and about the imagined and real advantages and disadvantages of being male or female (Vann 1995). The boys generally believed that their life chances would change in negative ways if they became girls. Among other things, they would become less active and more restricted in what they could do. In addition, they would become more conscious about tending to their appearance, finding a husband, and being alone and unprotected in the face of a violent attack—"I'd use a lot of makeup and look good and beautiful" and "I would not be able to help my dad fix the car and his two motorcycles." (pp. 2–9)

The girls, on the other hand, believed that if they became boys they would be less emotional, their lives would be more active and less restrictive, they would be closer to their fathers, and they would be treated as more than "sex objects"—"My father would be closer, because I'd be the son he always wanted" and "People would take my decisions and beliefs more seriously." (pp. 5–13)

Baumgartner-Papageorgiou's findings about how one's life is shaped by gender seem to hold up across time. When I asked my students how their lives would change if they were the other gender, their responses were remarkably similar. Decisions about how early to get up in the morning, which subjects to study, whether to show emotion, how to sit, and what sports to play are influenced by society's polarized definitions of masculinity and femininity rather than by criteria such as self-fulfillment, interest, ability, or personal comfort.

Life Chances

When selecting a college major many students consider, even if subconsciously, the "sex" of the major: If a major matches their sex, they consider the major to be a viable option, and if it does not match, they may reject the major outright (Bem 1993). Note that 75 percent of bachelor's degrees in computer and information sciences are awarded to males, whereas 94 percent of bachelor's degrees in library sciences are awarded to females. Other majors dominated by women

include education, health professions, and public administration/services. At least 80 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded in these fields go to women (*Chronicle of Higher Education* 2006).



◀ Life chances include not just the probability of choosing a college major based on whether it is viewed as sex-appropriate, but also the probability of wearing uncomfortable clothing. One study found that 90 percent of women routinely buy and wear shoes that are uncomfortable because they are too narrow (by design) and too small by one or two sizes (Harris 2003). Yet many women decide to wear uncomfortable shoes so they can appear more feminine.

Structural Constraints

How do we explain that, for the most part, nurses are females and carpenters are males? Sociologists believe that one answer to this question lies with **structural constraints**, the established and customary rules, policies, and day-to-day practices that affect a person's life chances. One example are the structural constraints that push many men and women into careers that correspond with society's ideals for sex-appropriate work. Women are likely to be pushed into work roles that emphasize personal relationships and nurturing skills or that pertain to products and services labeled as family-oriented and feminine. Men are likely to be pushed into jobs that emphasize decision-making and control and that pertain to machines and products and services considered masculine.

Sociologists argue that we must also consider the ways job descriptions channel behavior in stereotypically male and female directions. The point is that it is not the daycare worker per se that is feminine; it is the skills needed for the job that makes the daycare worker behave in ways we associate with femininity. Presumably anyone holding the job of daycare worker will display "feminine" characteristics (Anspach 1987).



Mass Communication Specialist 1st
Class Wendy Wyman



Mass Communication Specialist 2nd
Class Josh Cassatt

▲ This woman is training for the Iraqi Police Academy. To be a successful police officer, she must behave in ways that we associate with masculinity. Likewise, to be a successful childcare worker, this man has to behave in ways we associate with femininity.

The concept of structural constraints offers insights as to how institutions are gendered. Sociologists look for ways in which gender is embodied and embedded in institutional arrangements. Institutions are **gendered** when there is an established pattern of segregating the sexes, empowering one sex and not the other, or subordinating one sex relative to the other. In other words, gender systematically affects the experiences, constraints, and opportunities of the participating men and women (Britton 2000; Martin 2004).

To know if an institution is gendered, sociologists ask the following kinds of questions: Do work institutions hold expectations about whether a male or female is best suited for a particular job? Are some occupations disproportionately occupied by females (administrative assistant) and others by males (vice president)? Are women the social studies teachers and men the science teachers? Do employers offer female employees maternity leave but do not offer males paternity leave? If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” then the institution is gendered.



▲ When you observe shoppers in a grocery store, is it mostly men or mostly women shopping? Does one gender tend to pick up a few items and the other fill their shopping carts? Are both genders equally likely to have children with them? If you notice a pattern, then it is safe to say that this is one of the gendered patterns associated with the institution of family.

Critical Thinking

How do you think your life would change if you presented yourself as another gender?

Key Terms

gendered

life chances

gender polarization

structural constraints

Gender Stratification

Objective

You will learn that sociologists seek to understand situations that put one sex at a disadvantage relative to the other.



Pic. Miranda Blackburn

Is there any country in the world where women are considered equal to men?

Each year the World Economic Forum publishes a report on the global **gender gap**, defined as the disparity in opportunities available for men and women. The report considers the situation of women relative to men in 130 countries with regard to four areas: economic participation and opportunity, health and survival, educational attainment, and political empowerment. In doing so, the World Economic Forum is considering **gender stratification**, the extent to which opportunities and resources are unequally distributed between men and women.

There is no country in which women have more *overall* opportunities than their male counterparts, but there are countries in which men and women share more equally in the available resources and opportunities. According to the measures used, Finland ranks first as the country with the least inequality; the United States ranks 27th, and Yemen ranks last with greatest inequality (see Table 9.3a).

Table 9.3a: Indicators Used to Rank Countries on Gender Equality/Inequality

Notice that female life expectancy exceeds that of males in all three countries. With regard to political power, the data show that women in Yemen have virtually no political power. Compare Finland and the United States on all indicators. On which indicators is Finland ahead of the United States? On which indicators are Finland and the United States similar? Why do you think Finland is ranked ahead of the United States with regard to gender equality?

Indicator	Finland		United States		Yemen	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Economic Opportunity						
% in Labor Force	73	77	70	81	31	77
Median Income	\$26,795	\$37,739	\$25,005	\$40,000	\$424	\$1,422
% Professional/Workers	55	45	57	43	15	85
% of Senior Managers	30	70	42	58	4	96
Educational Attainment						
% Literacy Rate	99	99	99	99	43	77
Health and Survival						
Life Expectancy	74	69	71	67	51	48
Political Empowerment						
% in Parliament/Congress	42	59	17	83	0	100
Number of Years (of last 50) with Female or Male Head of State	9	42	0	50	0	50

Source: World Economic Forum (2008)

Explaining the Gender Gap

Using a complex formula, the World Economic Forum estimates that in Finland, 82 percent of the overall gender gap has been closed. In the United States 72 percent of the gap has been closed, and in Yemen, 46 percent has been closed. Sociologists seek to identify the social factors that put one sex at a disadvantage relative to the other. Inequality exists when one sex relative to the other

1. faces greater risks to physical and emotional well-being,
2. possesses a disproportionate share of income and other valued resources, and/or
3. is accorded more opportunities to succeed.

YEMEN. In Yemen there are many customs and traditions that work to keep women in positions inferior to men. In particular, Yemen is a **patriarchy**, an arrangement in which men have systematic power over women in public and private (family) life. Male power is supported by Islamic laws known as *Shari'a* that govern all aspects of life. In addition, “women are prohibited from interpreting the religious texts that define Islamic laws, and they cannot serve as family court judges. One can speculate that if women had this right, they would interpret Islamic texts differently than men, who for the most part have defined a woman’s duty as obeying her husband” (Freedom House 2008). Because 70 percent of Yemenese women are illiterate, most are unable to read Islamic texts. Thus the low literacy rate of women *relative* to men (23 percent of whom are illiterate) affects their ability to gain independence from men through paid employment and political leadership (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010).

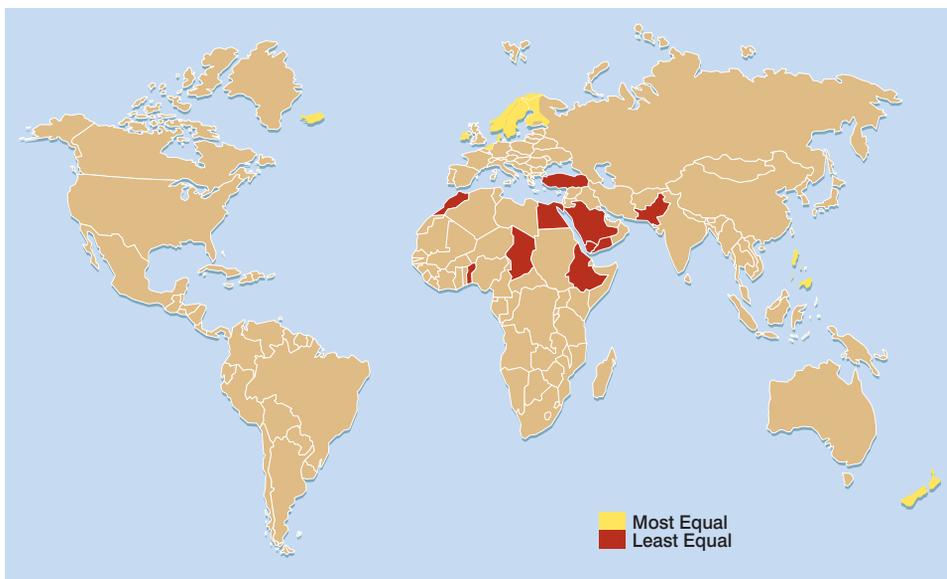
► These Yemenese women are participating in a U.S. military-sponsored training program with the goals of empowering them and closing the gender gap.

FINLAND. Finland has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. The country ranks number one in the world with regard to gender equality. That ranking can be attributed in large part to the 1987 Act on Equality between Women and Men reviewed and updated in 1995. The Act ensures an equal proportion of women and men in public organizations, including “government committees, advisory boards and other corresponding bodies, and municipal bodies (exclusive of municipal councils).” Under the Act equality means that the percentage of males or females in government organizations cannot exceed 60 percent or fall below 40 percent. As a result, today 42 percent of parliament consists of women and 58 percent of those in ministerial positions are women. The Equality Act also supports efforts to balance work and family life for both women and men and mandates that employers with at least 30 staff members have plans in place to ensure gender equality (Virtual Finland 2008). Among other things, the government subsidizes child care and a family leave policy that guarantees both parents the opportunity to care for newborns (Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2008).

Tech. Sgt. Carrie Bernard



Figure 9.3a Closing the Gender Gap: 10 Most Equal and 10 Least Equal Countries in the World The map shows the 10 countries in which women’s overall opportunities relative to the men in that country are most and least equal. Note that countries considered Muslim are among those with the least opportunities for women. In evaluating this fact, consider the dominant role men play in interpreting Islamic texts that govern public and private life. The 10 countries with greatest equality for women are Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, New Zealand, the Philippines, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Latvia. The 10 least equal are Bahrain, Ethiopia, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Benin, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Chad, and Yemen.



Source: World Economic Forum (2008)

THE UNITED STATES. The United States ranks 27th in closing the gender gap. It does rank number one with regard to equality of educational opportunity, but it only ranks 56th on political empowerment. Unlike Finland, the United States does not mandate equal representation in government and other public organizations. As a result only 17 percent of the U.S. Congress consists of women. In comparison to Finland, American women earn significantly less money relative to male counterparts. Table 9.3b examines male-female income differences by level of education and age.

Table 9.3b: Median Income of Males and Females Age 25 and Older Working Year Round and Full-Time by Education, 2008

Regardless of the level of education, men on average earn more money than their female counterparts. Overall there is a \$11,031-per-year gap between the median incomes of males and females age 25 and older. The income gap, as measured in actual dollars, rises with education. The smallest real dollar gap exists between men and women with less than a high school education. The largest real dollar gap exists between men and women with a graduate or professional degree.

	Overall Median Income	Less Than High School	High School Graduate	Some College	4-Year Degree or Higher
Male, age 25+	\$50,603	\$33,960	\$50,292	\$57,014	\$89,932
Female, age 25+	\$39,572	\$25,844	\$36,868	\$43,160	\$66,820
Difference	\$11,031	\$8,116	\$13,429	\$13,845	\$23,112
Percentage of Male Earnings	78.2%	76.1%	73.3%	75.7%	74.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2009)

Male-female income differences also vary by age group, with the greatest inequality between men and women ages 45–64 and the least inequality between men and women ages 16–24. Women ages 16–24 earned 91 cents for every dollar earned by men, and women 35 and over earn 75 cents for every dollar earned by men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009).

If we take a broader view and examine total earnings of men and women over an extended period of time, such as a 15-year period, we find that the average woman earned about 38 percent of what the average man did (Madrack 2004). Economists Stephen J. Rose and Heidi Hartman (2004) compared men’s and women’s total earnings between 1983 and 1998 and found that the average woman earned \$273,592 while the average man earned \$722,693.

There are settings in which women outearn men. Sociologist Andrew Beveridge (2007) found that women age 21–30, working full-time in major cities such as New York City, have a higher median income than their male counterparts. Beveridge hypothesized that the reason is that these women are better educated as a group; a greater percentage are college educated, and a lower percentage are high school dropouts. He also hypothesized that educated women are drawn to major cities in search of jobs that match their educational attainment. Note that Beveridge did not compare the incomes of men and women employed in the same occupations who were working in New York City.

Explaining Income Inequalities

There are many possible explanations for these annual and long-term income differences between men and women. These explanations also help explain the gender gap in political participation. They include the following:

- Women are disproportionately employed in lower-paying, lower-status occupations. Specifically they choose or are forced into lower-paying positions that are considered sex-appropriate, such as teacher, secretary, and caregiver. In addition women are channeled into positions that offer fewer and more flexible hours to meet caregiving responsibilities. Women choose or are forced into occupations that will not require them to relocate, work in unpleasant environments (such as mines), or take on hazardous assignments—three activities associated with higher pay (Sahadi 2006).
- Employers underinvest in the careers of childbearing-age women because they assume the women will eventually leave the workplace to raise children. Because society expects women to take on primary caregiving responsibilities, many do leave the labor market to take care of children and elderly parents and then re-enter it.
- Employers often view women's salary needs as less important than men's and pay women accordingly. Unfortunately, many still consider women's earnings as supplemental to a presumed male partner—earnings that can be used to buy “extras”—when in reality many women are heads of households. When negotiating for salaries, women underestimate their worth to employers and ask for less than their male counterparts. Some employers steer males and females into different gender-appropriate assignments (such as sales clerks in baby clothes departments rather than hardware) and offer them different training opportunities and chances to move into better-paying jobs (Love 2007).
- Women encounter a **glass ceiling**, a term used to describe a barrier that prevents women from rising past a certain level in an organization, especially for women who work in male-dominated workplaces and occupations. The term applies to women who have the ability and qualifications to advance but who are not well-connected to those who are in a position to advocate for or mentor them. With regard to men who work in female-dominated professions, they encounter the **glass escalator**, a term that applies to the invisible upward movement that puts men in positions of power, even within female-dominated occupations. In this case, management singles out men for special attention and advancement such that men are encouraged to move from school teacher to assistant principal to principal or from social worker to program director.

► This woman represents one of the 90 percent of all registered nurses that are female. The male represents one of the 10 percent of all nurses that are male. The median weekly income for female nurses is \$971. The median weekly income for male nurses is \$1,074; \$103 per week more than female counterparts (U.S. Department of Labor 2007).

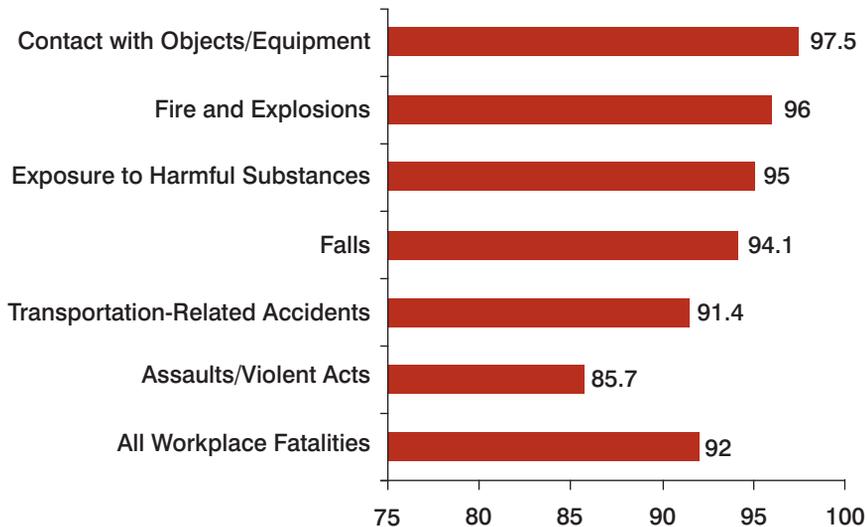


MC2 Chantel M. Clayton

Workplace Fatalities and Injuries

There are many areas in which men are disadvantaged relative to women. Men work almost 60 percent of all hours worked and suffer 92 percent of workplace fatalities. Men suffer disproportionately more workplace fatalities than women because they are employed in the most dangerous industries, including construction, mining, and logging. There is also evidence that males (relative to their female counterparts) fail to take preventive steps that would protect them from fatalities.

Figure 9.3b Fatal Occupational Injuries by Type of Event/Exposure Leading to Death: Percentage of Victims Who Are Males



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008c)

Men also experience more nonfatal workplace injuries than females. For every 10,000 employed males, 142 are injured on the job each year. For every 10,000 employed females, 106.4 are injured on the job each year. Women's injuries are likely to be sprains and strains from lifting and otherwise overexerting muscles (lifting patients, picking up children, lifting mattresses). Men too suffer from sprains and bruises but are much more likely than women to suffer injuries related to falls, chemical and heat burns, severed limbs, and exposure to harmful chemicals (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008c).

Critical Thinking

Is there an area of your life where you feel advantaged relative to the other sex?

Key Terms

gender gap

glass ceiling

patriarchy

gender stratification

glass escalator

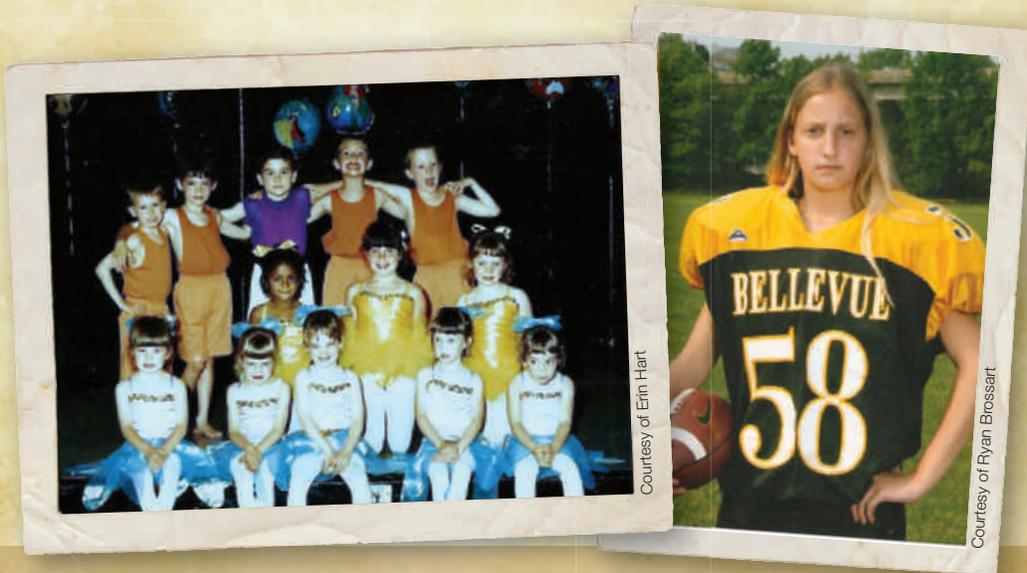
Gender Socialization

MODULE

9.4

Objective

You will consider the process by which children learn to be male or female.



Imagine that one of the boy dancers and the girl football player were your son and daughter. Would you be proud or embarrassed?

Masculinity and femininity are not innate; children learn these characteristics. Once a child is labeled male or female everyone who comes in contact with the child begins to treat him or her as such. With encouragement from others, children learn to talk, walk, and move in gendered ways (Lorber 2005). They also learn **gender roles**, the behavior and activities expected of someone who is male or female. These expectations channel male and female energies in different gender-appropriate directions. As children learn to look and behave like boys or girls, most reproduce and perpetuate their society's version of how the two sexes should be. When children fail to behave in gender-appropriate ways, their character becomes suspect (Lorber 2005). At the minimum people call girls who violate the rules tomboys and boys who do so sissies.

The gender socialization process may be direct or indirect. It is indirect when children learn gender expectations by observing others' words and behavior, such as the jokes, comments, and stories they hear about men and women or portrayals of men and women they see in magazines, books, and on television (Raag and Rackliff 1998). Socialization is direct when significant others intentionally convey the societal expectations to children.



▲ Socialization theorists argue that an undetermined yet significant portion of male-female differences are products of the ways in which males and females are socialized. These little boys see images of “real” men who likely become a standard by which they judge themselves. This baby girl clearly had no say over whether to have her ears pierced.

Agents of Socialization

Agents of socialization are the significant people, groups, and institutions that act to shape our gender identity—whether we identify as male, female, or something in between. Agents of socialization include family, classmates, peers, teachers, religious leaders, popular culture, and mass media. Child development specialist Beverly Fagot and her colleagues (1985) observed how preschool teachers shape gender identity. Specifically, the researchers focused on how toddlers, ages 12 and 24 months, in a play group interacted and communicated with one another and how teachers responded to the children’s attempts to communicate. Fagot found no differences in the interaction styles of 12-month-old boys and girls: All of the children communicated by gestures, gentle touches, whining, crying, and screaming. The teachers, however, interacted with them in gender-specific ways. They were more likely to respond to girls who communicated in gentle, “feminine” ways and to boys who communicated in assertive, “masculine” ways. That is, the teachers tended to ignore girl’s assertive acts but respond to boys’ assertive acts. Thus, by the time these toddlers were two, they communicated in very different ways.

Fagot’s research was conducted more than 20 years ago. A more recent study found that early childhood teachers are more accepting of girls’ cross-gender

behaviors and explorations than they are of boys'. According to this research, teachers believe that boys who behave like "sissies" are at greater risk of growing up to be homosexual and psychologically ill-adjusted than are girls who behave like "tomboys." This finding suggests that while American society has expanded the range of behaviors and appearances deemed acceptable for girls, it has not extended the range for boys in the same way (Cahill and Adams 1997).

Children's toys and celebrated images of males and females figure prominently in the socialization process, along with the ways in which adults treat children. Barbie® dolls, for example, have been marketed since 1959 with the purpose of inspiring little girls "to think about what they wanted to be when they grew up." The dolls are available in 67 countries. An estimated 95 percent of girls between ages 3 and 11 in the United States have Barbie® dolls, which come in several different skin colors and 45 nationalities (Mattel 2010).

► These girls in Mexico show off their Barbie® to a photographer. Through Barbie®, these girls are exposed to an American ideal of beauty to which they may aspire.

For boys, G.I. Joe was launched in 1964 as the first action figure toy on the market, and it was followed by a long line of action figures, including Transformers™, Micronauts™, Star Wars™, Power Rangers™, X-Men™, Street Fighter™, Bronze Bombers, and Mortal Kombat™. The popularity of these toys has generated comic books, motion pictures, and cartoons, and they appear on school supplies, video games, card games, lunch boxes, posters, and party supplies (Hasbro Toys 2010; Son 1998).



Norms Governing Body Language

Learning to be male or female involves learning norms governing the way males and females present themselves; that includes learning the sex-appropriate norms governing body language. According to women's studies professor Janet Lee Mills (1985), norms governing male body language suggest power, dominance, and high status, whereas norms governing female body language suggest submissiveness, subordination, vulnerability, and low status. Mills argues that these norms are learned and that people give them little thought until someone breaks them, at which point everyone focuses on the rule breaker. The description for the photos that follow is in Mills' words.



Lisa Southwick



Lisa Southwick

▲ In this typical office scene, the man (left) holds power with an authoritative stance—one hand in pocket and the other at mid-chest, straight posture, and head high; the woman is submissive with smile, arms and hands close to her body. Note the man’s wide, stable stance and the woman’s unstable stance. Many women tend to slip into a posture similar to that shown when talking to a shorter male authority figure. In the right photo, the man defers to authority by assuming a feminine, subordinate posture—with scrunched-up spine, constricted placement of arms and legs, canted head, and smiling attentiveness.

Such norms governing appropriate body language for males and females can prevent women from conveying a sense of security and control when they are in positions that demand these qualities, such as a lawyer, politician, or physician. Mills suggests that women face a dilemma: To be perceived as feminine and nurturing, a woman needs to appear “passive, accommodating, affiliative, subordinate, submissive, and vulnerable.” To be perceived as a competent manager, a woman needs to appear “active, dominant, aggressive, confident, competent, and tough” (Mills 1985, p. 9).

Critical Thinking

Have you ever tried to engage in an activity that was not considered sex-appropriate? What strategies, if any, did others use to discourage or encourage you from pursuing that activity?

Key Terms

agents of socialization

gender roles

Sexuality and Sexual Orientation

MODULE

9.5

Objective

You will learn the meaning of sexuality and sexual orientation.



If you saw these three people at a party, would you make a snap judgment about their sexuality? If yes, what clues informed that judgment?

We are bombarded daily with messages about sexuality. They may come from sex education classes that warn of the health dangers of unprotected sexual activities, from fairy tales, from song lyrics, or from commercials, movies, and news events. Other messages come from those close to us: friends who come out to us or parents who kidded us about having a boyfriend or girlfriend. Finally, messages come from observing the treatment of people around us: we notice uncomfortable reactions toward women who breast-feed their babies in public and toward a man who appears feminine or a woman who appears masculine; we take notice of the boy and girl everyone wants to date or to not date; we take note of reactions and facial expressions when someone says they are from San Francisco.

Sexuality

Sexuality encompasses all the ways people experience and express themselves as sexual beings. The study of sexuality considers the range of social activities, behaviors, and thoughts that generate sexual sensations and experiences and that allow for sexual expression. Sexuality is not an easy subject to present for several reasons.

First, for most of us sex/sexuality education focused on the dangerous consequences of sexuality (sexually transmitted diseases) uninformed by any discussions of what to make of sexual excitement, sexual attraction, or of the relentless messages regarding sexuality going on around us. Second, people

who have had difficult sexual experiences—those molested or raped as children, men who cannot achieve erections, and women and men who have been sexually assaulted—may be uncomfortable with the topic (Davis 2005). Third, it is very difficult to discuss human sexuality in all its dimensions when heterosexuality and all that it entails is presented as normal and legitimate such that any sexuality outside that norm is considered deviant and in need of fixing.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an expression of sexuality. While sociologists are interested in the topic of sexual orientation, the American Sociological Association does not issue a statement about what sexual orientation means. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2009), **sexual orientation** refers to “an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes. Sexual orientation also refers to a person’s sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions.” The word *enduring* suggests that one encounter does not make someone gay or lesbian. This caveat speaks to the fact that many people have experienced at least one same-sex sexual encounter at some point in their lives. Results from the most recent survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (2002) found that 1 in 9 women and 1 in 18 men ages 15–44 have had a sexual experience with someone of the same sex.

Sexual orientation falls along a continuum, with its endpoints being exclusive attraction to the other sex and exclusive attraction to the same sex. In the United States we tend to think of sexual orientation as falling into three distinct categories: heterosexual (attractions to those of the other sex), gay/lesbian (attractions to those of one’s own sex), and bisexual (attractions to both men and women). It is important to realize that there are other labels that cultures apply to expressions of human sexualities (APA 2009).

Sexual orientation should not be confused with other related and intertwining terms that shape the experiences of sexuality and sexual orientation, including

- biological sex**—the physiological, including genetic, characteristics associated with being male or female
- gender role**—the cultural norms that guide people in enacting what is considered to be feminine and masculine behavior
- gender identity**—the awareness of being a man or woman, of being neither, or something in between (gender identity also involves the ways one chooses to hide or express that identity)
- transgender**—the label applied to those who feel that their inner sense of being a man or woman does not match their anatomical sex, so they behave and/or dress to actualize their gender identity

People enact sexual orientation in relationships with others. Thus, according to the APA (2009), “sexual orientation is closely tied to the intimate personal relationships that meet deeply felt needs for love, attachment, and intimacy.”

Based on what we know to date, the core attractions that emerge in middle childhood through early adolescence prior to sexual experiences are the foundation of adult sexual orientation. The experiences of coming to terms with sexual orientation vary. People can be aware of their sexual orientation even if they are celibate or have yet to engage in sexual activity. Others come to label their orientation after a sexual experience with a same-sex and/or other-sex partner.

Still others ignore, suppress, or resist pulls toward those of the same sex because of widespread social disapproval (APA 2009).

► In addition to sexual behaviors, sexual orientation includes “nonsexual physical affection between partners, shared goals and values, mutual support, and ongoing commitment. . . . One’s sexual orientation defines the group of people in which one is likely to find the satisfying and fulfilling romantic relationships that are an essential component of personal identity for many people” (APA 2009).



Every group has established **sexual scripts**, responses and behaviors that people learn, in much the same way that actors learn lines for a play, to guide them in sexual activities and encounters. These scripts are gendered in that males and females learn different scripts about the sex-appropriate responses and behavioral choices open to them in specific situations (Stein 1989). Even if they resist following the script, people know the script they are expected to follow and must come to terms with accepting or rejecting that script. As a result, people often feel like they must account for deviating from the script. In this regard, most of my students have acknowledged knowing a same-sex person for whom they felt deep affection and attraction and who made them feel alive (descriptions we typically reserve for male-female attractions). Likewise most, if not all, these students account for these feelings by emphasizing that they not be interpreted as sexual:

I have a set of friends that I absolutely love hanging out with, but I have one friend in particular that, when I’m around him, I feel really great. If I told him that I liked his company that much, he would most likely call me a fag.

The sexual scripts of the dominant culture call for behaviors and responses that support its definitions of what it means to be heterosexual. Other sexual scripts constructed by those in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities and other cultures are dismissed as deviant.

How Is Sexuality Commodified?

Commodification occurs when economic value is assigned to things not previously thought of in economic terms such as an idea, a natural resource (water, a view of nature), or a state of being (youth, sexuality). The **commodification of sexuality** occurs when companies create products for people to buy so that they can express themselves as sexual beings or elicit a sexual response from others.

One way to convince people to buy products is to play on their insecurities over whether they meet and can maintain sexual ideals. An entire industry has evolved around offering products to help people in their efforts to do so. Sociologists refer to this as the **commercialization of sexual ideals**—the process of introducing products into the market using advertising campaigns that promise consumers they will achieve a sexual ideal if they buy and use the products. The list of available products is endless, especially for women. From hair dye to nail polish, products are available to sexualize almost every female body part or body function. Other products include four-times-a-year menstrual control pills, vaginal moisturizers, Botox, hair removers, and artificial fingernails. Relatively new products on the market for men include the erectile dysfunction drugs that are being advertised even to men who do not have the medical condition for which



Copyright © Bill Aron / Photo Edit

these drugs were designed. Millions of men have tried these drugs to date, and the manufacturers hope to attract millions more “by suggesting that if men cannot have an erection ‘on demand,’ if they ‘fail’ even once, they are candidates” (Tuller 2004).

◀ Study the advertisement. How are ideals regarding female sexuality used to sell the product? This advertisement is an example of the commercialization of sexual ideals.

Another relatively untapped market consists of girls between ages 6 and 11. One market research study showed that significant numbers of girls in this age group use eyeliner, mascara, blusher, perfume, self-tanning products, and hair color (Bowcott 2004; Sweeney 2008). Another marketing study recommended placing vending machines in schools, cinemas, and bowling alleys to market cosmetics to teens, noting that “makeup, in particular, is often an impulse purchase, so placing teen brands in unusual locations . . . may persuade consumers into buying something they had not previously considered” (Bowcott 2004).



Lisa Southwick

◀ The trend to market cosmetics to pre-teens has led critics to claim that young girls are being hypersexualized and in the process are joining the ranks of older women who believe that they fall short in their natural state (Wiseman 2003).

Social Movements

If we simply think about the men and women we encounter every day, we quickly realize that many people cannot, do not, or outright refuse to express their sexuality in idealized ways. These facts do not stop most people from using the ideals to evaluate their own and others’ sexuality. Some people accept the ideals without question, others resign themselves to the ideals, and still others behave in ways that resist, and even challenge, those ideals. Social movements occur when enough people organize to make a change, resist a change, or undo a change in some area of society.

It is not easy to piece together the complete history of LGBT revolutionary social movements and the reactionary movements that emerged to oppose any gains made. In the United States, LGBT movements can be dated to the establishment of the first gay rights organization in Chicago in 1924 (the Society for Human Rights). Over time the movements have involved various players and assumed various names, including gay liberation, lesbian feminism, the queer movement, and the transgender movement (Bernstein 2002).

Sociologist Mary Bernstein (2002) describes the movements' goals as both cultural and political: the “cultural goals include (but are not limited to) challenging dominant constructions of masculinity and femininity, homophobia, and the primacy of the gendered heterosexual nuclear family (**heteronormativity**). Political goals include changing laws and policies in order to gain new rights, benefits, and protections from harm” (p. 536). Strategies to achieve these goals include building communities, lobbying, holding street marches of celebration and protest, and promoting LGBT culture through international, national, and community events, magazines, films, literature, and academic research.

➤ Demonstrations, such as gathering at the U.S. capital to oppose a proposed constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, represent another strategy.



The relative successes of the LGBT movements and the Religious Right movements can be gauged by examining each of the 50 states' position on same-sex marriage and unions. Voters in 37 states have approved measures amending their constitutions to ban same-sex marriage. On the one hand, nine states allow same-sex marriages or unions. We know from social movement theory that people mobilize when they believe something can be gained from joining hands or will be lost if they don't do so. As a result both sides are mobilizing forces.



◀ The various LGBT movements have met resistance from groups broadly labeled the Religious Right and from state, local, and federal politicians who have sought to preserve, and have succeeded in preserving, the gendered heterosexual nuclear family and reserving marriage as a right granted only to a man and woman.

Critical Thinking

Have you had the chance to vote on a state constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage? If so, how did you vote? Explain.

Key Terms

biological sex
commercialization of sexual ideals
commodification

commodification of sexuality
gender identity
gender role
heteronormativity

sexuality
sexual orientation
sexual scripts
transgender

Objective

You will learn about the meaning of sexism and that feminism offers one response.



Ray Tamarra/Getty Images

Do you think any of the following words—sexist, misogynist, homophobic, hypermasculinized—apply to this photograph of the hip-hop recording artist “Mario”?

Sexism

Sexism is the belief that one sex—and by extension, one gender—is innately superior to another, justifying unequal treatment of the sexes. Sexism revolves around three notions:

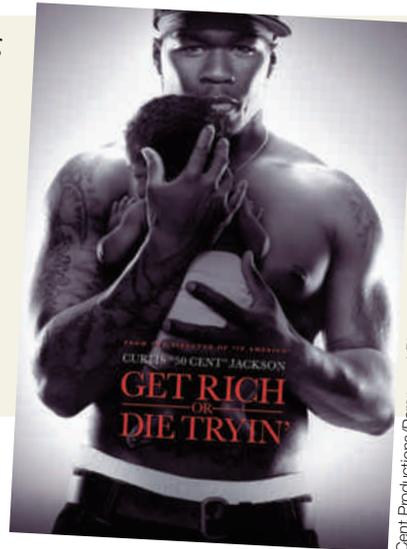
1. People can be placed into two categories—male and female.
2. A close correspondence exists between a person’s primary sex characteristics and characteristics such as emotional state, body language, personality, intelligence, the expression of sexual desire, and athletic capability.
3. Primary sex characteristics are viewed as so significant that they explain and determine behavior and the inequalities that exist between the sexes.

One example of sexism is the belief that men are not capable of forming relationships with other men that are as meaningful as those formed between women. Sexism underlies any differential treatment of, or thinking about,

males and females that ignores and/or undermines individual aspirations, ability, or capability.

Sexism can be so extreme that it can involve a hatred for one sex. That hatred is called **misogyny** when it is directed at women; it is called **misandry** when it is directed at men. Arguably one of the most publicized charges of misogyny is leveled against those hip-hop/rap artists who portray themselves as pimps and the women around them as prostitutes and sex objects who must obey them. In addition to the accusation of misogyny, some hip-hop artists have also been accused of promoting homophobia and hypermasculinity. As we will learn, hip-hop is much more complex than portrayed in the popular media.

► Hypermasculinity involves exaggerating the traits and behaviors believed to be characteristic of males by placing excessive emphasis on strength to the point that a man's muscles and reproductive organs are presented as impossibly large. Other portrayals of hypermasculinity involve armed males surrounded by dozens of scantily clad women whose only role in life appears to be that of a sex object.



Cent Productions/Paramount Pictures/The Kobal Collection

Homophobia and Hypermasculinity

The term **homophobia** is used in at least two ways. The word refers to an irrational fear held by some heterosexuals that a same-sex person will make a sexual advance toward them. It also refers to a fear of being in close contact with someone of the same sex. Some people are so afraid of such contact that they engage in or support violence toward gays; others react in other but still discriminatory ways, including banning gays from certain occupations (military service, child care).

In assessing whether the words sexist, misogynist, homophobic, and hypermasculinized apply to hip-hop, it is important to consider a number of questions that follow:

1. Who is promoting misogyny, homophobia, and hypermasculinity? One overly simplistic answer is black rap artists who are considered part of hip-hop culture. The more complex answer is the \$9 billion industry promoted through primarily white-owned record companies, magazines, radio stations, and retailers to consumers who are believed to be 70 percent white males (PBS 2008).
2. Are misogyny, homophobia, and hypermasculinity unique to hip-hop culture? No they are not. Many advertisers portray women as sex objects to sell products. Likewise, jokes and derogatory comments about gays are commonplace in American society. In addition, hypermasculinity has deep roots in American society. "From the outlaw cowboy in American history to the hypermasculine thug of gangster rap, violent masculinity is an enduring symbol of American manhood itself" (Dyson 2008).

3. Are misogyny, homophobia, and hypermasculinity related? Yes, hypermasculinity reinforces misogyny and homophobia. Avoiding and fearing close contact with same-sex people, responding to a same-sex sexual advance with violence, and treating women as sex objects are elements of hypermasculinity. Why? From a hypermasculine point of view, any characteristic that threatens masculinity and departs from the extreme ideals about what men should be, such as homosexuality and femininity, must be demeaned.
4. Do misogyny, homophobia, and hypermasculinity capture the essence of hip-hop culture? No, for many, hip-hop is a culture or lifestyle that uses music to promote constructive political engagement and social activism.
5. Who is drawn to the commercialized hip-hop emphasis on hypermasculinity? Hypermasculinity may be most appealing to those men who lack financial status and power. Hypermasculinity sends the message to those with little power that one way men can communicate power is through their bodies and taking control over women's lives (Public Broadcasting System 2008).

Hypermasculinity and the Military

Hypermasculinity and all that it entails point to another dimension of sexism—the belief that people who behave in ways that depart from ideals of masculinity or femininity are considered deviant and in need of fixing and should be subject to negative sanctions. This ideology is reflected in U.S. military policy toward gay men and lesbians. According to a U.S. Department of Defense (1990) directive: “Homosexuality is incompatible with military service. The presence of such members adversely affects the ability of the Armed Forces to maintain discipline, good order, and morale” (p. 25).

In the past decade the Department of Defense has discharged 12,500 servicemen and servicewomen for homosexuality under its “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy (Bumiller 2009). This number is significant in light of the fact that U.S. military forces are now stretched to the limit. Gay men and lesbians in 161 different occupations, including foreign-language specialists and infantrymen, have been discharged (*Online Newshour* 2007). Yet little if any scientific evidence supports this directive. In fact, a 2007 Zogby poll found that 75 percent of U.S. soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan indicated that they were comfortable interacting with gay colleagues; only 5 percent indicated that they were extremely uncomfortable (Shalikashvili 2007).

► Whether taking part in training exercises or relaxing afterward, soldiers often make physical contact with other soldiers. Would the presence of gay men and lesbians in the military disrupt these kinds of bonding activities? Is physical contact of any kind sexual? Might the presence of two soldiers who share a strong friendship also be disruptive?



United States Navy/Mass Communication Specialist
2nd Class Patrick Gordon

People who oppose the presence of gay men and lesbians in the military stereotype them as sexual predators just waiting to pounce on heterosexuals while they shower, undress, or sleep. Opponents seem to believe that any same-sex

person is attractive to a gay man or lesbian. But as one gay ex-midshipman noted, heterosexuals “have an annoying habit of overestimating their own attractiveness” (Schmalz 1993, p. B1). Supporters of gay men and lesbians in the military point out that almost 75 percent of troops say that they usually shower alone; only 8% say they usually take showers where others can see them (Zogby International 2006). Apparently, openly gay soldiers serve in the British and other militaries without any major problems; the British military even recruits soldiers at gay pride events (Lyall 2007).

Feminism

When women living in the United States are asked, “Do you consider yourself a feminist or not?” only one in four answers yes. When asked the same question accompanied by this definition of feminist—someone who believes in social, political, and economic equality of the sexes—65 percent of women answer yes. One possible explanation for the difference is that few people consider the label of feminist a compliment (CBS News Polls 2005).

People correctly or incorrectly associate feminists with many mainstream and controversial positions, including support for equal rights, equal pay, affordable day care, abortion rights, opposition to sexual harassment, a lack of respect for “stay-at-home” moms, and a dislike or even hatred of men (Time.com 2007).

Feminism is a perspective that seeks to understand the position of women in society relative to men and that advocates equal opportunity. Questions about what that equality looks like and how equality should be achieved distinguish feminist camps from one another.

► This early-20th-century political cartoon speaks to a widespread misperception that feminists as a group disdain men and see them as the weaker sex. Here four women are inspecting what appears to be a bug. It is actually someone of the “male species” on his knees begging for mercy.



Charles Dana Gibson/Library of Congress

Many feminists believe that any inequality between males and females, including that which gives females an advantage over males, needs to be addressed. The following quotations from well-known feminists demonstrate the range of concerns and positions feminists hold:

It’s important to remember that feminism is no longer a group of organizations or leaders. It’s the expectations that parents have for their daughters, and their sons, too. It’s the way we talk about and treat one another. —Anna Quindlen

If divorce has increased by one thousand percent, don’t blame the women’s movement. Blame the obsolete sex roles on which our marriages were based. —Betty Friedan

Women do not have to sacrifice personhood if they are mothers. They do not have to sacrifice motherhood in order to be persons. Liberation was meant to expand women's opportunities, not to limit them. The self-esteem that has been found in new pursuits can also be found in mothering. —Elaine Heffner

No one sex can govern alone. I believe that one of the reasons why civilization has failed so lamentably is that it had one-sided government. —Nancy Astor



I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat, or a prostitute. —Rebecca West

◀ One of the most memorable quotes associated with feminist thought is *“Remember, Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, but she did it backwards and in high heels.”* The person who observed this—Faith Whittlesey—was commenting on the fact that Ginger Rogers, although a great talent in her own right, was best known as Fred Astaire's dance partner.

Feminism's Activists' Roots

The history of feminism cannot be separated from efforts to bring about change in the lives of women, and by extension the lives of children and men. The following very selected list highlights some major events in feminist history. They include gaining the right to vote, securing fair labor standards, and opening doors that were previously closed. These are rights that most of us—male and female—have come to take for granted.

1920 The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution becomes law, guaranteeing women the right to vote.

1943 With many men fighting in World War II, over 6 million women hold factory jobs as welders, machinists, and mechanics.

1963 The Equal Pay Act, signed by President John F. Kennedy, prohibits the practice of paying women less money than men for the same job.

1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act, outlawing discrimination in unions, public schools, and the workplace on the basis of race, creed, national origin, or sex.

1965 Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is established to prohibit discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sex, religion, race, color, national origin, age, or disability.

- 1966** The National Organization for Women (NOW) is founded by Betty Friedan with the purpose of challenging sex discrimination in the workplace.
- 1972** The U.S. Senate approves the Equal Rights Amendment making sex discrimination in schools that receive federal funding illegal and requiring that schools that receive such funds give females an equal opportunity to participate in sports.
- 1973** The U.S. Supreme Court rules that the Texas law restricting abortion in the first trimester is unconstitutional. As a result, anti-abortion laws in nearly two-thirds of the states are declared unconstitutional, legalizing abortion nationwide.
- 1975** President Gerald Ford signs a defense appropriations bill to allow women to be admitted into U.S. military academies.
- 1993** President Bill Clinton signs the Family Medical Leave Act, allowing eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave for reasons of illness, maternity, adoption, or a child's serious health condition.

Source: Adapted from Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senator from California, Historical Timeline for Women's History (2007), <http://boxer.senate.gov/whm/time.cfm>.

Sociologists take a feminist perspective when they emphasize in their teaching, research, and activism the following kinds of themes:

- the right to bodily integrity and autonomy,
- access to safe contraceptives,
- the right to choose the terms of pregnancy,
- access to quality prenatal care, protection from violence inside and outside the home, and freedom from sexual harassment,
- equal pay for equal work,
- workplace rights to maternity and other caregiving leaves, and
- freedom for both men and women to make choices in life that defy gender expectations.

Critical Thinking

Identify some example of popular culture—such as a movie, a song, a sport, a cartoon, a toy—that exhibits misogyny, misandry, homophobia, or hypermasculinization.

Key Terms

feminism

misandry

sexism

homophobia

misogyny

Applying Theory: The Three Perspectives

Objective

You will learn how the theoretical perspectives help us think about sex testing.



Lisa Southwick

Did your parents know from an ultrasound or genetic test your sex months before you were even born?

If your parents knew your sex before you were born, why do you think it was important to them to know beforehand? If your parents did not, why do you think they resisted knowing? The sociological theories—functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interaction—help us to go beyond individual cases and think about the larger consequences and issues associated with sex testing months before babies are born.

Functionalist Perspective

Functionalists focus on how parts of society contribute to the stability of an existing social order. They also pay attention to how parts contribute to disorder and instability. Functionalists ask: “What are the anticipated and unanticipated effects of a part on society?” In this module, the part we will analyze is the practice of testing for the sex of a baby before it is born.

► One manifest, or expected, function of using an ultrasound to test for a baby's sex is that parents can prepare for a baby boy or baby girl. They can choose a name, decorate a room, and buy clothes that correspond with the expected sex. Relatives and friends are able to buy sex-appropriate gifts.

An unexpected, or latent, function of sex testing is that it allows parents who might be hoping for a baby of a particular sex time to deal with disappointment if the sex tests show that their baby is the other sex. The logic is that it is better to experience and come to terms with disappointment prior to the baby's birth.

An expected, or manifest, dysfunction of sex testing is that sometimes the tests fail to correctly predict the sex of the baby. The parents have prepared for a baby of a particular sex only to learn when the baby is born that it is not the predicted sex. Now room color has to be changed and clothes and other sex-coded items have to be exchanged.

A latent, or unexpected, dysfunction of sex testing is its worrisome connection to **female infanticide**, the targeted abortion of female fetuses because of a cultural preference for males and corresponding low status assigned to females. Note there seem to be no cases in which a society has a cultural preference for female babies. The widespread practice of female infanticide is believed to be the cause of sex ratios skewed in favor of males, especially in China and India. Another serious latent, or unexpected, dysfunction of sex determination testing and the imbalances it may cause are the likelihood that one sex will have greater power over the other in heterosexual relationships. For example, the more prevalent sex could use their power to oppress their partner, who may accept subordination as the price of having a mate (Hollingsworth 2005).

Conflict Perspective

Conflict theorists seek to identify the dominant and disadvantaged groups, document unequal access to scarce and valued resources, and identify the practices that dominant groups establish to promote and protect their interests. With regard to sex testing, conflict theorists ask: "Who ultimately benefits from knowing the sex of the baby in advance and at whose expense?" Conflict theorists reject the argument that a good reason to sex test is that it allows parents time to plan for a boy or girl. There should be no difference in planning for the needs of a baby boy or girl, both of which have the same needs. In reality, conflict theorists say, sex tests simply allow parents to plan out the baby's future in very gender-specific ways that thereby narrow or expand their opportunities in life.

Conflict theorists also maintain that another advantaged group is those who own/sell sex testing equipment, kits, and tools. One sex testing kit, for example, is marketed over the Internet and allows parents to test for the sex of their baby 6 weeks after conception (14 weeks before hospitals typically know the sex through ultrasound technology). The cost is \$380.00 (Medical News.net 2007). Critics argue that knowing the baby's sex that early in the pregnancy may encourage some parents, disappointed by the baby's sex, to choose abortion,



something they might not have considered 20 weeks into a pregnancy. In fact, the availability of ultrasound technologies to determine a baby's sex 20 weeks after conception is believed to be responsible for sex ratio imbalance in India, China, and other countries where there are clear cultural preferences for boys (Online Newshour 2001).

Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Symbolic interactionists ask: "How do people experience, interpret, influence, and respond to a social situation?" Symbolic interactionists are interested in how knowing the sex of the baby after 20 or fewer weeks of pregnancy affects a parent's self-awareness or sense of self. Do parents feel different about themselves if they are having a baby girl versus a baby boy? Are parents' projections of future interactions different depending on whether the baby tests as a boy or a girl?

Symbolic interactionists are also interested in how parents and other involved parties negotiate interactions where the question of the baby's sex comes up. How do some parents, who choose not to sex test their baby, withstand questions like "Do you know the sex of the baby yet? Why not?" How do they explain their decision not to know? After the baby is born, do these parents interact in less gender-specific ways with their baby?

Table 9.7a: Summary of Three Perspectives As Applied to Sex Determination Testing

	Functionalist	Theory Conflict	Symbolic Interaction
Question	What are the anticipated and unanticipated effects of testing for the sex of a baby before it is born?	Who ultimately benefits from knowing the sex of the baby in advance (and at whose expense?)	How do people experience, interpret, influence, and respond to a social situation?
Answer	<p>Manifest function: parents can prepare for a baby boy or baby girl</p> <p>Manifest dysfunction: sometimes the tests fail to correctly predict the sex of the baby</p> <p>Latent function: it allows parents hoping for a particular sex the time to deal with disappointment if the sex tests show that their baby is not the wished-for sex</p> <p>Latent dysfunction: sex testing supports practice of infanticide</p>	<p>Who Benefits? parents who plan out the baby's future in gender specific ways; those who sell sex testing equipment, kits, and tools; those in advantaged sex</p> <p>Disadvantaged groups: babies aborted because they are the wrong sex; babies who opportunities are diminished by prematurely channeling their lives in gender specific ways</p>	<p>Looks at how knowing sex of baby affects parents' sense of self.</p> <p>Studies symbols parents use to convey sex of baby.</p> <p>Considers how expectant parents explain a decision not to learn the sex of the baby</p>

Critical Thinking

Which one of the three perspectives best captures your views of sex-determination tests?

Key Term

female infanticide

Summary: Putting It All Together

Sex is a biological distinction determined by the anatomical traits essential to reproduction. While most cultures classify people in two categories—male and female—sex should not be considered a clear-cut category. Gender is a social distinction about how males and females should be; it is something that is carefully constructed, taught, learned, and enforced. Not every society divides people into so-called opposite genders. For example, American Samoans and other Pacific Islander peoples accept a third gender known as *fa'afafine*.

Sociologists are especially interested in gender ideals, as few people can achieve or sustain them. For the most part, gender ideals do not exist in reality, yet that does not stop people from trying to attain them. The commercialization of gender ideals is the process of introducing products to consumers through advertising campaigns that promise that those who buy and use the products will achieve masculine or feminine ideals.

Sex, and by extension gender, affects people's life chances, the *probability* that an individual's life will be or turn out a certain way. This is because we organize life in a gender polarized way. The effect a person's gender has on his or her life becomes evident when we ask people to imagine life as another gender. Structural constraints—the established and customary rules, policies, and day-to-day practices—affect a person's life chances. Institutions are gendered when there is a pattern to the relationships, practices, images, and belief system that supports segregating the sexes and empowering or subordinating one sex relative to the other. An institution is gendered when gender has some systematic and differential effect on the experiences, constraints, and opportunities of the people that are part of that institution.

When sociologists study inequality between males and females, they seek to identify the social factors that put one sex at a disadvantage relative to the other. Inequality is justified by sexism, which can be so extreme that it takes the form of misogyny and misandry. Sexism also encompasses homophobia and hypermasculinization. Feminism, a response to sexism, is a perspective that advocates equality between men and women. Most feminists believe that any inequality between males and females, including that which gives females an advantage over males, needs to be addressed.

[Can You Top This Photo?]



Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo with a caption to show how children come to learn about gender-appropriate ways of behaving and appearing.



DoD photo by Cherie Cullen

10

CHAPTER

ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

- 10.1 Economic Systems**
- 10.2 The U.S. Economy**
- 10.3 Multinational and Global Corporations**
- 10.4 Power and Authority**
- 10.5 Forms of Government**
- 10.6 Imperialism and Related Concepts**
- 10.7 Applying Theory: Global Society Theories**
- Summary Putting It All Together**

When sociologists study economies, they focus on how goods and services are produced, distributed, and consumed. When they study politics, they focus on who has the power to control resources and make decisions that affect others' lives on a local to global scale. Sociologists also seek to understand how economy and politics are interconnected. This image offers one example of such interconnection: employees at an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) production facility in the United States are shown welcoming Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who has come to tour that facility. The company produces a product that is used by the military. The Department of Defense, under the authority of the U.S. president and Congress (political bodies), awards contracts to corporations to produce the equipment and products it needs to fight wars and defend the strategic interests of the United States.

Objective

You will learn about economic systems of socialism, capitalism, and the welfare state.

Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statement 2009		OMB. No. 1545-0008		Dept. of the Treasury - Internal Revenue Service	
Copy 2 To Be Filed With Employee's STATE Income Tax Return					
1 Wages, tips, other compensation	31734.46	2 Federal income tax withheld		3559.89	
3 Social security wages	31734.46	4 Social security tax withheld		1967.54	
5 Medicare wages and tips	31734.46	6 Medicare tax withheld		460.15	
a Employee's SSA number		Employer use only			

Missy Gish

How does your pre-tax income compare with your take-home pay?

Would you be willing to pay more taxes if the government guaranteed free college education with a monthly stipend for 55 months, child care, health care, and other benefits from cradle to grave? These are the kinds of benefits you would receive if you lived in Finland. The catch is that you would live in a smaller house, pay more taxes (50 percent versus 30 percent), and consume less. You would also see fewer people who are extremely poor or wealthy.

A society's **economic system** is the social institution that coordinates human activity to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services. **Goods** include any product that is extracted from the earth, manufactured, or grown—corn, clothing, petroleum, automobiles, coal, and computers are just a few examples. **Services** include activities performed for others that result in no tangible product, such as theater productions, transportation, financial advice, medical care, spiritual counseling, and education. We can classify the economies of the world as falling somewhere along a continuum that has capitalism and socialism as its extremes. Keep in mind, however, that no economy fully realizes capitalist or socialist principles and that, in practice, societies are some combination of these two systems.

Capitalism

Capitalism is an economic system in which the raw materials and the means of producing and distributing goods and services are privately owned. That is, individuals (rather than employees or the government) own the raw materials, machines, tools, trucks, buildings, and other inputs needed to produce and distribute goods and services. In theory, this economic system is profit-driven and free of government interference. Profit-driven is the most important characteristic of capitalist systems. In such systems, those who own the means of production and distribution are motivated to increase and maximize profits by seeking maximum return on investments and using labor and resources in cost-efficient ways. Theoretically, production and distribution are consumer-driven, because businesses depend on consumers choosing their goods and services over those of competitors.

Capitalist systems are governed by the laws of supply and demand; that is, as the demand for a product or service increases, its price rises. Manufacturers and service providers respond to increased demand by increasing production, which in turn “increases competition and drives the price down” (Hirsch, Kett, and Trefil 1993, p. 455). Although most economic systems in the world are classified as capitalist, in reality no system fully realizes capitalist principles. Simply consider that the U.S. and other governments ignored capitalist principles when they intervened in 2008 to bail out the auto industry, banks, and other financial institutions. Consider also that the U.S. post office, the national parks, the public school system, Medicaid, and libraries are public-owned enterprises that are not profit-driven.

Karl Marx argued that capitalism ignored too many human needs and exploited the workers’ labor in the name of profit. Marx believed that if this economic system were in the right hands—those of socially conscious people motivated not by a desire for profit or self-interest but by an interest in the greatest good to society—public wealth would be more than abundant and could be distributed according to need.

► Look closely at this kitchen in Vietnam. Notice the 50-pound bag of rice in the left-hand corner. Rice is the staple of this country, and it is the staple for 50 percent of the world’s population (Bradsher 2008). Market forces, driven not by human need but by profit, can affect the cost of rice, as when rice farmers decide to switch to more profitable crops (such as corn used to make ethanol) or when speculators buy rice with the goal of hoarding it so that prices rise, increasing their profits.

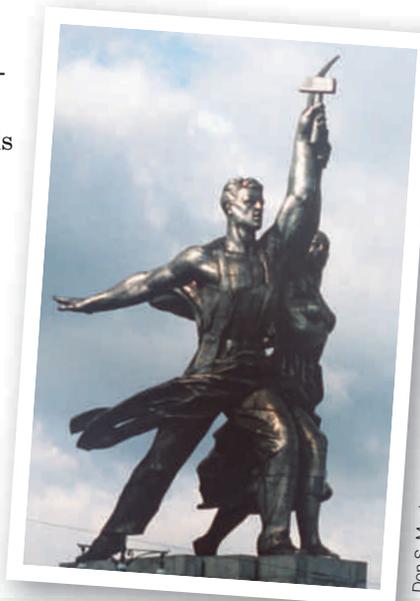


Marx pointed out that capitalism is characterized by economic booms and busts and periods of growth, stagnation, and recession. Competition pushes capitalists to cut the costs of production by introducing labor-saving machinery, laying off workers, and/or finding workers who will work for less. Marx argued that at some point the search to lower production costs would result in so many jobs

lost and workers displaced that the system would collapse. For Marx, the contradiction of capitalism is that the capitalists must lay off and lower the wages of those upon whom they depend to buy their products (Kilcullen 1996).

Socialism

The term *socialism* was first used in the early 19th century in response to poverty and inequality that accompanied the capitalist Industrial Revolution, and by extension, colonization. In contrast to capitalism, **socialism** is an economic system in which raw materials and the means of producing and distributing goods and services are collectively owned. That is, public ownership—rather than private ownership—is an essential characteristic of this system. Socialists reject the idea that what is good for the individual and for privately owned businesses is good for society. Instead, they believe the government or some worker- or community-oriented organization should play the central role in regulating economic activity on behalf of the people as a whole.



Don S. Montgomery, USN (Ret.)

► This sculpture, a symbol of socialist ideals, celebrates the common worker, who ideally labors for the good of society. The following principle dominates: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs” (Marx 1875). Ideally, each person shall produce to the best of his or her ability and shall take in accordance with his or her needs. Living by such principles would eliminate the wide disparities in income and wealth that separate, even divide, people in the professional and working classes.

Socialists maintain that things like oil, banks, medical care, transportation, and the media should be state-owned. In socialism’s most extreme form, the pursuit of personal profit is forbidden. In less extreme forms, profit-making activities are permitted as long as they do not interfere with larger collective goals. As with capitalism, no economic system fully realizes socialist principles. The People’s Republic of China, Cuba, North Korea, and Vietnam are all officially classified as socialist economies, but they permit varying degrees of activities that generate personal wealth.

Welfare States

The **welfare state** is a term that applies to an economic system that is a hybrid of capitalism and socialism. In this economic model the government (through taxes) assumes a key role in providing social and economic benefits to some or all of its citizens, including unemployment benefits, supplemental income, child care, social security, basic medical care, transportation, education (including college), or housing. Under one welfare state model followed by the United States (with the exception of social security and Medicare, to which everyone over 65 is entitled), such benefits are provided to those who fall below a set minimum standard, such as a poverty line or a certain income level. Under a second welfare

state model, the benefits are awarded in a more comprehensive way to everyone in the population (e.g., all families with children, all college-age students, universal health care). Most European countries follow the second model, as do oil-revenue-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates.



◀ Finland funds all schools equally. There are no elite, working class, or poor schools. In Finland day care and preschools are free, uniformly high in quality, and staffed by teachers who have received extensive training. Finland's investment in equality of educational opportunities explains in part why its students are among the best performing in the world (Kaiser 2005).

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption that connects national parks such as Mt. Rushmore to the underlying principles of some economic system covered in this module.

Write a caption here



Hints: In writing this caption

- review the economic systems covered in this module,
- consider who owns national parks such as Mt. Rushmore, and
- think about the purpose of the national park system (e.g., as a safeguard against commercial exploitation and for public enjoyment and use).

Critical Thinking

What are some examples of government-run (local, state, federal) programs in the United States that follow socialist principles?

Key Terms

capitalism

goods

socialism

economic system

services

welfare state

Objective

You will learn about some characteristics that define the U.S. economy.

\$12,109,970,981,099.66

Cengage Learning

What do you think this number represents?

This number—more than \$12 trillion—represents the U.S. national debt as of January 1, 2010. Each American's share of that debt is \$40,000. A large national debt is one feature of the U.S. economy that we will discuss in this module (U.S. National Debt Clock 2010).

GDP and National Debt

As measured by gross domestic product (GDP), the United States has the largest economy in the world at \$14.26 trillion (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010). In per capita (per person) terms, however, the United States has the tenth-highest GDP in the world—\$46,400. Liechtenstein has the highest per capita GDP in the world at \$122,100, followed by Qatar at \$121,400 (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010).

The U.S. national debt of \$12.1 trillion is 85 percent of GDP. The debt is climbing at a rate of \$3.8 billion per day. About a third of this \$12 trillion plus debt has been borrowed from U.S. government-held accounts such as the Social Security Trust Fund. Foreign investors and governments hold an estimated \$4.0 trillion of the debt. Other holders of national debt include U.S. state and local governments (\$467 billion), individual investors (\$423 billion), and public and private pension funds (\$319 billion). The foreign country from which the United States has borrowed the most money is China (about \$800 billion), followed by Japan (\$757.3 billion), Britain (\$275.3 billion), and various Caribbean banking centers and oil-exporting countries (\$366.7 billion) (U.S. Department of Treasury 2010).

Consumer Debt

In addition to the national debt, total U.S. consumer debt, not counting mortgage debt, stands at \$2.46 trillion, with approximately \$866 billion in credit card debt (U.S. Federal Reserve 2010). If mortgage debt were counted, total consumer debt would be \$9.3 trillion (U.S. Federal Reserve 2007). U.S. consumption far exceeds that of other countries (see Table 10.2a).

Table 10.2a: Personal Consumption in United States, European Union, Japan, China, and India

Because goods and services are so much cheaper in China and India, \$923 is equivalent to about \$3,600 of personal spending in the United States; \$521 is equivalent to about \$2,000 in personal spending in the United States. Even with that adjustment in mind, Americans outspend their European and Asian counterparts.

Country	Total Personal Consumption, 2007	Per Capita Personal Consumption, 2007
United States	\$9.7 trillion	\$31,596
European Union	\$8.9 trillion	\$18,126
Japan	\$2.5 trillion	\$19,685
China	\$1.2 trillion	\$923
India	\$0.6 trillion	\$521

Sources: *New York Times* (2008); U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (2009)

Twenty-eight percent of Americans state that their number one resolution is to get out of debt. Safe debt, stupid debt, and survival debt are the three kinds of consumer debt. Safe debt is secured debt; that is, collateral such as a house is associated with the debt. Survival debt is debt acquired from using credit cards to pay living expenses associated with food, rent, and transportation (Hunt 2004).

➤ Stupid debt results from using credit cards to finance spending sprees and impulse buying. One way to resist spending in this way is to cut up credit cards.



Army Sgt. 1st Class VeShammah J. Lovelace

Dependence on Oil and Mineral Imports

Despite its large size and relative stability, the United States depends on foreign sources for many critical raw materials, such as oil. According to the U.S. Department of Energy Information Administration (2010), the United States produces approximately 2.1 billion barrels of crude oil each year. This amount meets approximately 40 percent of the country's crude oil needs. The United States must import the remaining 60 percent—about 3.5 billion barrels. The extent of U.S. dependence on foreign oil becomes evident when we consider that the country has an estimated 20.2 billion barrels of proven oil reserves—less than 3 percent of the world's total proven reserves. At the current rate of production, these reserves will last about nine years. If the United States could produce and refine 100 percent of its crude oil needs, it would deplete the reserves in less than four years.

➤ While most Americans are likely to know of their dependence on oil, they are not likely to know of the country's dependence on imported materials such as strontium, an essential metal used to make fuel cells that power alternative fuel vehicles, which cannot be obtained in the United States. China is the top producer of strontium; it is believed to have 66 percent of the world's strontium within its borders. Spain and Mexico also have significant amounts within their borders (British Geological Survey 2008).



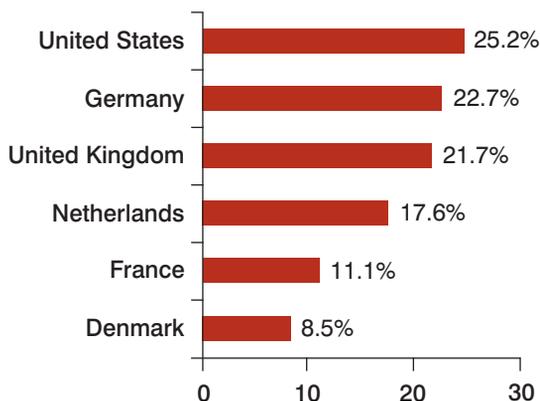
One might speculate that worldwide demand for oil, minerals, and metals will continue to increase, if only because China and India, home to 2.5 billion people, have experienced dramatic economic growth, which has increased their demand for these commodities. As the world's demand for energy increases, the United States must address a critical question: how can a country with 4.6 percent of the world's population continue to consume 25 percent of the world's energy resources?

A Two-Tier Labor Market

Over time, a two-tier labor market has emerged in the United States—one in which those who lack formal education beyond high school and professional/technical skills are at a severe disadvantage relative to those with strong educational and professional credentials. As a result, those that are part of the bottom tier (low-wage earners) are less likely to hold occupations that pay living wages or that include health insurance coverage and other benefits (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010). In a comparative study of low-wage labor in six countries, researchers found that the United States has the highest percentage of low-wage workers, followed by Germany (see Chart 10.2a).

Chart 10.2a Percentage of Low-Wage Workers in Workforce

One definition of low-wage work is a job that pays two-thirds of the median gross hourly wages. In the United States that median wage is \$18.75 and would include those who earn \$12.40 or less per hour before taxes (the equivalent of about \$23,000 per year). The percentage of the workforce earning two-thirds of the median gross hourly wages is shown in the following chart.



Source: Appelbaum and Schmitt (2009)

To understand these differences, Eileen Appelbaum and John Schmitt (2009) looked at the work situations of five low-wage occupations in each country—(1) nursing assistants, (2) cashiers and stock/salesclerks, (3) food processing

operators, (4) housekeepers in hotels, and (5) incoming call operators in call centers. They found that the percentages earning 66 percent (two-thirds) of median gross hourly wages in each occupation varied by country. As one example, 38 percent of nursing assistants in the United States are low-wage earners, compared with less than 5 percent in the Netherlands. The researchers discovered that each of the six countries have different levels of tolerance regarding the prevalence of low wages that is manifested in each country's policies, laws, and norms. Specifically, the United States and the United Kingdom stand out as countries that allow low wages and that place less emphasis on the quality of the work experience. As a case in point, consider the plight of nursing assistants. In the United States almost 40 percent of all nursing assistants earn \$12.40 or less per hour. In the United Kingdom that figure is 21 percent. In Germany, France, and the Netherlands, less than 10 percent of nursing assistants earn the U.S. equivalent of \$12.40 or less. In particular, researchers found that as a general rule European countries place high value on quality health services and see that quality as dependent on health care workers well-trained at all levels. The United States, by contrast, seems to believe that some tasks can be done with minimal training (Appelbaum and Schmitt 2009).

► Instead of a registered nurse (shown here) or an LPN monitoring temperatures, taking blood pressures, applying sterile dressings, and drawing blood, U.S. hospitals allocate these kinds of tasks to minimally trained nursing assistants (who receive about six weeks of training) as a way of reducing costs.

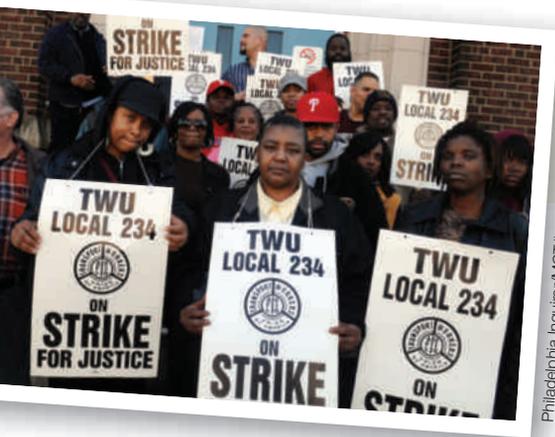
In the Netherlands, a hospital nursing assistant must complete a 34-month program that includes 56 weeks of theory-oriented coursework. France has taken steps to eliminate unqualified nursing assistants by giving them a choice to leave or enroll in a strong vocational training program to upgrade their knowledge and skills (Appelbaum and Schmitt 2009).

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Joan E. Kratschmer



Decline in Union Membership

Of all the workers in the United States, 12.3 percent (or 15.3 million) are union members. Union affiliation varies by state. In three states 20 percent or more of the workers belong to unions: New York (24.9 percent), Alaska (24.7 percent) and Hawaii (24.3 percent). Five states report union affiliation of less than 5 percent of the workforce: North Carolina (3.5 percent), South Carolina (3.9 percent), Virginia (4.1 percent), Georgia (3.7 percent), and Texas (4.5 percent) (U.S. Department of Labor 2010a). Unions, or organized labor, seek to maintain and sometimes improve workers' pay, benefits, and working conditions. Ideally, they also strive to ensure that the workplace remains secure for future generations of workers. In 2009, the median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers belonging to a union were \$908, almost \$200 more than that of their non-union counterparts, who earned \$710 (U.S. Department of Labor 2010a). Other research shows that the typical service sector worker who is part of a union earns 10.1 percent more than non-union counterparts and is more likely to have health insurance and a pension plan (Schmitt 2009).



Philadelphia Inquirer/MCT/Landov

< Union membership in the United States has declined from 20.1 percent of the workforce in 1983 to 12.3 percent in 2009 (U.S. Department of Labor 2010).

The steady drop in union membership over the past 30 years has been connected to many factors, including:

- the declining significance of the manufacturing sector (the traditional base of union membership) in the overall economy,
- increasing percentages of females in the workforce (who have tended to work in non-union positions), and
- increasing global competition (which has added pressure to keep wages down and minimize union influence).

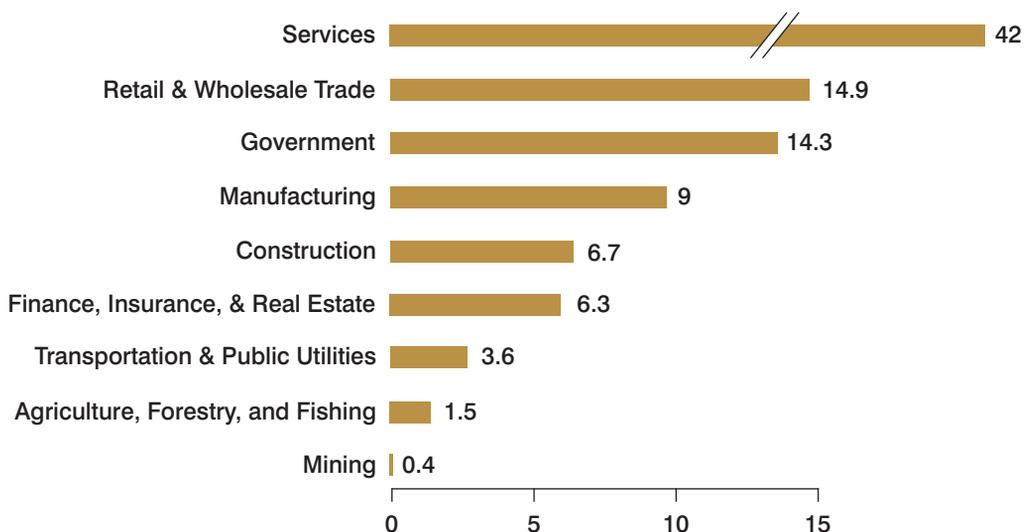
Job Growth by Sector

We can think of an economy as comprised of three sectors: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The **primary sector** includes economic activities that generate or extract raw materials from the natural environment. Mining, fishing, growing crops, raising livestock, drilling for oil, and planting and harvesting forest products are examples. The **secondary sector** consists of economic activities that transform raw materials from the primary sector into manufactured goods such as computer and cars.

The **tertiary sector** encompasses economic activities related to delivering services, such as health care or entertainment, and to creating and distributing information, such as books or data. One way to identify the relative importance of each sector of an economy is by determining how much it contributes to total employment. Chart 10.2b shows that agriculture and mining accounts for less than 2 percent of employment; the manufacturing sector accounts for 9.0 percent. The tertiary sector as a whole accounts for 81 percent of employment.

Chart 10.2b Percentage of U.S. Workers by Industry, 2007

In 2007, 140.7 million people were employed in the United States. In which two industries were the greatest number of people employed? Which two industries contributed the least to employment?



Source: U.S. Bureau of Commerce (2009)

The significance of the tertiary sector in the U.S. economy is reflected in the list of occupations projected to experience the largest job growth between now and 2018. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) the ten occupations with the largest projected numerical job growth are listed in Table 10.2b.

Table 10.2b Top 10 Occupations with the Largest Projected Numerical Growth, 2008-2018

Of the 10 occupations with the largest numerical growth, how many are associated with median wages greater than \$50,000? How many are associated with median wages lower than \$25,000? How many of these 10 require college or graduate school education?

Occupations	Number of new jobs (in thousands)	Median wages	Education/training category
Registered nurses	581.5	\$62,450	Associate degree
Home health aides	460.9	20,460	Short-term on-the-job training
Customer service representatives	399.5	29,860	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food	394.3	16,430	Short-term on-the-job training
Personal and home care aides	375.8	19,180	Short-term on-the-job training
Retail salespersons	374.7	20,510	Short-term on-the-job training
Office clerks, general	358.7	25,320	Short-term on-the-job training
Accountants and auditors	279.4	59,430	Bachelor's degree
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	276.0	23,850	Postsecondary vocational award
Postsecondary teachers	256.9	58,830	Doctoral degree

Source: Department of Labor (2010b)

Critical Thinking

With what feature of the U.S. economy have you had the most personal experience? Explain.

Key Terms

primary sector

tertiary sector

secondary sector

Multinational and Global Corporations

Objective

You will learn that multinational and global corporations wield considerable influence over how we live.



What does it mean to be the largest corporation in the world and have \$458.3 billion in annual revenue?

Royal Dutch Shell's annual revenue of \$458.3 billion in 2009 made it the world's highest-earning global or multinational corporation. Its revenue makes it the 31st-largest economy in the world, after Belgium (\$461.5 billion). Shell was just one of 7 petroleum corporations on the list of the world's largest corporations. Obviously these corporations' success depends on people consuming petroleum-based products.

Multinational Corporations

A **multinational corporation** is an enterprise that owns, controls, or licenses facilities in countries other than the one in which it is headquartered. It is difficult to estimate the number of multinationals in the world, because digital

technologies allow as few as two people in different countries to form a corporation. The last estimate made by the United Nations was 65,000 multinationals, with 820,000 foreign affiliates (Chanda 2003). A multinational corporation can range in size from fewer than 10 to millions of employees. In fact, most multinationals employ 250 people or fewer (Gabel and Bruner 2003). Regardless of size, multinationals compete, plan, produce, sell, recruit, acquire resources, and do other activities on a multi-country scale.

Multinationals establish operations in foreign countries for many reasons, including to obtain raw materials (such as oil and diamonds), to avoid paying taxes, to employ a low-wage labor force, and to manufacture goods for consumers in a host country (as does Toyota Motor North America, Inc.). Multinationals are headquartered disproportionately in the United States, Japan, and Western Europe. These global enterprises make “the key decisions—about what people eat and drink, what they read and hear, what sort of air they breathe and the water they drink, and ultimately what societies will flourish and which city blocks will decay” (Barnet 1990, p. 59).

The world’s largest multinational corporations are often referred to as global corporations. Theoretically, a truly global corporation should have some kind of presence in every country in the world. Probably no corporation is yet global in that sense. Still, because of their size and reach, many corporations such as McDonald’s, with a presence in 119 countries, and UPS, with a presence in 200-plus countries, are called global (McDonald’s 2010; UPS 2010).

Table 10.3a: The World’s Largest Global Corporations, 2009

Notice that 7 of the 10 largest corporations in the world extract or refine oil. In what ways might petroleum industries slow down national efforts to use less oil or drive less?

Rank	Global Corporation	Industry	Revenues (in billions)	Profits (in billions)	Headquarters
1	Royal Dutch Shell	Petroleum	\$458.3	\$26.7	Netherlands
2	ExxonMobil	Petroleum	\$442.8	\$42.2	USA
3	Wal-Mart	General Merchandisers	\$405.6	\$13.4	USA
4	BP	Petroleum	\$367.0	\$21.2	UK
5	Chevron	Petroleum	\$263.2	\$23.9	USA
6	Total	Petroleum	\$234.7	\$15.5	France
7	Conoco Phillips	Petroleum	\$230.8	−\$17.6	USA
8	ING	Banking	\$226.6	−\$1.1	Netherlands
9	Sinopec	Petroleum	\$207.8	−\$2.0	China
10	Toyota Motors	Automobile	\$204.4	−\$4.4	Japan

Source: *Fortune* (2010)

When you read the names of the world’s largest global corporations, 10 of which are listed in Table 10.3a, it is difficult to imagine their size and power of influence without some basis for comparison.

We can get some idea of their size by comparing the annual revenues of a corporation to a country’s gross domestic product. A corporation’s annual revenue is the total amount of money it receives for goods sold or services provided over the course of a given year. Taken together, the annual revenue of the top 10 global corporations is about \$3.1 trillion. GDP is the total value of all goods and services produced *within* the country over a year’s time. Only four countries in

the world—the United States, China, Japan, and Germany—have a GDP that exceeds \$3.1 trillion. The annual revenue of the world’s largest corporation, Royal Dutch Shell, is around \$458 billion. Only 30 countries have a gross domestic product larger than that amount; those countries include Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mexico, and the United States.

In 2008 the global economic crisis alerted us to the possibility that many of the world’s largest corporations were “too big to fail.” That is, if these corporations failed, the economy as a whole might fail, too. So the United States and other governments intervened to prevent key financial and automobile institutions from failing. At that time the combined annual revenues of just four troubled financial institutions—Citigroup, Bank of America, JPMorgan, and AIG—was \$504 billion (*Fortune* 2009).

Criticism and Support for Multinationals

Critics of multinational corporations maintain that they are engines of destruction. That is, they exploit people and natural resources to generate profits. They take advantage of desperately poor labor forces, lenient environmental regulations, and sometimes nonexistent worker safety standards. In the case of financial institutions in the decade leading up to the economic crisis, these corporations set terms and loaned money to people who could never hope to meet payments (e.g., subprime loans) and then passed that risk on to others.

Supporters of multinational corporations, by contrast, maintain that these companies are agents of progress. They praise the multinationals’ ability to raise standards of living, increase employment opportunities, transcend political hostilities, transfer technology, and promote cultural understanding. As one measure of their positive contributions, consider that Royal Dutch Shell and other oil producers allow billions of people to drive cars, warm their homes, and so on.

Most obviously, multinationals employ millions and distribute goods, services, technology, and capital across the globe. On another level, however, multinationals’ operations can aggravate problems related to obesity, poverty, mass unemployment, and overall inequality. Still, one can also argue that multinationals are not responsible for creating or solving social problems, such as obesity. After all, nobody forces people to eat fast foods or drive automobiles when they could walk, for example (Weiser 2003).

➤ One former McDonald’s CEO points out that McDonald’s sells “meat and potatoes and bread and milk and Coca-Cola and lettuce and everything else you can buy in a grocery store. . . . You can get a balanced diet at McDonald’s. It’s a question of how you use McDonald’s” (Greenberg 2001).

Moreover, corporations claim that they merely respond to consumer demand. For example, virtually all of the major fast-food companies have introduced healthy items on their menus, and most have proven unpopular with consumers. The typical McDonald’s restaurant, for example, sells 50 to 60 salads per day versus 300 to 400 double



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Martin R. Harris

cheeseburgers (Warner 2006). Nevertheless, critics question whether corporations should have the right to ignore the long-term effects of their products and practices on people and the environment, even if they are responding to consumer demand. Profitable products may benefit a corporation's bottom line and shareholders, but they can also be costly for a society due to **externality costs**—hidden costs of using, making, or disposing of a product that are not figured into the price of the product or paid for by the producer. Such costs include those associated with cleaning up the environment and with treating injured and chronically ill workers, consumers, and others. These costs must eventually be paid by someone (Lepkowski 1985).

While multinationals and other corporations are very powerful, consumer advocacy organizations have demonstrated that they can hold corporations in check. One thing is clear: when corporate executives feel real pressure from consumers, they act. However, if only a small number of consumers speak out, their claims are often dismissed. Consider the comments from McDonald's CEO after as many as 2,000 protesters trashed McDonald's restaurants and other businesses during four days of protest in Seattle against the World Trade Organization. The CEO noted that while 2,000 people protested, 17.5 million other people visited a McDonald's restaurant to eat (Greenberg 2001). The point is that there is no need to be concerned about the voices of 2,000 activists when 17.5 million consumers are voting with their feet—or mouths. However, McDonald's has changed some of its practices in response to pressure from other organizations. Greenpeace is one example of a grassroots organization dedicated to mobilizing people to hold governments and corporations responsible for crimes against the environment or for failing to protect the environment. It has recorded a number of successes, including pressuring McDonald's Corporation to agree not to use chickens that have been fed on soya, a feed that is grown in the Amazon rainforest. For a list of Greenpeace victories, see <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/about/victories>.

Critical Thinking

Review the most current list of the world's largest corporations, which can be found online. Identify one that has had a positive or negative impact on your life. Explain.

Key Terms

externality costs

multinational corporation

Objective

You will learn under what circumstances people can exert their will, even in the face of opposition.



Do you recognize the people in these photos? How might you describe the power each holds?

President Barack Obama, Prince William and Prince Harry, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton each possess a type of power that allows them to assert their will, even against opposition from others. Their power derives from one or more of the following sources of authority: personality, tradition, and position.

A society's **political system** is the institution that regulates the access to and use of power that is essential to articulating and realizing individual, local, regional, national, international, or global interests and agendas. **Power** is the probability that an individual can achieve his or her will, even against opposition (Weber 1947). That probability increases if the individual can force people to obey his or her commands or if the individual has authority over others.

Authority is legitimate power—power that people believe is just and proper. A leader has authority to the extent that people view him or her as being legitimately entitled to it.

► Ultimately, the power of Princes William and Harry of Wales is grounded in traditional authority—their father is Prince Charles of Wales and their grandmother is Queen Elizabeth II. By tradition, after their father, William is second in line and Harry is third in line to be King of the United Kingdom and its independent states. Here the two are participating in Sport Relief, a fundraising effort the proceeds of which go toward transforming the lives of the world's poorest peoples.

AP Photo/Andrew Parsons, Pool



Types of Authority

Max Weber identified three types of authority: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational. People can possess more than one kind of authority. **Traditional authority** is grounded in the sanctity of time-honored norms that govern how someone comes to hold a powerful position, such as chief, king, queen, or emperor. Usually the person inherits that position by virtue of being born into a family that has held power for some time. People accept that system because it has always been like that and to abandon the past is to renounce a heritage and collective identity (Boudon and Bourricaud 1989).

Charismatic authority is grounded in exceptional and exemplary personal qualities. Charismatic leaders are obeyed because their followers believe in and are attracted irresistibly to the leaders' vision. These leaders, by virtue of their special qualities, can persuade followers to behave in ways that depart from rules and traditions. Charismatic leaders often emerge during times of profound crisis, such as economic depressions and wars. During such times people are susceptible to a vision of a new order. A charismatic leader is more than popular, attractive, likable, or pleasant. A merely popular person, "even one who is continually in our thoughts" (Boudon and Bourricaud 1989, p. 70), is not someone for whom we would break all previous ties and give up our possessions. Charismatic leaders successfully persuade their followers to make extraordinary personal sacrifices, cut themselves off from ordinary worldly connections, or devote their lives to achieving a vision that the leaders have outlined.

The source of a charismatic leader's authority, however, does not rest with the ethical quality of his or her vision. Adolf Hitler, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Mao Zedong, and Winston Churchill were all considered charismatic leaders. Each assumed leadership of a country during turbulent times. Likewise, each conveyed a powerful vision (right or wrong) of his country's destiny. Charismatic authority results from the intense relationships between leaders and followers. From a relational point of view, charisma is a highly unequal relationship between a guide who inspires and followers who believe wholeheartedly in that guide's promises and visions (Boudon and Bourricaud 1989).



Maurice Sornelli/Ebony Collection/AP Images

◀ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a Baptist minister, possessed charismatic power. He used this power to persuade followers to engage in civil disobedience and other nonviolent behaviors to advance what is known as the American civil rights movement.

Over time, charismatic leaders and their followers come to constitute an emotional community devoted to achieving a goal and sustained by a belief in the leader's special qualities.

Weber argues, however, that eventually the followers must be able to return to a normal life and to develop relationships with one another based on something other than their connections to the leader. Attraction and devotion cannot sustain a community indefinitely, if only because the object of these emotions—the charismatic leader—is mortal.

Legal-rational authority derives from a system of impersonal and formal rules that specify the qualifications for occupying an administrative or judicial position; the individual holding that position has the power to command others to act in specific ways. These rules also specify the scope of that power and appropriate context in which it can be exercised. In cases of legal-rational authority, people comply with commands, decisions, and directives because the power belongs to the position, and by extension, to the person occupying the position.

▶ The position of U.S. secretary of state is grounded in legal-rational authority. The secretary of state is appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. The president's and Senate's authority to make this appointment is also grounded in legal-rational authority.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Robert Strup/Released

The Power Elite

Sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote about the connection between government, industry, and the military in *The Power Elite* (1956). The **power elite** are those few people who occupy such lofty positions in the social structure of leading institutions that their decisions affect millions, even billions, of people worldwide. For the most part, the source of this power is legal-rational—residing not in the personal qualities of those in power, but rather in the positions that the power elite have come to occupy.

The power elite use their positions—and the tools of their positions—to rule over, control, and influence others. These tools include the power of the bureaucracy of which they are part to channel human activity. They also include surveillance systems, communication structures, and weapons. In writing about the power elite, Mills does not focus on any single individual, but rather on those

who occupy the highest positions in the leading U.S. institutions. According to Mills, those institutions are the military, corporations (especially the 200 or so largest), and the government (Mills 1963, p. 27).

The origins of these institutions' power can be traced to World War II, when the political elite mobilized corporations to produce the supplies, weapons, and equipment needed to fight that war. U.S. corporations, which were left unscathed by the war, were virtually the only corporations capable of providing the services and products war-torn countries needed for rebuilding. The interests of the U.S. government, the military, and corporations became further intertwined when the political elite decided that a permanent war industry was needed to contain the spread of communism. Thus, over the past 45 to 50 years, these three institutions (and by extension the American workforce) have become deeply and intricately interrelated in hundreds of ways.

► This photograph shows Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, with the president of Lockheed Martin, talking with a plant worker while touring an aircraft production facility.

As one measure of the ties between the military, the government, and industry, consider that each year the U.S. Department of Defense (2010) awards more than 60 million contracts to more than 2,000 businesses. The value of these contracts ranges from less than \$25,000 to \$21.9 billion. Table 10.4a shows the top five military contractors for fiscal year 2008.

DoD photo by Cherie Cullen/Released



Table 10.4a: Top Five Military Contractors for Fiscal Year 2008

In 2008 the Department of Defense awarded \$307.4 billion in contracts. The five largest defense contractors are listed in the table.

Rank	Corporation	Defense Revenue (in billions)	Percentage of Total Revenue from Defense
1	Lockheed Martin Corporation	\$39.6	92.5%
2	BAE Systems PLC	\$32.7	95.0%
3	Boeing Company	\$31.2	51.0%
4	Northrop Grumman Corporation	\$26.6	78.4%
5	General Dynamics	\$22.9	78.0%

Source: U.S. Department of Defense (2009).

Think about Lockheed Martin's dependence on government contracts. About 93 percent of its sales are to the U.S. Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, and other U.S. government agencies. Department of Defense and other government contracts support 1,000 facilities in 500 cities and 46 states throughout the U.S. and in 75 other nations and territories (Lockheed Martin 2010). Because the military, the government, and corporations are so interdependent and because decisions made by the elite of one sector affect the elite of the other two, Mills believes that everyone has a vested interest in cooperation. Shared interests cause those who occupy the highest positions in each sector to interact with one another. Out of necessity, then, a triangle of power has emerged. Mills cautioned that we should not assume, however, that the alliance among the three sectors is untroubled, that the powerful share exactly the same

interests, that they know the consequences of their decisions, or that they are joined in a conspiracy to shape the fate of a country or the globe.

At the same time it is clear that they know what is on each other's minds. Whether they come together casually at their clubs or hunting lodges or more formally as board members, they are definitely not isolated from each other. There is a community of interest and sentiment among the elite (Hacker 1971).

Mills gives no detailed examples of the actual decision-making process at the power elite level. Rather, he focuses on understanding the consequences of this alliance. Mills acknowledges that the power elite are not free agents but are subject to controls, such as whistleblowers, congressional investigations, and budget constraints.

Pluralist Model

A pluralist model of power views politics as an arena of compromise, alliances, and negotiation among many competing special-interest groups, and it views power as something dispersed among those groups. **Special-interest groups** consist of people who share an interest in a particular economic, political, or other social issue and who form an organization or join an existing organization to influence public opinion and government policy.

◀ Special-interest groups are very diverse. They include those who are part of grassroots groups that are considered socially conscious about some issue, as well as those who belong to established groups such as the American Medical Association (its vast resources are symbolized by the AMA headquarters in Chicago).

These interest groups are often represented by **lobbyists**, people whose job it is to solicit and persuade state and federal legislators to create legislation and vote for bills that favor the interests of the group they represent. Lobbyists can work for corporations, a private individual, or the public interest. There are about 106,000 people employed as lobbyists, about one-third of whom work in Washington, DC. Lobbyists also persuade state-level senators and representatives. Lobbyists can represent states, foreign governments, industries, universities, or nonprofit agencies. Some examples of organizations that lobbied to shape health care reform in 2009 and the amount each spent are the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association (\$20.1 million), Blue Cross and Blue Shield (\$16.1 million), American Medical Association (\$12.3 million), and American Hospital Association (\$12.6 million) (Center for Public Integrity 2009a).



Joe Flood



© Andy Guest / Alamy

Some special-interest groups form **political action committees (PACs)**, which raise money to be donated to the political candidates who seem most likely to support their special interests. There are more than 4,500 registered PACs. Examples of those among the top 20 contributors to the 2009–2010 U.S. political campaigns are AT&T (\$1.4 million), American Association for Justice (\$1.3 million), and the Laborers Union (\$1.0 million) (Center for Responsive Politics 2009b). Another kind of special-interest group is the 527 group, a tax-exempt advocacy organization that seeks to influence federal elections by mobilizing potential voters to register and by running issue-related advertisements criticizing the record of a candidate it opposes. Prominent 527 groups include MoveOn.org and American Solutions for Winning the Future.

According to the pluralist model, no single special-interest group dominates the U.S. political system. Rather, competing groups thrive and can express their views through opinion polls, unions, protests, e-mails, and PACs. One problem with the pluralist model is that we cannot conclude that every special-interest group has enough resources to represent and defend its interests.

Critical Thinking

Think of someone who has authority over you. Which of the three types of authority does the person possess?

Key Terms

authority

charismatic authority

legal-rational authority

lobbyists

political action
committees (PACs)

political system

power

power elite

special-interest groups

traditional authority

Forms of Government

Objective

You will learn about various forms of government and how they direct and coordinate political and economic activity.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jacob Caldwell

What form of government does an ink-stained finger symbolize?

This is a photograph of an Iraqi woman who has just voted, as indicated by her ink-stained finger. Voters in Iraq dip their index finger into an inkwell after voting. The stained finger marks people so they do not try to vote again. This image has come to symbolize the change in Iraq's government as it moves from a dictatorship to a democracy.

Government is the organizational structure that directs and coordinates people's involvement in the political activities of a country or some other territory, such as a city, county, or state. It is also the mechanism through which people gain power and exercise authority over others. Governments make laws and create policies that shape every aspect of life. Governments are often divided into branches of power, such as executive, judicial, and legislative. In this module we consider five forms of government: democracy, totalitarianism, authoritarianism, monarchy, and theocracy.

Democracy

Sir Winston Churchill (1947), prime minister of the United Kingdom during World War II, once said that "democracy is the worst form of government except for all others that have been tried" (p. 7566). **Representative democracy** is a system of government in which power is vested in citizens who vote into office

those candidates they believe can best represent their interests. Because it is not feasible for citizens to vote on every matter that affects them, they make their voices heard through those they elect. In a democracy, political candidates can be from more than one party and those in minority parties can oppose the party holding power. In addition, when a majority of voters elect to change the party in power, the transition is orderly and peaceful. In democracies, elected representatives make laws, vote on taxes, establish budgets, and support or oppose the party in power.

Democratic forms of government extend basic rights to citizens and legal residents. These rights include freedom of speech, movement, religion, press, and assembly (that is, the right to form and belong to parties and other associations), as well as freedom from unwarranted arrest and imprisonment. Other characteristics of democracies include free and fair elections, access to alternative information sources (free press), an educated or informed citizenry, and a constitution that sets limits on executive and other powers (Bullock 1977).



Library of Congress

◀ Successful democracies depend on informed voters. Although the United States is classified as a representative democracy, not everyone who is eligible to vote does.

In the 2008 presidential election, 65 percent of all those eligible to vote actually voted. Barack Obama received 52.9 percent of all votes actually cast, but only 33.4 percent of all Americans eligible to vote cast a vote for him. The percentage of Americans eligible to vote who register varies dramatically by age and racial or ethnic classification. It is striking that only 54.9 percent of people classified as Hispanic or Latino and 58.5 percent of those aged 18–24 reported being registered. In contrast, 72 percent of voting-age

people classified as white and 78.1 percent of those aged 65 and older reported being registered (U.S. Census Bureau 2009b).

In light of these statistics, we might question whether elected officials represent everyone or just those who vote. Furthermore we might question whether elected officials represent those powerful constituents who donate generously to their campaigns. In assessing whether a form of government is a true democracy, it is important to consider who has the right to vote. All democracies have at one time or another excluded some from the political process based on race, sex, income, property ownership, criminal status, mental health, religion, age, or other characteristics.

Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism is a system of government characterized by (1) a single ruling party led by a dictator, (2) an unchallenged official ideology that defines a vision of the “perfect” society and the means to achieve that vision, (3) a system of social control that suppresses dissent, and (4) centralized control over the media and the economy. Ideological goals vary but may include overthrowing capitalist and

foreign influences (as in China under Mao Zedong), creating the perfect race (as in Germany under Hitler), or meeting certain economic and development goals (as during China's Great Leap Forward). Whatever the government's goals, the political leaders, the military, and the secret police intimidate and mobilize the masses to help the state meet the goals.

Totalitarian governments are products of the 20th century, because by that time technologies existed that allowed a few people in power to control the behavior of the masses and the information the masses could hear. Many of the governments labeled as totalitarian have followed communist principles. Traditionally, communist governments have outlawed private ownership of property, supported the equal distribution of wealth, and offered status and power to the working class or proletariat. Communist leaders also mobilize the masses to bring about change.

► North Korea's government is considered totalitarian. This photograph shows North Korean soldiers celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Korean People's Army. The soldiers' precise movements and synchronized timing reflect their dedication to the revolutionary ideology of their Great Leader, Kim Il Sung. One key principle guiding North Koreans is, "We must establish strong organizational regulations so that the entire party, nation and military move as one under the one and only leadership of the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung" (DailyNK 2008 Ten Principles 2008).



KCNA/AFP/Getty Images

Authoritarianism

Under **authoritarian** government, no separation of powers exists; a single person (a dictator), a group (a family, the military, a single party), or a social class holds all power. No official ideology projects a vision of the "perfect" society or guides the government's political or economic policies. Authoritarian leaders do not seek to mobilize the masses to help realize a vision or meet ideological goals. Instead, the government functions to serve those in power, who may or may not be interested in the general welfare of the people. Common to all authoritarian systems is a lack of checks and balances on the leader's power and no commitment by the leader to law or guiding ideology (Chehabi and Linz 1998).

How does a single person, a group, or a social class gain control of an entire country? Authoritarian leaders typically receive support from a foreign government that expects to benefit from their leadership (Buckley 1998). Saddam Hussein is one example of an authoritarian leader whom the U.S. government both supported and opposed. The U.S. government supported Hussein during the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988)—even though he invaded Iran, abused the human rights of Iraqi citizens, used chemical weapons on Iranians and his own people, and

sought to produce nuclear weapons. Then, the U.S. government opposed Hussein during and after the 1991 Gulf War. In 2003 the United States invaded Iraq and deposed Hussein on the grounds that the dictator had been secretly developing and building weapons of mass destruction. When no evidence of such weapons turned up, the U.S. government justified the invasion on the grounds that Hussein had abused the human rights of Iraqi citizens and used chemical weapons against his own people.

Monarchy

A **monarchy** is a form of government in which the power is in the hands of a leader (known as a monarch) who reigns over a state or territory, usually for life and by hereditary right. Typically, the monarch expects to pass the throne on to someone who is designated as the heir, usually a firstborn son. The monarch's power may range from absolute (total power) to nominal (in name only) (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010).



Saudi Arabia qualifies as a monarchy. Since 1932 it has been ruled by the sons and grandsons of the first king of Saudi Arabia, Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud.

◀ Saudi Arabia has no official political parties and no national elections. As King, Abdullah ibn Abdul Aziz's power is tempered by consultation with the royal family and with an appointed consultative body known as

the Majlis al-Shura, which debates, rejects, and amends proposed legislation; holds oversight hearings over government ministries; and initiates legislation. While the head of state and government is a king and not a religiously trained leader, the constitution and legal system are grounded in Islamic laws and principles (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010).

The United Kingdom has a constitutional monarchy in which the queen (Elizabeth II) is head of state in a nominal sense. She assumes a representational role in that “she acts as a focus for national identity, unity and pride; gives a sense of stability and continuity; officially recognizes success and excellence; and supports the ideal of public and voluntary service” (Royal Family 2009).

Theocracy

Theocracy, which means rule of the deity, is a form of government in which political authority rests in the hands of religious leaders or a theologically trained elite group. The primary purpose of a theocracy is to uphold divine laws in its policies and practices. Thus, there is no legal separation of church and state. Government policies and laws correspond to religious principles and laws.

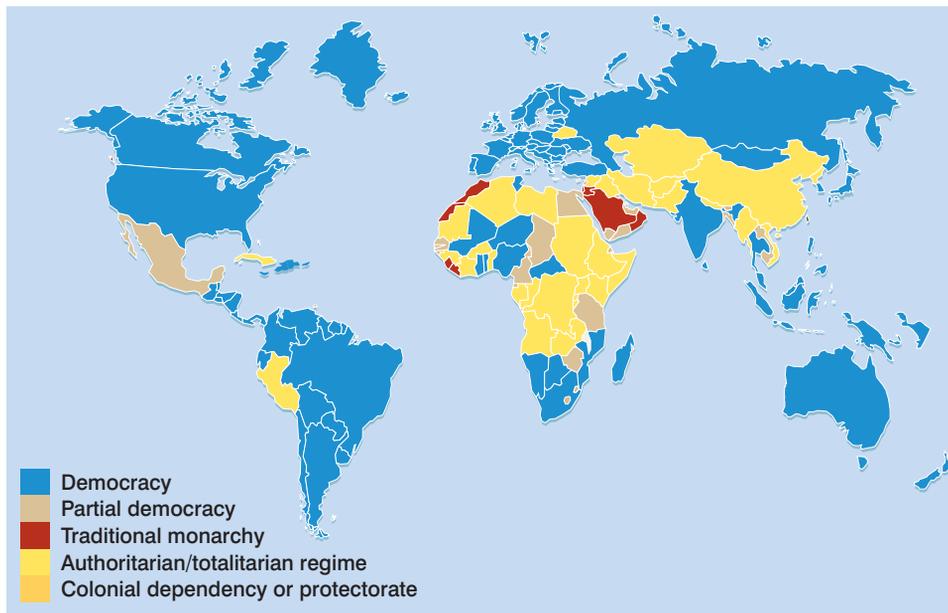


◀ Contemporary examples of theocracies include the Vatican under the pope, Afghanistan under the Taliban, and Iran under Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

In other forms of theocracy, power is shared by a secular ruler, such as a king, and a religious leader, such as a pope or an ayatollah, or by secular government leaders devoted to the principles of the dominant religion. At one time, England was dominated by the Anglican Church, France by the Roman Catholic Church, and Sweden by the Lutheran Church.

Figure 10.5a Forms of Government

This map divides the world's countries according to the dominant form of government. Consider this map a rough profile of governments that is subject to debate and disagreement. What areas of the world are more likely to possess authoritarian and totalitarian regimes? Notice that there is no theocracy code, because no country is considered a pure theocracy.



*Colonial dependencies are too small to see on this map; most are island states.
Source: National Constitution Center (2008).

Critical Thinking

Have you voted in local, state, and national elections? What does your voting record say about democracies?

Key Terms

authoritarian

monarchy

theocracy

government

representative
democracies

totalitarianism

Imperialism and Related Concepts

Objective

You will learn about concepts sociologists use to describe forms of foreign dominance.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jarrod Hodge

Imagine that someone asked you why the United States spends \$711 billion a year on defense, an amount equal to that spent by the rest of the world's 240-plus countries combined. How would you explain this spending?

Sociologists use several terms to describe governments and other political entities with the capacity to exercise their will, even force it, upon others. In this module we will discuss concepts of empire, imperialism, hegemony, and militarism. As you learn about their meanings, ask if any of these terms apply to the United States.

Concepts of Power and Dominance

An **empire** is a group of countries under the direct or indirect control of a foreign power or government that acts to shape the political, economic, and cultural life of the people over which it has power. Perhaps the most well-known empire was the British Empire, considered the largest in history. By the early 1920s, this empire ruled over a quarter of the world's population and territory (Maddison 2001).

An **imperialistic power** exerts control and influence over foreign entities either through military force or through political policies and economic pressure. Imperialists believe that their cultural, political, or economic superiority justifies

control over other entities. From the imperialist's point of view, such control is for the greater good of those conquered and for the planet as a whole.

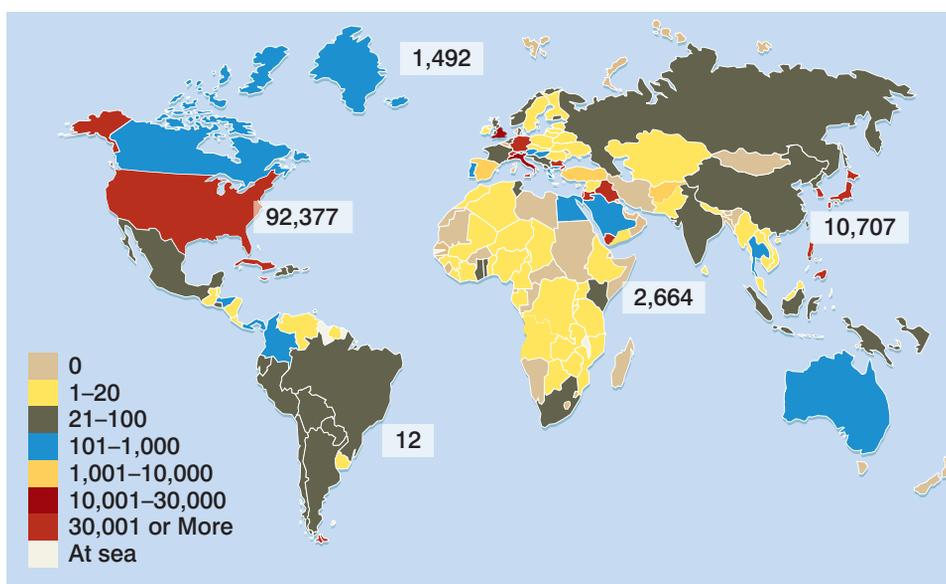
Hegemony is a process by which a power maintains its dominance over foreign entities. Those in power use bureaucratic structures (such as the World Bank and the United Nations) to formalize their power and to make it seem impartial and abstract. That power also uses educational programs and various forms of media (advertisements, television, music, movies) to influence the foreign populace.

► There is a close correspondence between imperialistic and militaristic powers. A **militaristic power** believes that military strength, and the willingness to use it, is the source of national and even global security. Usually a peace-through-strength doctrine—peace depends on military strength and force—is cited to justify military buildups and interventions on foreign soil (see Figure 10.6a).



Figure 10.6a U.S. Military Presence by Country

The map shows that U.S. military personnel are stationed in 135 countries. That presence may be as small as 5 or as large as 160,000 military personnel assigned to that country. The Pentagon divides the world into what it calls commands: the Pacific Rim (Pacific Command), Europe (European Command), Latin America (Southern Command), the Middle East (Central Command), North America (Northern Command), and the newest command (Africa Command). There is no other country in the world with this kind of military presence across the globe.



Source: Department of Defense (2007)

American empire, imperialism, militarism, and hegemony yield more hits on the Google search engine than terms for any other empire (including British and Roman). Is the United States any of these things? In answering this question, our goal is not to classify the United States as an evil or a benevolent empire. Rather, we simply wish to assess the United States' world influence and power

in light of these concepts. One assessment describes the United States this way: “Throughout the history of mankind certainly no country has existed that so thoroughly dominates the world with its policies, its tanks, and its products as the United States does” (*Der Spiegel* 2003). Still “talk of ‘empire’ makes Americans distinctly uneasy . . . and yet though the rest of the world is under no illusion,” Americans don’t want to be part of a country that is an empire, but if it is one, they want to think of the United States as a kind and just empire (Judt 2004, p. 38).

Functionalist Perspective

Functionalists ask: “What are the anticipated and unanticipated consequences of the U.S. military presence throughout the world?” One manifest, or expected, function of this global-scale military presence is that it exists to safeguard U.S. interests and the American way of life. The September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center are often evoked as evidence that the United States has enemies.

An unanticipated, or latent, function of U.S. military presence is that the military often operates as a humanitarian force working to promote democracy and to improve health, education, and economic growth in some of the world’s poorest countries (Bush 2007).



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Joshua Valcarcel



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Marcus Surquez

▲ The left photo shows a U.S. Navy hospital ship, one of many, that deploys to nations around the world providing medical treatment to children, expectant mothers, and others in need. The right photo shows people in Haiti who have lined up to see naval doctors.

An expected, or manifest, dysfunction of this military presence around the world is that wherever there are servicemen or servicewomen, we can expect to find babies conceived with locals overseas. For example, there are significant populations of children known as Amerasians who live in Guam, Hawaii, Okinawa, Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines. In fact, a class action suit was filed against the United States in 1993, arguing that the country has a moral and legal responsibility to support the estimated 8,600 children fathered by U.S. servicemen who were once stationed there. The suit was dismissed on the grounds that these children were offspring of prostitutes providing illicit sexual services to the men (Lambert 1993; Gage 2007).

A latent, or unexpected, dysfunction of U.S. global military presence is that it drives what sociologists call a **military-industrial complex**, a relationship between those who declare, fund, and manage wars (the Department of Defense, the office of the president, and Congress) and corporations that make the equipment and supplies needed to wage war. Corporations and their stockholders come to need war to maintain profits and the millions who work for these corporations also rely on war to maintain their employment (and by extension their lifestyles). In his farewell address to the American people, President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1961) warned that this complex is “felt in every city, every state house, every office of the Federal government. . . our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society . . . we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.”



DoD photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Kliska, U.S. Army

◀ Keep in mind that the U.S. Department of Defense (2010) awards more than 60 million contracts, worth hundreds of billions of dollars, to more than 2,000 businesses each year to supply everything from doughnuts to tanks. This amount of money is a powerful incentive for businesses to influence American foreign policies in ways that encourage war and other defensive measures.

Conflict Perspective

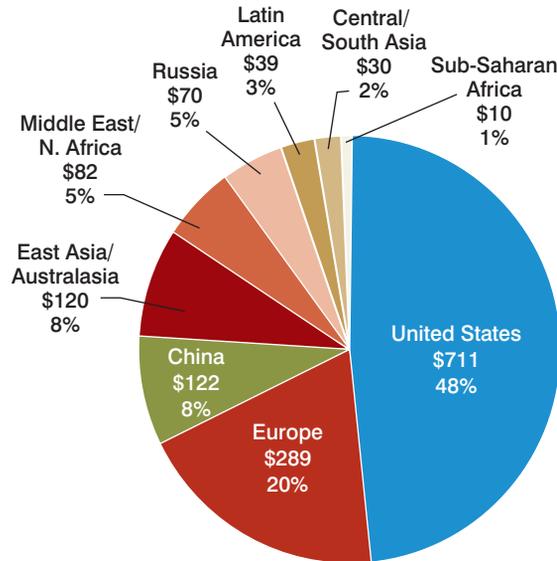
Conflict theorists would certainly focus on the corporations that benefit from military contracts and how the U.S. leaders justify this level of military presence around the world. They ask: “Who benefits from military deployments and at whose expense?” In answering this question, conflict theorists point out that the American way of life is very dependent on oil and nonfuel minerals such as coltan (needed to make cell phones and other electronic equipment). For example, the United States must rely on foreign sources for 60 percent of its oil needs. Conflict theorists would argue that it is no coincidence that the U.S. military is stationed in parts of the world that supply these needed resources. As a case in point, in 2007 the United States created a command to oversee the African continent. The Pentagon argued that this command was necessary because of Africa’s increased strategic importance. Conflict theorists ask: “What factors might contribute to the rise of the continent’s strategic importance?” One obvious answer is that Africa has taken on strategic importance because of China’s growing presence in Africa and interest in that continent’s oil and other natural resources. Given the fact that 25 percent of U.S. oil imports come from African countries, it is no surprise that the United States has significant military presence in that region (U.S. Department of Energy 2010). In short, U.S. consumers and corporations benefit at the expense of the African people.

In light of the amount of money the United States allocates to national defense, it is probably safe to conclude that the term *militaristic power* as defined earlier applies. In terms of its ability to invest in its military, the United States accounts for almost 50 percent of all military spending worldwide (see Chart 10.6a).

Chart 10.6a U.S. Military Spending versus the World, 2008 (in billions and percent of world total)

In 2008 worldwide military expenditures approached \$1.5 trillion. The United States budgeted \$711 billion, followed by all of Europe (\$290 billion) and China (\$122 billion) (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2008).

US Military Spending vs. The World, 2008
(in billions of US dollars and % of world total)
2008 Total Military Spending: \$1.473 Trillion



Source: Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation (2009)

► In spite of its size, the U.S. military, the most powerful in the world, has been battling insurgents in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other places for years. Insurgents are groups who participate in armed rebellion against an occupying or established power with the hope that those in power will retreat or pull out. From the occupier's or liberator's point of view, insurgents have no legitimate cause; from the insurgent's point of view, the authority of the occupier or liberator is illegitimate.



Cpl Mike Escobar

Critical Thinking

Do you think any of the four terms you learned in this module—empire, imperialism, hegemony, and militarism—apply to the United States? Explain your answer.

Key Terms

empire

imperialistic power

military-industrial complex

hegemony

militaristic power

Applying Theory: Global Society Theories

Objective

You will learn how world system theory explains the forces creating a global-scale economy.



Lisa Southwick

What does the term *global economy* mean to you? How are you part of a global economy?

World system theory explains how global-scale economy came to be. This theory falls under the category of global society theories. Global society theorists see human activity as embedded in a larger global context. They emphasize that seemingly local events are interconnected with events taking place in other countries and regions of the world. These interconnections are part of a phenomenon known as **global interdependence**, a situation in which human interactions and relationships transcend national borders and in which social problems within any one country—such as unemployment, drug addiction, water shortages, natural disasters, or the search for national security—are shaped by events taking place outside the country, indeed in various parts of the globe. Global interdependence is part of a dynamic process known as **globalization**—the ever-increasing flow of goods, services, money, people, technology, information, and other cultural items across political borders. This flow has become more dense and quick-moving as constraints of space and time that once separated people in various locations seemingly dissolve. As a result of globalization, no longer are people, goods, services, technologies, money, and images fixed to specific geographic locations.

The Sociology of Immanuel Wallerstein

Immanuel Wallerstein (1984) is the sociologist most frequently associated with world system theory. He has written extensively about the ceaseless 500-year-plus expansion of a single market force—capitalism—that created the world economy. The world economy, which currently encompasses more than 200 countries and thousands of cultures, is interconnected by the division of labor. In this world economy, economic transactions transcend national boundaries. Although each government seeks to shape the global market in ways that benefit its

interests, no single political structure such as a world government holds authority over the system of production and distribution.

How has capitalism come to dominate the global network of economic relationships? One answer to this question can be found in the ways capitalists respond to changes in the economy, especially to economic stagnation. Wallerstein (1984) identifies six important responses to economic stagnation, all designed to generate profits through economic growth. One response is to find ways to lower labor-associated production costs by moving production facilities out of high-wage zones and into lower-wage zones outside a country, introducing technologies that save labor, and forcing people to work for little to no wages (enslavement, indentured servitude).

► The label “Made in China” has come to symbolize the practice of moving production from high-wage to low-wage labor zones. The average manufacturing worker in China earns about 57 cents per hour. This is but one example of the “human presence behind the masses of Barbies, bobbleheads, and other made-in-China bric-a-brac that the world consumes each day” (Wolf 2005).

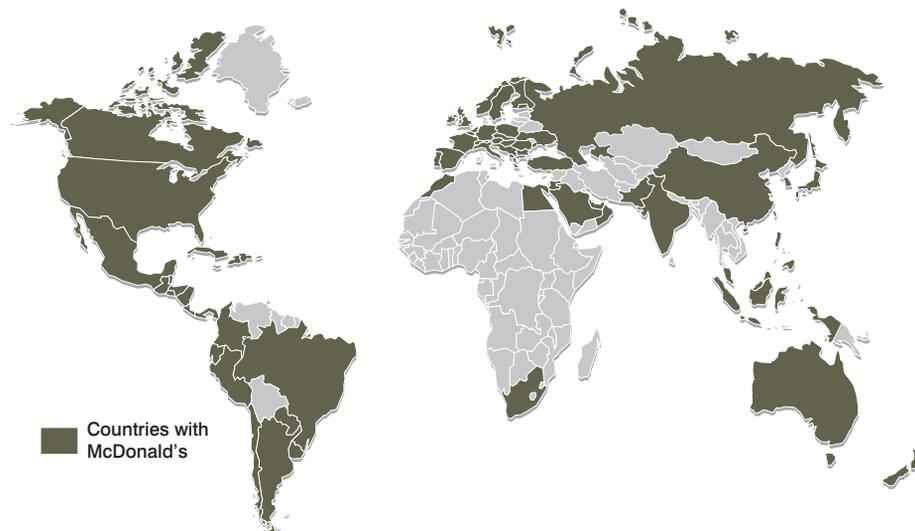


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A second response to economic stagnation capitalists use to generate profits is to secure at the lowest possible price the raw materials needed to make products; those products may be rubber, sugar cane, or coltan (an essential mineral for making cell phones). Karl Marx wrote that the drive for profit is a boundless thirst that chases the capitalist “over the whole surface of the globe” in search of not only low-cost labor but also inexpensive raw materials. A third response to economic stagnation is to create new markets that expand the boundaries of the world economy. The global expansion of McDonald’s represents such a response (see Chart 10.7a).

Chart 10.7a Locations of McDonald’s Restaurants

The case of McDonald’s shows how expanding market share creates a global economy. The first McDonald’s restaurant opened in 1955 in Des Plaines, Illinois. Since then, operations have spread to at least 119 countries.



Source: McDonald’s (2010)

In addition to finding ways to lower labor-associated production costs, there are at least three other typical responses to economic stagnation:

- creating new products that consumers feel they *need* to buy, such as the iPod, the BlackBerry, or even Viagra;
- improving existing products to make previous versions obsolete (i.e., create printers that print faster, make cell phones with more features); and
- finding ways to help people purchase more products and services by offering higher wages or issuing credit, allowing people to spend beyond their means (i.e., no payments for five years, no interest, home equity loans).

Because of these strategies, capitalism has spread steadily across the globe and facilitated connections between local, regional, and national economies. Wallerstein argues that the 200-plus countries that have become part of the world economy play one of three different and unequal roles in the global economy: core, peripheral, or semiperipheral.

Core Economies

Core economies include the wealthiest, most highly diversified economies with strong, stable governments. Examples of core economies include the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The 20 percent of the world's population that constitutes the core economies accounts for 86 percent of total private consumption expenditures (World Bank 2008). Consequently when economic activity weakens in core economies, the economies of other countries suffer, because exports to core economies decline and prices fall. In spite of their large size and relative stability, core economies have weaknesses, one of which is their dependence on foreign sources for raw materials, such as oil needed to fuel cars and palm oil needed to make soaps.



◀ Most Americans are unaware that palm oil—produced in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Western African forests—is used to make soaps, cooking oil, and personal care products. Palm oil is also used to make biofuels. Here an Indonesian plantation worker harvests palm oil fruits. Over the past 25 years Indonesia has lost more than 60 percent of its tropical forests meeting the demand from core economies for wood and palm oil.

Peripheral Economies

Peripheral economies are built on a few commodities or even a single commodity, such as coffee, peanuts, or tobacco, or on a natural resource, such as oil, tin, copper, or zinc (Van Evera 1990). At least 38 countries depend on one commodity for 50 percent or more of the revenues generated from exports (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010). For example, coffee accounts for 50 percent of the

revenue that Uganda, Ethiopia, and Burundi earn from their exports (United Nations 2008). Peripheral economies have a dependent relationship with core economies that traces its roots to colonialism. Peripheral economies operate on the so-called fringes of the world economy. Most of the jobs that connect their workers to the world economy pay little and require few skills. Amid widespread and chronic poverty, pockets of economic activity may exist, including manufacturing zones and tourist attractions.

Extreme dependence on one commodity causes many problems. First, fluctuations in the price of that commodity can leave a government flush with money when prices rise and poor when prices fall, leading to cycles of wild government spending followed by drastic spending cuts. Second, corruption and political rivalries inevitably arise when a government or a few powerful people control a country's natural resources, the distribution of those resources, and the revenues from them (Birdsall and Subramanian 2004).



© Antony Njuguna/Reuters/Corbis

◀ The African country of Malawi represents one example of a peripheral economy as illustrated by this description in the *World Factbook*: “Landlocked Malawi ranks among the world’s most densely populated and least developed countries. The economy is predominately agricultural with about 85% of the population living in rural

areas. Agriculture accounts for more than one-third of GDP and 90% of export revenues. The performance of the tobacco sector is key to short-term growth as tobacco accounts for more than half of exports” (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2009).

Semiperipheral Economies

Semiperipheral economies are characterized by moderate wealth (but extreme inequality) and moderately diverse economies. Semiperipheral economies exploit peripheral economies and are in turn exploited by core economies. According to Wallerstein, semiperipheral economies play an important role in the world economy because they are politically stable enough to provide useful places for capitalist investment if employee wage and benefit demands in core economies become too great. The countries known as emerging markets—Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Poland, Turkey, India, Indonesia, China, and South Korea—qualify as semiperipheral (U.S. Department of Commerce 2008).



United States Navy Photo



AP Photo/Heng Smith

◀ The People’s Republic of China is considered a rapidly emerging economy. One symbol of its emergence as an economic power is its high-rise buildings and a growing middle and upper class, perhaps as large as 300 million people (top). However, approximately 65 million people live in a state of absolute poverty, such as this elderly woman (bottom); that is, they lack the resources to satisfy the basic needs of food and shelter. Another 300 million Chinese live in a state of substantial deprivation (French 2008).

One problem with this three-tier classification scheme—core, semiperipheral, and peripheral—is that some countries possess characteristics that apply to more than one category. For example, because the Persian Gulf countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are dependent on primarily one commodity, oil, they would seem to qualify as peripheral. On the other hand, their level of wealth is high enough to qualify them as semiperipheral. In addition, like many semiperipheral economies, these Persian Gulf countries rely on peripheral and

other semiperipheral economies to supply them with cheap labor. The extent of that reliance becomes clear when we consider that approximately 70 percent of the total labor force in these six Persian Gulf countries originates from places such as Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Critical Thinking

Find an example of a country that depends on one commodity for 50 percent or more of the revenues generated from exports.

Key Terms

core economies

globalization

semiperipheral

global interdependence

peripheral economies

economies

Summary: Putting It All Together

Economic systems coordinate human activity to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services. There are two major types of economies—capitalist and socialist. Although the two are treated as extremes along a continuum, in practice economies are blends of these two systems. An economy is comprised of three sectors: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The relative importance of each sector to a particular country's economy can be determined by examining the percentage of workers in each category.

The United States possesses the world's largest economy in the world as measured by GDP; it is the 10th richest country when measured by GDP per capita. Among other things, the U.S. economy is characterized by high government and consumer debt and a dependence on oil and other critical minerals. Multinational corporations, which wield considerable influence over how we live, have facilities and operations in countries outside the one in which they are headquartered.

Political systems distribute power over resources and decision making. Power is the likelihood that an individual can achieve his or her will, even against opposition. That probability increases when people possess authority or legitimate power, of which there are three types: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational.

There are two broad models for the ways power is distributed: power elite and pluralist. The power elite model describes power as concentrated in the hands of those few people who occupy lofty positions in the social structure of the military, corporations (especially the 200 or so largest), and the government. The pluralist model views politics as an arena of compromise, alliances, and negotiation among many competing special-interest groups and power is therefore dispersed among those groups.

There are five major forms of government: democracy, totalitarianism, authoritarianism, monarchy, and theocracy. Governments and other political bodies that have the capacity to dominate others can be described with the following terms: empire, imperialism, hegemony, and militarism. There is no question that the United States invests heavily in defense—the United States accounts for almost 50 percent of all military spending worldwide.

[Can You Top This Photo?]



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Robert Stirrup. Released

Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo with a caption that represents one of the three types of authority.



Lisa Southwick

11

CHAPTER

FAMILIES

- 11.1** Defining Family
- 11.2** Family Structure in Three Countries
- 11.3** Family Structures in the United States
- 11.4** Sexual Stratification
- 11.5** Intergenerational Family Relationships
- 11.6** Who Needs and Gives Care?
- 11.7** Applying Theory: Critical Social Theory
- Summary** Putting It All Together

Family is a social institution that binds people together through blood, marriage, law, and/or social norms about what constitutes family. When sociologists study family, they do not have a particular family structure in mind as a standard. Instead, they consider the social forces that affect the ever-changing structure of families. Those social forces include, but are not limited to, life expectancy, women's ability to take control of reproductive life, and employment opportunities for males and females.

Defining Family

Objective

You will learn about the challenges of defining family and what being part of a family means.



Cpl. Micaela M. Bravo-Cullen

Who do you count as family? In deciding, do you use legal, genetic, and/or emotional ties as criteria?

Family is a social institution that binds people together through blood, marriage, law, and/or social norms. It is important to point out that “there is no concrete group which can be universally identified as ‘the family’” (Zelditch 1964, p. 681).

Family Arrangements

An amazing variety of family arrangements exists worldwide—a variety reflected in the many norms that specify how two or more people enact family life. These norms govern who can marry, the number of partners one can have, the connection to paternal and maternal relatives, and the ways people trace their ancestors and descendants (see Table 11.1a).

Table 11.1a: Norms Governing Family Structure and Composition

Number of Marriage Partners	
Monogamy	One husband, one wife
Serial Monogamy	Two or more successive spouses
Polygamy	Multiple spouses at one time
Polygyny	One husband, multiple wives at one time
Polyandry	One wife, multiple husbands at one time
Choice of Spouse	
Arranged	Parents select their children's marriage partners
Romantic	One selects one's own marriage partner based on love
Endogamy	Marriage within one's social group
Exogamy	Marriage outside one's social group
Homogamy	Marriage to a person or persons whose social characteristics—such as class, religion, and level of education—are similar to one's own
Authority	
Patriarchal	Male-dominated
Matriarchal	Female-dominated
Egalitarian	Equal authority between sexes
Descent	
Patrilineal	Traced through father's lineage
Matrilineal	Traced through mother's lineage
Bilateral	Traced through both mother's and father's heritage
Family Type	
Nuclear	Husband, wife, and children
Extended	Three or more generations
Single-parent	Mother or father living with children
Household	People who share the same residence
Domestic Partnership	People committed to each other and sharing a domestic life but not joined in marriage or civil union
Civil Union	A legally recognized partnership providing same-sex couples with some of the rights, benefits, and responsibilities associated with marriage
Family Residence	
Patrilocal	Wife living with or near husband's family
Matrilocal	Husband living with or near wife's family
Neolocal	Wife and husband live apart from their parents

In light of this variability, we should not be surprised that when people think of family, they often emphasize different dimensions, such as kinship, ideal members, or legal ties.

KINSHIP. Definitions of family emphasizing kinship view family as comprised of members linked together by blood, marriage, or adoption. The size of any given person's family network is incalculable, because one person has an astronomical number of living and deceased kin. For this reason every society finds ways to exclude some kin from their idea of family. Some societies, for example, trace family lineage through the maternal or the paternal side only. In addition, people make conscious or unconscious decisions about which kin they will remember or “forget” to tell offspring about (Waters 1990).

MEMBERSHIP. Definitions of family emphasizing membership often focus on ideals; defining marriage, for example, as a voluntary union of a man and a woman in a lifelong covenant welcoming of children. However, in reality few living arrangements match that so-called ideal arrangement.



◀ Only about 26 percent of households in the United States consist of male and female parents with children. This fact does not stop people from using that ideal to evaluate their own and others' family arrangements, or from labeling family arrangements that do not fit the ideal as nontraditional, dysfunctional, immoral, or at-risk (Cornell 1990).

LEGAL RECOGNITION. From a legal perspective, a family consists of people whose living and procreation choices are recognized under the law as constituting a family. In the United States, federal law defines marriage as “a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife” (Defense of Marriage Act 1996). But some state and local governments recognize same-sex marriage and alternatives to marriage, such as domestic partnerships and civil unions. Legal recognition means that certain benefits, responsibilities, and rights are enforced by law. As a result, those who do not meet legal definitions face obstacles and hardships. As a case in point, the U.S. General Accounting Office (2004) identified 1,138 federal statutory provisions classified to the United States Legal Code “in which marital status is a factor in determining or receiving benefits, rights, and privileges.”

Functionalist View of Family Life

Because of the debate over what constitutes family, some sociologists argue that it should be defined in terms of social functions, of which there are at least four: (1) regulating sexual behavior, (2) replacing the members of society who die, (3) socializing the young, and (4) providing care and emotional support.

Regulating Sexual Behavior. Marriage and family systems specify norms that regulate sexual behavior. These norms may prohibit sex outside of marriage, or they may specify the characteristics of sexual and marriage partners considered appropriate. Such norms can take the form of laws prohibiting marriage and sexual relationships between certain relatives (such as first cousins), age groups (such as an adult and a minor), and racial or ethnic groups. Other laws regulate the number of people who may form a marriage.

Replacing the Members of Society Who Die. For humans to survive as a species, society must replace those who die. Marriage and family systems provide a socially and legally sanctioned environment into which new members can be born and nurtured.

Socializing the Young. The family is the most significant agent of socialization, because it gives society's youngest members their earliest exposure to relationships and the rules of life.

Providing Care and Emotional Support. A family is expected to care for the emotional and physical needs of its members. Without meaningful social ties,

people of all ages deteriorate physically and mentally. The life cycle is such that humans experience a time of extreme dependency in infancy and early childhood, which is likely to recur at the end of life.

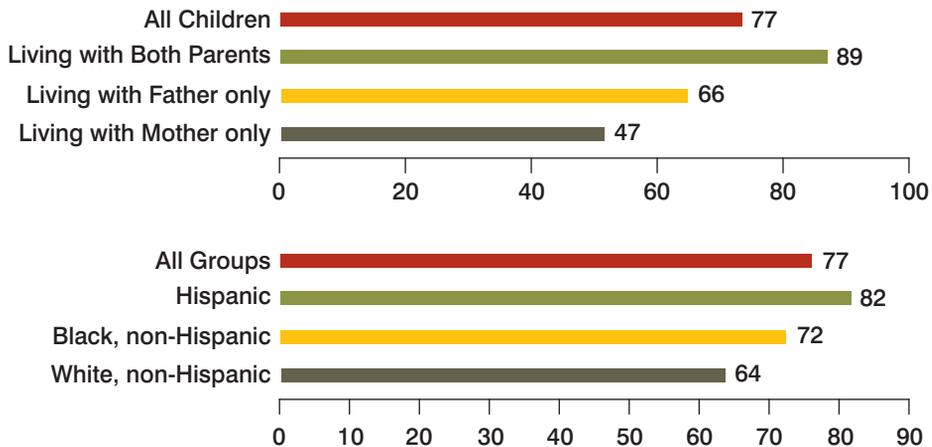
Conflict View of Family Life

While everyone might agree that families should fulfill these four functions, conflict theorists point out that family members do not always care for one another in positive ways and that the family also perpetuates inequalities by passing on social advantages and disadvantages to its members. Moreover, marriage and family systems are structured to value productive work and devalue reproductive work, and to foster and maintain divisions and boundaries.

SOCIAL INEQUALITY. We cannot choose our family and its economic status. Families transfer power, wealth, property, and privilege from one generation to the next. Obviously, income affects the level of investment parents can make in their children. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 77 percent of children in the United States live in a household with secure parental employment. That is, they reside with at least one parent or guardian who was employed full time (35 or more hours per week for at least 50 weeks in the past year). The percentage varies by racial classification and living arrangement (see Figure 11.1a).

Figure 11.1a Percentage of U.S. Children with Secure Parental Employment by Living Arrangement and by Racial/Ethnic Classification of Child, 2007

Under which living arrangement are children most likely to have a parent securely employed? Which racial/ethnic category includes the smallest percentage of children who are living with a securely employed parent?



Source: ChildStats.gov (2010)

PRODUCTIVE AND REPRODUCTIVE WORK. Friedrich Engels (1884) distinguishes between productive and reproductive work. Productive work involves the actual manufacture of food, clothing, and shelter and the tools necessary to produce them. Reproductive work involves bearing children, caregiving, managing households, and educating children. Both are work: bearing children and caregiving activities are fundamental to the perpetuation of society. However, reproductive work is disproportionately performed by women, whether or not pay is involved.



Lisa Southwick

◀ Using data from 17,636 respondents in 28 countries, sociologist Shannon Davis and colleagues (2007) examined the division of reproductive work within cohabitating and married heterosexual households. They found that on average men report spending about 9.4 hours per week performing household tasks; their female counterparts report an average of 21 hours.

The gap between the time men and women spend on household tasks is affected by living arrangement (cohabitating couples tend to establish a more equal division of household labor) and income differences (the more equal the incomes, the less the imbalance). The largest gap was found in Chile, where men reported contributing 24.0 percent of total hours devoted to household tasks. The smallest gap was found in Australia, where men reported contributing 39.1 percent of the total hours.

FOSTERING SOCIAL DIVISIONS AND BOUNDARIES. In the United States we assume that people choose a partner or mate based on love. Upon investigating who marries, however, we find that people's choices are guided by other considerations as well: a potential partner's age, height, weight, income, education, race, sex, social class, and religion, among other things. When the conditions are right, we allow ourselves to fall in love.

All societies have norms defining who may date or marry whom. These norms may be formal (enforced by law) or informal (enforced by social pressure). **Exogamy** refers to norms requiring or encouraging people to choose a partner from a social category other than their own—for example, to choose a partner outside their immediate family who is of the other sex or of another race. **Endogamy** refers to norms requiring or encouraging people to choose a partner from the same social category as their own—for example, a partner of the same race, sex, ethnicity, religion, or social class.

Symbolic Interactionist View of Family Life

When symbolic interactionists study family life, they seek to understand the experiences of being in a family, engaging in family-related activities, and conforming to or resisting societal ideals about what family life should be. Symbolic interactionists are interested in how established norms and ideals about family are enacted or resisted. This scenario posed in *Having It All* by Francine M. Deutsch (1999) shows how symbolic interactionists frame such an analysis. With this example, Deutsch illustrates the costs borne by men and women who decide to share in reproductive work: a husband, a wife, and their young son, Ollie, are traveling together by plane. The husband is holding Ollie, who is screaming. A male passenger sitting behind them asks, "What's wrong with the child's mother? Why doesn't the mother take care of the baby?" The husband answers, "Because I'm his father and I am perfectly capable of taking care of him."

➤ A man's decision not to hand over a crying child to a woman and a woman's decision not to grab the baby away represents a commitment by both to share in the reproductive work. The scenario Deutsch described illustrates the interaction dynamics by which even well-intentioned couples committed to equality might give in to societal pressures for women to handle the reproductive tasks (Gerson 1999).

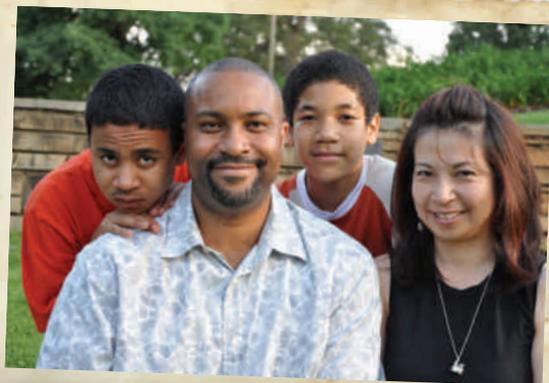


Missy Gish

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption that uses sociological language from this module to describe the family pictured (a married couple and two children).

Write a caption here



Lisa Southwick

Hints: In writing this caption

- consider which type of household this family would be classified as,
- think about the federal definition of marriage and if this family qualifies, and
- think about whether the relationship between the couple represents exogamy or endogamy (she identifies as Asian and he as black).

Critical Thinking

Think about the household in which you grew up. How were household tasks (reproductive work) divided up among those who lived in the household?

Key Terms

endogamy

exogamy

family

Family Structure in Three Countries

Objective

You will learn about the ways in which the larger social context influences the structure of family life.



The girl on the left lives in Afghanistan; the girl on the right lives in the United States. If you asked each girl whether she would like to have children some day and if so, how many, how do you think each would answer?

Imagine answers of none, two, or ten to the question “How many kids do you want?” “None” is likely to draw the response, “Why not?” And “ten” would draw expressions of shock. From such exchanges, children learn what their society considers an ideal number of children. They also learn that they may have to justify a future decision that departs from the ideal.

Family Systems

In this module we compare family life in the United States with that of Japan and Afghanistan. We chose Japan because it has one of the lowest fertility rates in the world; we chose Afghanistan because it has one of the highest. Both situations have prompted concern and efforts to increase low fertility and decrease

high fertility. In making comparisons, we will consider three factors that shape the experience of living in a family:

1. women’s control over reproductive life, including family size,
2. the timing of family members’ deaths, and
3. caregiving responsibilities.

FEMALE CONTROL OVER REPRODUCTIVE LIFE. If we look at the statistics presented in Table 11.2a, we can gain some insights about the typical size of families in the three countries. We see that **total fertility**, the average number of children that a woman bears in her lifetime, is almost seven for women in Afghanistan. In the United States total fertility is two children, and in Japan it is about one (see Table 11.2a).

Table 11.2a: Fertility-Related Statistics for Japan, the United States, and Afghanistan

Notice that by 30 years of age, 56 percent of Japanese women and 33 percent of American women remain childless. A woman who is childless by age 30 is a rare occurrence in Afghanistan. What are the chances that a Japanese, Afghani, or American baby will be born to a teenage mother? What percentage of women in each country report using some form of contraception?

	Japan	United States	Afghanistan
Chances of Teens Giving Birth per Year (ages 15–19)	1 in 200	1 in 20	1 in 9
Total Fertility	1.21	2.05	6.53
Percentage of Married or In-Union Woman Using <i>Any</i> Method of Contraception	52%	73%	10%
Percentage of Childless Women at Age 30	56%	33%	1.8%

Sources: Population Reference Bureau (2009); Rutstein and Shah (2004); United Nations Population Fund (2005); OECD (2008)

DEATH OF FAMILY MEMBERS. Death results in the loss of a family member. We can think of death in terms of the time in life at which it occurs. Specifically, sociologists ask, “What are the chances a child will survive the first year of life and beyond? What are the chances a woman will survive childbirth? And what are the chances of living beyond age 65?” The answers to these questions offer important clues about the composition of the family unit and the broad nature of family relationships.



▲ For the most part, parents in Japan and the United States can expect their children to survive them. Look at Table 11.2b. How many babies in each country die before reaching age 5? When parents can expect a baby to survive, the future of the child seems more secure and parents feel less need to have additional children. On the other hand, when children have a high mortality rate, parents have less incentive to prevent additional pregnancies.

The chances that a woman living in the United States will die of pregnancy-related complications are 1 in 4,800. In Japan those chances are 1 in 11,600. By comparison, those chances are extraordinarily high in Afghanistan (1 in 8). The uncertainty of whether women in Afghanistan will survive childbirth and whether their babies will live to age 5 indicates an overall lack of control over reproductive options.

► Lack of access to clean water is responsible for many waterborne illnesses such as diarrhea, the number-one cause of death among children under 5 in Afghanistan. The United Nations, the United States, and other agencies are working to find sources of clean water near where people live so that children, who are often charged with collecting water, do not have to walk far to get it. In fact, many children, especially girls, in Afghanistan do not go to school because they spend their days carrying water.



SSGT Jeremy T. Lock, USAF

Life expectancy, or the average number of years after birth a person can expect to live, offers insights about the timing of death. Notice that 84 percent of people in Japan can expect to reach age 65 and to live, depending on their sex, on average another 17 or 22 years beyond that age. In the United States 77 percent can expect to live to age 65 and then on average an additional 17 to 20 years. In Afghanistan, 56 percent of people live to age 65 and upon reaching that age can expect to live an average of 10 or 11 years longer.

Table 11.2b: Selected Life Expectancy and Mortality Statistics

Relative to Japan and the United States, death is an event that more often strikes the very young in Afghanistan. The average life expectancy is so low in Afghanistan because of the high infant and under-five mortality rates.

	Japan	United States	Afghanistan
Infant Mortality (per 1,000)	2.79	6.26	151.9
Under-Five Mortality (per 1,000)	4.00	8.00	257.00
Estimated Lifetime Chance of Dying from Pregnancy-Related Causes	1 in 11,600	1 in 4,800	1 in 8
Average Life Expectancy	82.1	78.1	44.6
Percentage of Population Expected to Reach Age 65	84.0%	77.4%	56.0%
Average Number of Years After Age 65 One Can Expect to Live	22.5 (females) 17.4 (males)	20.0 (females) 17.2 (males)	11.0 (females) 10.0 (males)
Number 1 Cause of Death (children)	Unintentional Injury (accident)	Unintentional Injury (accident)	Diarrhea

Sources: United Nations (2009); U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (2009)

CAREGIVING AND DEPENDENCY. The family plays an important role in meeting the emotional and physical needs of its members. People’s emotional and/or physical needs tend to be more evident when they are very young and very old. Table 11.2c offers broad insights about where family energies are likely to be pulled, depending on the age composition of its population. If the number of children is considerably larger than those 65 and over, then more energy within the families is directed toward caring for their young.



LCP/L. Antonio J. Vega, USMC

Cpl. C.P. Ingersoll

▲ In Japan 29 percent of the population is 65 years or older; only 4 percent of its total population is 5 and under. In Afghanistan almost 18 percent of the population is under 5 years of age, and less than 3 percent is 65 and older.

Table 11.2c: Percentage of Total Population in Japan, Afghanistan, and the United States Under 18 and Over 65

The data in this table show that both the United States and Japan have an **aging population**, one in which family members tend to live longer—and thus participate in family life for a greater number of years—than ever before. Currently, 13.0 percent of the U.S. population and 22.7 percent of the Japanese population are 65 years old or older.

	Japan	United States	Afghanistan
Percentage of Population Under Age 5	4.0%	6.8%	17.5%
Percentage of Population Ages 5–18	14.2%	20.3%	47.5%
Percentage of Population Age 65+	22.7%	13.0%	2.4%
Percentage of Population Age 80+	6.3%	3.7%	0.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010b)

Japan's Family System

Japan's low total fertility rate, combined with its long life expectancy and low immigration rate, means that the country has one of the world's oldest populations. The low total fertility rate is a major national concern, and it has prompted a variety of responses encouraging people to have children. Japan's very low total fertility rate of 1.2 children per woman can be explained by a number of social forces including, but not limited to, the dismantling of the *ie* family structure, a dramatic decline in arranged marriages, and employment barriers.

DISMANTLING OF THE *IE* FAMILY STRUCTURE. Until Japan's defeat in World War II, everyone was officially part of a male-headed multigenerational household known as an *ie*. Relationships between family members were shaped by the Confucian values of filial piety, faith in the family, and respect for elders. Firstborn sons held privileged status, inheriting and controlling family wealth (primogeniture). Legally, women could not choose a spouse or own property. Daughters were viewed as temporary family members until marriage, at which point they moved in with their husband's family (Takahashi 1999). Brides served and obeyed the husband and his parents, including caring for them in old age. After World War II ended in 1945, the United States imposed sweeping changes on Japan's family systems granting equal rights to women, ending arranged marriage, and abolishing primogeniture. In spite of these changes to the family structure, the belief that problems should be managed within the family

persisted. This persistence is evident by the fact that the Japanese government provides only limited public services to the elderly; women are expected to serve as primary caregivers to the young and old.

THE DECLINE OF ARRANGED MARRIAGES. Since 1955 the proportion of all marriages considered arranged has fallen from 63 percent to 10 percent. When parents no longer arranged marriages, young people were left to their own devices. Japan has not fully adjusted to this shift and it has yet to develop a couple's culture (Ogawa, Retherford, and Matsukura 2009). As one young Japanese woman commented, "In the U.S., you are supposed to be with your boyfriend or husband all the time. . . . In Japan, women have their ways of having fun and men have their ways. You're not expected to bring a date everywhere and you don't feel excluded if you're not involved with someone" (Ornstein 2001, p. 34).

In Japan 70 percent of working females ages 20 to 39 live with their parents while contributing little to household expenses (Ogawa, Retherford, and Matsukura 2009). Sociologist Masahiro Yamada (2000) coined the phrase *parasite singles* to describe those who work but are free of the financial and emotional pressures associated with parenting and marriage. According to government surveys, among the most stressful pressures these singles wish to avoid is that of guiding children through Japan's highly competitive educational system.



Courtesy of Philip Reakes

◀ To give their children an edge, parents enroll children in *juku* (after-school cram schools) and even hire tutors at a combined cost of \$303 to \$433 per month (Sato 2005). Keep in mind that scores on qualifying exams are the only factor that determines acceptance into the best high schools and colleges—GPA, letters of recommendation, athletic ability, and extracurricular activities are not taken into consideration (8Asians.com 2009). The photograph of students at *juku* was taken at 10:00 p.m.

The *juku* pressure is particularly stressful for mothers, who almost single-handedly guide children through the process—many working fathers are largely absent from the home. The workplace emphasizes work over family, as employees work long hours, take little time off for personal reasons, and accept sudden job transfers (Newport 2000).

ENTRENCHED BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT. Although Japan's labor laws forbid discrimination against women, it exists at every level, including recruitment, hiring, training, compensation, and promotion. For the most part, Japanese women are expected to quit working when they marry or have children. When mothers do work, they tend to accept low-paying and insecure employment in exchange for the flexibility needed to meet household and caregiving responsibilities. In addition, the tax system offers married women incentives to "choose" part-time employment (*Japan Times* 2003; Lam 2009). While the U.S. system is not perfect, it does have laws in place that forbid employers from, at least overtly, considering a woman's family situation when making hiring and promotion decisions.

Afghanistan's Family System

In Afghanistan, the family is *the* source of economic and social support, because there are very few public services. The typical family in Afghanistan is extended, with members sharing a household or a valley. Extended family households span several generations, including “the male head of family and his wife, his brothers, several sons and their families, cousins within their families, as well as all unmarried and widowed females” (Blood 2001). The Afghan family is male-dominated; authority rests with male elders, and inheritance is passed through the male line. Women are expected to want children, especially sons, as infertility is “a frightening social stigma” for a woman and her family (Blood 2001).

In Afghanistan males, considered superior to females, assume control over women’s lives, usually deciding whether they can pursue an education or career.

The men also approve the spouse and negotiate the price of the bride for their sons. Independent females are viewed as a threat, and families tolerating such independence are ostracized. The ideal mate for a son is a paternal first cousin. The typical Afghan bride is in her teens and is matched with a man in his mid-twenties. When price is paramount, very young girls are matched with much older men who can afford to pay the price (Blood 2001).

◀ The average female in Afghanistan can expect to attend 4.7 years of school; the average male can expect to attend 7.6 years of school. Although there are a few exceptions, the sexes attend segregated schools for the most part (United Nations 2010).

Under the Taliban, who enforced a conservative interpretation of Islamic law, girls could not go to school; women could not hold public jobs and could leave their homes only under rare circumstances, and only if wearing full-body burqas. The Taliban mandated that men grow beards and banned Western-style clothing. Crimes such as theft, adultery,

and drinking were subject to severe punishments, including lashings, stoning, and amputation (Shoup 2006). After 2001, the year of the U.S. military intervention, a new constitution was put into place that guaranteed equal rights for women but allowed ethnic minority groups to establish their own family law in keeping with their religious traditions. These family laws tend to place women in subordinate positions (Boone 2009).

Critical Thinking

Use the concepts in this module to describe the family structure into which you were born and/or raised.

Key Terms

aging population

life expectancy

total fertility



U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Tamara Gabbard

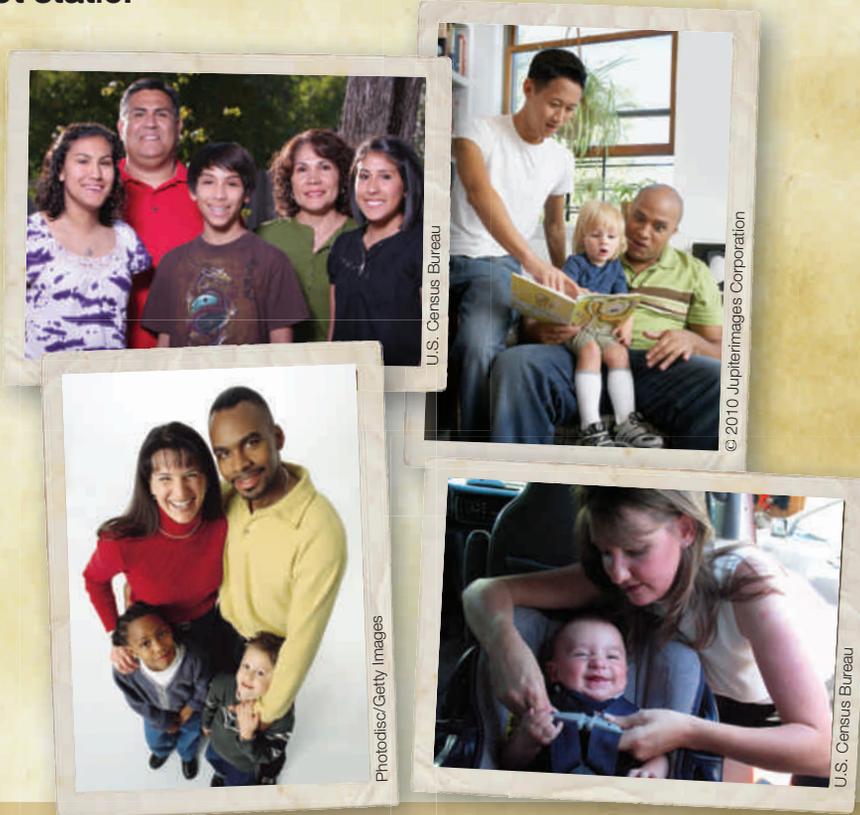


U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Jg. James Dietler/Released

Household Structures in the United States

Objective

You will learn that household structures in the United States are not static.



Do any of these photographs represent the kind of family household in which you grew up? Did your family household stand out for being larger, blended, or otherwise different from the mainstream?

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2010a) a household includes all the persons who occupy a housing unit. That unit may be a house, an apartment, a rented room, or a mobile home, but not group quarters. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other combination of related or unrelated persons who share a housing unit. To capture the diversity of households sociologists emphasize structural features, elements such as size (one person or more), family/nonfamily, number of children, married couple, single parent, and so on (see Table 11.3a).

Table 11.3a shows that the distribution of different household structures in the United States is not static; over the span of 100-plus years, it has changed quite dramatically, especially with regard to single-person and single-parent households.

Table 11.3a: U.S. Households: 100+ Years of Change

The table is a profile of household structures for 1900, 1950, and 2008. Which structures have seen the greatest decline? Which structure has seen the greatest increase?

	1900	1950	2008
Household Characteristics			
Average Household Size (persons)	4.8	3.4	2.6
Percentage of Households with Seven or More People	20.4%	4.9%	1.2%
Percentage of Households with One Person Living Alone	5.0%*	9.3%	27.5%
Living Arrangements of Children by Family Status (percent)			
Two-parent—Farm Family	41%	17%	2%
Two-parent—Father Breadwinner, Mother Homemaker	43%	56%	32%
Two-parent—Dual-earner	2%	13%	32%
Single-parent	9%	8%	28%
Children Not Living with a Parent	5%	6%	4%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (2010a; 2002)

*Except for the western United States, where 13 percent of households were single-person

Changing Household Structures in the United States

Sociologist Kingsley Davis (1984) points to another and related dramatic trend: between 1900 and 1980 the percentage of women in the *paid* labor force rose from less than 20 percent to 60 percent, and the percentage of married women in the labor force rose from 15.4 percent to 53.1 percent. Davis links women's entry (and especially married women's entry) into the paid labor market to a series of interdependent social forces affecting the structure of households and families, including the rise and fall of the breadwinner system.

The Rise and Fall of the Breadwinner System

Before industrialization—that is, for most of human history—the workplace was made up of the home and the surrounding land, and both men and women worked together to produce for the household. Industrialization separated the workplace from the home and destroyed the household economy by removing production from the home and consequently taking it out of women's hands. Davis calls this new economic arrangement the breadwinner system. Historically, this system was not typical. Rather, it was limited to the middle and upper classes and its heyday was 1860 to 1920. The breadwinner system emerged at about the same time as the average number of living children in family households reached its peak, beginning around 1860. During this period, infant and childhood mortality declined, but the old norms favoring large families persisted. The breadwinner system came about because women had too many children to engage in work outside the home.

► This 1887 drawing depicts an image we have come to associate with the breadwinner system. As the breadwinner, men worked not in the home or on surrounding land but with non-kin in factories, shops, and offices. The man's economic roles now made him the link between the family and the wider market economy. At the same time, his personal participation in the household diminished. His wife stayed home and performed the parental and domestic duties that women had always performed. She bore and reared children, cooked meals, washed clothes, and cared for her husband's personal needs, but to an unprecedented degree her economic role changed because she could not produce what the family consumed—production had been removed from the home (Davis 1984).



The breadwinner system did not last long because it placed too much strain on husbands and wives. The strains stemmed from several sources. Never before had

- the roles of husband and wife been so distinct,
- women not produced what their families consumed,
- men spent most of their waking hours separated from their families, and
- men assumed sole responsibility for supporting the entire family.

Davis regards these events as structural weaknesses in the breadwinner system. Given these weaknesses, the system needed strong normative controls to survive: “The husband’s obligation to support his family, even after his death, had to be enforced by law and public opinion. Illegitimate sexual relations and reproduction had to be condemned; divorce had to be punished, and marriage had to be encouraged by making the lot of the ‘spinster’ a pitiful one” (p. 406). Davis maintains that these strains were too great and these strict normative controls eventually collapsed. Other changes contributed to the breadwinner system’s collapse, including decreases in total fertility rates, increases in life expectancy, increases in divorce rates, and increases in employment opportunities for women.

DECLINES IN TOTAL FERTILITY. The decline in total fertility (number of children born over a woman’s lifetime) actually began before married women entered the labor force in large numbers. Davis attributes the decline to the forces of industrialization, which changed children from economic assets to economic liabilities. Not only did women have fewer children, but the number of years separating first- and lastborn had also decreased so that women had their last child at a younger age. These changes in number and spacing of children gave women time to work outside the home, especially after their children entered school.

INCREASED LIFE EXPECTANCY. Davis argues that by 1980 the average woman could expect to live 33 years after her last child left home. As a result, the time devoted to child care occupied a smaller proportion of her life. In addition, women's life expectancy came to exceed men's by 5.5 years. Because brides tended to be younger on average than their partners, the average married woman could expect to outlive her husband by 8 to 10 years. Although few women would name increased life expectancy as a reason for working in the paid labor force, the possibility of living many years longer than her husband changed the way women looked at and planned out their lives.

INCREASED DIVORCE RATE. Davis traces the rise in the divorce rate to the breadwinner system, and specifically to the shift of economic production outside the home:

With this shift, husband and wife, parents and children, were no longer bound together in a close face-to-face division of labor in a common enterprise. They were bound, rather, by . . . the husband's ability to draw income from the wider economy and the wife's willingness to make a home and raise children. The husband's work not only took him out of the home but also frequently put him into contact with other people, including young unmarried women who were strangers to his family. Extramarital relationships inevitably flourished. Freed from rural and small-town social controls, many husbands either sought divorce or, by their behavior, caused their wives to do so. (pp. 410–411)

Davis argues that an increase in the divorce rate preceded married women's entry into the labor market by several decades. However, once the divorce rate reached a certain threshold (a 20 percent or greater chance of divorce), more married women seriously considered seeking employment to protect themselves in case their marriages failed. When both husband and wife participate in the labor force, the chances of divorce increase even more.



John Collier/Library of Congress

◀ This 1942 photograph captures the dynamics of a dual-career, heterosexual-couple household. The caption associated with this photograph is “Mr. Smith leaves for the early morning shift in the chemical division of the Dupont powder company. His wife will leave ‘as soon as she does the dishes’ for her work as secretary in the plant office.” Working outside the house put both in contact with others, increasing the possibility of extramarital romantic attachments.

INCREASED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN.

Davis believes that married women were motivated to seek work because of changes in the childbearing experience, increases in life expectancy, the rising divorce rate, and the strains inherent to the breadwinner system. However, women could act on these motivations only when their opportunities for paid employment increased. As industrialization matured, it brought a corresponding increase in the kinds of jobs perceived as suitable for women. Paid employment increased their economic self-sufficiency

and transformed gender roles. There is “nothing like a checking account to decrease someone’s willingness to be pushed into marriage or stay in a bad one” (Kipnis 2004).

► The groundbreaking *Cosby Show* began airing in 1984, the same year Davis published his article describing the rise and fall of the breadwinner system. The show emphasized the dual-income arrangement and offered a model of what husbands and wives could expect of each other when the woman held a position (lawyer) essentially equal in stature and income to her husband’s (physician).

NBC-TV / The Kobal Collection



Davis does not argue that the dual-career model is free of problems. First, it “lacks normative guidelines. It is not clear what husbands and wives should expect of each other. . . . Each couple has to work out its own arrangement, which means in practice a great deal of experimentation and failure” (Davis 1984, p. 413). Second, even in the two-income system, women tend to remain primarily responsible for domestic matters. Davis maintains that women bear this responsibility because men and women are unequal in the labor force. (At the time Davis wrote his study, women earned 66 cents for every dollar men earned. Today, they earn about 77.1 cents for every dollar men earn [National Committee on Pay Equity 2009].) Davis believes that as long as women make an unequal contribution to the overall household income, they will do more work around the house. The problems of the post-breadwinner system are evident when we consider that a large proportion of married women (almost one-third) “choose” to not work outside the home (U.S. Department of Labor 2007). According to Davis, that choice reflects the psychosocial costs of employment to married women—costs that include the stress of juggling family and career, finding reliable day care, and anxiety over making those choices.

Critical Thinking

To what extent does the image of the breadwinner system (as described by Davis) figure into your thinking about what constitutes the ideal family arrangement?

Sexual Stratification

11.4

Objective

You will learn about the larger social forces that shape relationships between those in marriages, civil unions, and other partnerships.

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ronald Guttridge



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Erick S. Holmes

Imagine for a moment that this man and woman are a couple. What kind of relationship do you think the two would have?

In answering the question, did you think about how that relationship would be affected by the fact that the partners appear equal in strength and probably earn about the same income? One might hypothesize that the more alike people are in physical strength, in the work they do, and in the income they earn, the more equal their overall relationship will be.

Sexual Stratification

Imagine a society in which men are encouraged to choose female partners who are physically smaller than they and women are encouraged to choose male partners physically larger than they. Imagine also that the occupations in the

society are distributed and rewarded in such a way that working females on average earn 77 cents to every dollar earned by their male counterparts. What generalization might we make about the relationships between men and women in partnerships? To what extent can these generalizations be applied to same-sex partnerships in that society? Such questions speak to issues surrounding sexual stratification.

Sexual stratification is the system societies use to rank males and females on a scale of social worth such that the ranking affects life chances in unequal ways. Sociologist Randall Collins (1971) offers a theory of sexual stratification. Collins's theory is based on three assumptions. First, people tend to use their economic, political, physical, and other advantages to dominate others. Second, any change in the distribution of resources across a society alters the structure of domination. Third, ideology is used to support and justify one group's domination of another.

► Under what conditions might women be *required* by law to cover their bodies from head to toe? Be denied access to education? Be forbidden to leave the house unless accompanied by a husband or other adult male relative? According to Collins (1971), when males hold political and economic power and when the society defines males as innately superior to females. How would the relationship between the sexes change if women were given access to education and to opportunities for earning an income independent of males?



U.S. Air Force photo

Collins points out that in general males tend to be physically stronger than females and that because of this physical difference, the *potential* for coercion by males exists in encounters with females. He maintains that women have historically been viewed and treated as men's sexual property and that the ideology of sexual property, the "relatively permanent claim to exclusive sexual rights over a particular person" (1971, p. 7), lies at the heart of sexual stratification.

According to Collins, the extent to which women are viewed as sexual property and subordinate to men depends on two important interdependent factors: women's access to agents of violence control and their position relative to men in the labor market. In other words, when women can call the police in the event of violence and when their income is equal to that of men's, they are less likely to be viewed as sexual property.

Collins identified four historical economic arrangements that shape relationships between men and women: (1) low-technology tribal societies, (2) fortified households, (3) private households, and (4) advanced market economies. These four arrangements are ideal types; the reality is usually a mixture of two or more types.

LOW-TECHNOLOGY TRIBAL SOCIETIES. Low-technology tribal societies include hunting and gathering societies without technologies that permit the creation of surplus wealth—that is, wealth beyond what is needed to meet basic human needs, such as food and shelter. In such societies, sex-based division of labor is minimal, because the emphasis is on collective welfare and the

belief that all members must contribute to ensure the group's survival. Because almost no surplus wealth exists, marriage between men and women from different families does little to increase a family's wealth or political power. Consequently, daughters are not treated as property, in the sense that they are not used as bargaining chips to achieve such aims. Relatively speaking, women in low-technology tribal societies have greater social standing and value than women in other arrangements described in this section (Cote 1997).

FORTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS. Fortified households are pre-industrial arrangements characterized by a lack of police force or other agency dedicated to social control. Rather, the household functions as an armed unit, and the head of the household acts as a military commander. All fortified households share one characteristic: the presence of a nonhouseholder class, consisting of propertyless laborers and servants. In the fortified household, “the honored male is he who is dominant over others, who protects and controls his own property, and who can conquer others’ property” (Collins, 1971, p. 12). Men treat women as sexual property in every sense: daughters are often bargaining chips for establishing

economic and political alliances with other households, and male heads of household have sexual access to female servants. In this system, women’s power depends on their relationship to the dominant men.



sexual property. This engraving titled “Emancipated Slaves, White and Colored” speaks to the sexual relationship between master and slaves, in which the product of their union was slaves who appeared white. The offspring of those unions assumed the legal status of the mother—the master’s property.

PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS. Private households emerge with the establishment of a market economy; a centralized, bureaucratic state; and agencies of social control that alleviate the need for citizens to take the law into their own hands. Under the private household arrangement, men monopolize the most desirable and important economic and political positions. Men are still heads of household in that they control the property and assume the role of breadwinner; women remain responsible for housekeeping and childrearing.

The decline in the number of fortified households, the separation of the workplace from the home, smaller family size, and the existence of a police force to which women could appeal in cases of domestic violence gave rise to the notion of romantic love as an important ingredient in marriage.

► This 1916 drawing suggests one image of the private household: men offer women economic security because they dominate the important, high-paying positions. Women offer men companionship and emotional support and they strive to be attractive—that is, to achieve ideal femininity, which might include possessing an 18-inch waist or wearing high-heeled shoes. At the same time, before marriage women try to act as sexually inaccessible as possible, because theoretically they offer sexual access to men in exchange for economic security.



Plummer, Ethel M./Cleveland/ Library of Congress

ADVANCED MARKET ECONOMIES. Advanced market economies offer widespread employment opportunities for women. Although women remain far from being men's economic equals, some can enter into relationships with

men by offering more than an attractive appearance; they can provide an income and other personal achievements. Because they have more to offer, these women can make demands on men to be sensitive and physically attractive, to meet the standards of masculinity, and to help with reproductive work. In the United States today, almost one-third (31 percent) of all women in dual-earner households where both partners work full time earn more money than their male partner (Population Reference Bureau 2008). This situation may explain in part why increasing commercial attention has been given to male appearances and abilities.



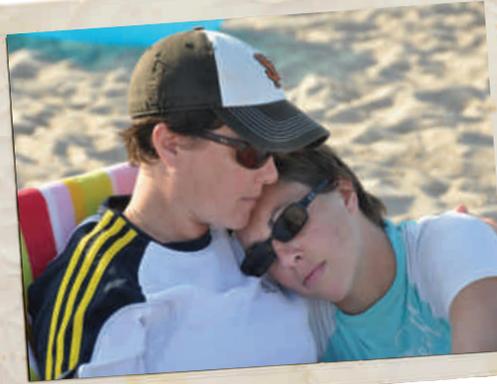
© David Young-Wolff / Photo Edit

◀ To some extent products such as Viagra and Cialis—used to address erectile dysfunction—emphasize that the drugs will enhance men's ability to satisfy women. This sends the message to men that they should be ready when the moment is right or when their partner is ready.

Lesbian and Gay Marriages and Partnerships

Gay partnerships, unions, and marriages (hereafter referred to as gay partnerships), like heterosexual relationships, are complex relationships that cannot be analyzed in simple ways. To what extent do same-sex or other unconventional partnerships mirror the inequalities that characterize heterosexual partnerships in general? As you might imagine, there is limited research on so-called unconventional partnerships, if only because it is difficult to identify those who are in such relationships. Most, if not all, of the existing research on unconventional partnerships focuses on gay and lesbian relationships. Those unfamiliar with same-sex commitments often frame them in terms of heterosexual ideals—ideals that assume one person enacts a traditional masculine role (butch) and the other enacts the traditional feminine role (femme). The research, however, indicates that most lesbians and gays tend to reject the traditional heterosexual

ideals associated with masculinity and femininity as a template for their relationships (Kurdek 2005). That is, while the same-sex couples may divide up the household tasks, assume different sexual responses, and take the lead with some kinds of household decisions, these activities are not typically allocated so that one partner performs strictly “female” and the other strictly “male” activities. In fact, it is rare to find a situation in which one partner exclusively performs traditional male or female roles. In this sense, lesbian and gay partnerships may approach the type of partnership characteristic of advanced market economies (Kurdek 2005).



◀ Sociologist Lawrence A. Kurdek (2005) has found that relative to heterosexual married couples, gay and lesbian couples tend to “assign household labor more fairly, resolve conflict more constructively, experience similar levels of satisfaction, and perceive less support from family members but more support from friends.” One might argue that structural factors, including income and physical parities, may contribute to this observed equality.

From what we know, lesbians and gays are very likely to be part of a dual-career relationship and therefore possess some measure of economic independence from the other. The research to date has not explored how gay and lesbian relationships are affected when one partner earns substantially more than the other and/or when one partner is physically stronger and has the potential to dominate the other (Kurdek 2004; Huston 2000).

Critical Thinking

Identify a couple in a partnership. In what ways do physical differences, occupation (paid or unpaid), and income shape their relationship?

Key Term

sexual stratification

Intergenerational Family Relationships

Objective

You will learn about the social forces that affect intergenerational family relationships.



© Bill Bachmann / Alamy

Do you have a grandparent in your life? How about a great-grandparent or even a great-great-grandparent that is still alive?

The six-year-old in this photograph was born into a family that includes her mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and great-great-grandmother. That six-year-old's mother, who is 25 years old, has had her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother in her life since birth. What does it mean that the 72-year-old grandmother still has her 97-year-old mother in her life?

Generations in the Context of Family

While great-grandparents and even great-great-grandparents have always been present in some people's lives, the likelihood that most of us will know and remember these older relatives has increased substantially over the past few decades. Moreover, the likelihood that parents will be in children's lives for 70 or 80 years has increased substantially as well.

In the context of family, we define a **generation** as a category of persons passing through time that is distinguished from other such categories by its cultural disposition (dress, language, preferences for songs, activities, entertainment),

posture (walk, dance, the way the body is held), access to resources, and socially expected privileges, responsibilities, and duties (Eyerman and Turner 1998). Each generation is distinguished by titles such as baby, teenager, parent, great-grandparent, and so on. As people age they pass into and out of generational categories. In this module we consider how three social forces have broadly affected intergenerational relationships among family members. Those forces are increased life expectancy, declines in parental authority, and change in economic status of children.

Dramatic Increases in Life Expectancy

Since 1900 the average life expectancy at birth has increased by 28 years in the world's richest economies and by 20 years (or more) in developing economies. Sociologist Holger Stub (1982) describes at least four ways in which gains in life expectancy have altered the composition of the family in the last century. First, the chance that children will lose one or both parents before they reach 16 years of age has decreased sharply. In 1900 the chance of such an occurrence was 24 percent; today it is less than 1 percent. At the same time, parents can expect their children to survive infancy and early childhood. In 1900, 250 of every 1,000 children born in the United States died before reaching age 1; 33 percent did not live to age 18. Today, 6 of every 1,000 children born die before they reach age 1; less than 5 percent die before reaching age 18. Not only can parents and children

be much more secure that the other will survive, but the length of time parents, siblings, and other relatives share each others' lives has increased.



◀ This 1896 photographic print shows six generations of women. This portrait indicates that multigenerational and even six-generation families existed in the past. From a societal point of view, however, the number of such families was insignificant. But what happens when four-, five- and

six-generation families become commonplace in society? It will take some time for societies' institutions to adjust to that reality, because there is virtually no model in place for how members of families with four or more generations are expected to interact with each other.

Second, the number of people surviving to old age has increased. In countries such as Japan, Italy, Germany, and the United States, where the total fertility rate is low or declining, the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. In 1970, approximately 25 percent of all people in their late fifties had at least one surviving parent; in 1980, 40 percent of this group had a surviving parent. Even more astonishing, by 1990, 20 percent of people in their early sixties and 3 percent of people in their early seventies had at least one surviving parent (Lewin 1990).

Third, the potential length of the average marriage and other intimate partnerships has increased. Given the mortality patterns in 1900, newly married

couples could expect their marriage to last 23 years before one partner died (assuming they did not divorce). Today, if they do not divorce, newly married couples can expect to be married for 53 years before one partner dies. This structural change may be one factor underlying the currently high divorce rates. At the turn of the last century, death nearly always intervened before a typical marriage had run its natural course. Now, many marriages run out of steam with decades of life remaining for each spouse. When people could expect to live only a few more years in an unsatisfying relationship, they would usually resign themselves to their fate. But today the thought of living 20, 30, or even 50 more years in an unsatisfying relationship can provoke decisive action at any age (Dychtwald and Flower 1989). Divorce dissolves today's marriages at the same rate that death did 100 years ago (Stub 1982).

Fourth, people now have more time to choose and get to know a partner, settle on an occupation, attend school, and decide whether they want children. In fact, these areas of experience are occurring later in life than in past generations. Moreover, an initial decision made at any one of these stages is not final. The amount of additional living time enables individuals to change life course—a luxury not available to their counterparts of a century ago. In fact, one might argue that the so-called midlife crisis derives from the belief “that there yet may be time to make changes” (Stub 1982, p. 12).

Decline in Parental Authority

Around the beginning of the 20th century, children learned from their parents and other relatives the skills needed to make a living. As the pace of industrialization increased, jobs moved away from the home and into factories and office buildings. Parents no longer trained their children, because the skills they knew and possessed were becoming obsolete. Children came to expect that they would not make their living in the same way their parents did. In short, as the economic focus shifted from agriculture to manufacturing, the family became less involved in children's lives. Ultimately, the transfer of work away from the home and neighborhood removed opportunities for parents and children to work together.

With industrialization the separation of parents' work life from their children's day-to-day activities soon spread to other areas, as parents and their children moved into different social spheres. Parental authority over adult children lost its economic and legal supports and the legal rights of individuals were strengthened. Gradually, values and norms developed that supported privacy and intergenerational independence; for example, the ideas that elders should not interfere in the lives of adult children and that parents and adult children should reside in separate households. Popular opinion pushed governments to establish social security and health insurance programs for the retired, low-income, and disabled. Those policies further reinforced changes in family structure and values. Contributing to these changes was the increased prevalence of employed females, a group that had historically assumed caregiving responsibilities for elderly family members. This new parent–adult child relationship has been labeled “intimacy at a distance” (Ogawa and Retherford 1997). The changed relationships among family members—especially the trend away from shared residences—offer fewer natural opportunities for intergenerational activities. Education, work, social, and leisure activities became largely age-segregated experiences, to the point that if intergenerational activities were to take place, they needed to be planned in advance.

Take a long view of family life in the United States and consider the responsibilities once assigned to the family that are now performed by organizations serving the public in general, such as day care, nursery schools, and preschools. In 1970 about 20 percent of three- and four-year-olds were enrolled in formal education programs. Today about half attend a full-time preschool program. The rise in such programs is connected in part to the increased number of women entering the workforce but also by a belief that early education programs are essential to educational success (Social Issues Reference 2009).



Andy Knell

SFA Bethann Hunt, USAF

▲ Contrast the experience of these American children (left) with that of these Afghan children from the Pashtun tribe sitting together at home in Kabul. While kindergartens exist in Afghanistan, only about 2,000 children attend them in a country where 7 million children are age 5 and under (Education Encyclopedia 2009). In that country the family is the major means of fulfilling economic and social needs. The contrast helps to illustrate how parental authority over children's lives is diminished (for better or worse) when outside agencies assume responsibility for some of their care.

Economic Status of Children

Technological advances associated with the Industrial Revolution and the shift from an agriculture-based economy to a manufacturing-based one also changed children from economic assets to liabilities. Mechanization decreased the amount of physical effort and time needed to produce food and other commodities. Consequently, children lost their economic value. In agricultural and other extractive economies, children represent an important source of free unskilled labor for the family. This fact may partly explain why the highest total fertility rates in the world occur in places like Afghanistan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Niger—places where labor-intensive agriculture and extractive industries are crucial to the economy.

Demographer S. Ryan Johansson (1987) argues that in most industrialized economies, couples who choose to have children bring them into the world to provide intangible, emotional services—services such as love, companionship, an outlet for nurturing feelings, enhancement of dimensions of adult identity—rather than economic services.

► Study the two photographs of children who are about the same age. When you think of the role of children in the United States today, do you think of children performing labor or do you think of children as having talents that need to be developed? The 1938 photo of a child working in a cranberry bog depicts labor that contributes to his family's income. The child in gymnastics class is participating in an activity for which the family must pay.



Rothenstein, Arthur/Library of Congress



Cpl. Im Jin-min (USAG-Yongsan)

The shift away from labor-intensive production stripped children of opportunities to make an economic contribution to the family (Johansson 1987). In high-income economies, the family's energies have shifted away from production of food and other necessities and toward the consumption of goods and services. In the United States, largely because of the shift away from labor-intensive production, children have become expensive to rear. Today, depending on income, Americans will spend between \$148,320 (average for lowest income two-parent households) and \$298,680 (average for highest income two-parent households) to house, feed, clothe, transport, and supply medical care to a child until he or she is 18 years old. Depending on income, the average annual expenses for child-rearing can range from \$7,830 to \$17,500 (Lino 2008). These costs cover only the basics; when we include extras, such as summer camps, private schools, sports, and music lessons, the costs go even higher. Of course, for many parents, the cost of raising children does not stop when they turn 18. The high cost of raising children may be one reason that, in a recent national survey of 2,200 adults, children were among the least cited contributors to a successful marriage. Faithfulness, a good sexual relationship, household chore-sharing, income, good housing, shared religious beliefs, and similar tastes and interests were cited more often than children (St. George 2007).

Critical Thinking

Describe an intergenerational relationship in your family between the oldest and youngest member.

Key Term

generation

Who Needs and Gives Care?

Objective

You will learn how sociologists think about those who give and receive care.



U.S. Army photo by Army Spc. Anna K. Perry

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class David G. Crawford

Is there someone in your life for whom you give, have given, or expect to give care? Have you ever needed care?

Obviously we needed care when we were very young and, unless we die suddenly, we will very likely need care at the end of life. In this module we explore caregiving apart from that needed to raise children.

Caregiving

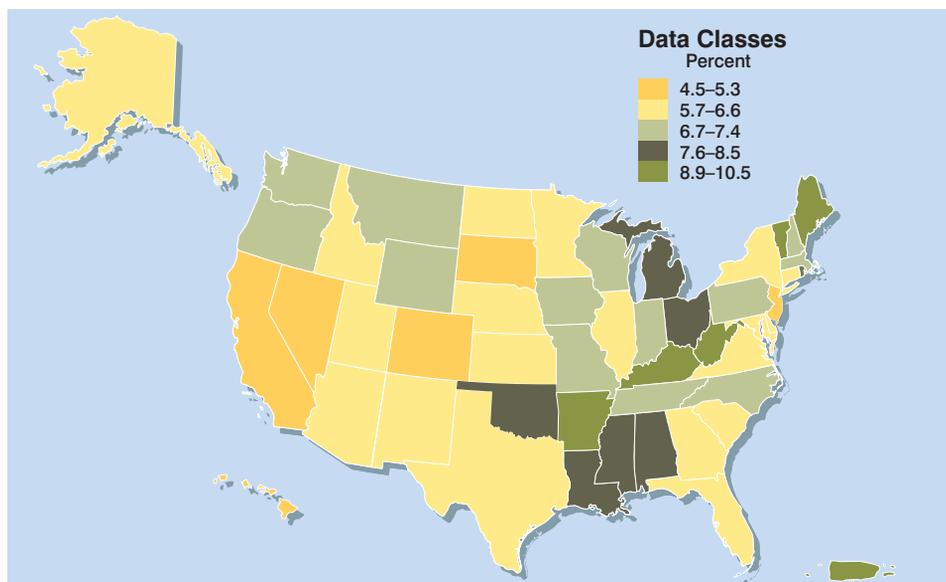
In this regard we use the term **caregivers** to mean those who provide service to people who, because of physical impairment, a chronic condition, or cognitive impairment cannot do certain activities without help (Day 2009). The caregiving that family members, neighbors, and friends provide in a home setting is **informal care**. Caregiving provided, usually for a fee, by credentialed

professionals (whether in the person's home or some other facility) is **formal care**. In this module we focus on the informal dimension of care, because most caregiving in the United States is provided by informal caregivers (Day 2009). An estimated 28.8 million informal caregivers in the United States devote 30.9 billion hours of caring each year to assist a family member or friend. On average each caregiver devotes 25.1 hours per week (Day 2009).

An estimated 41.1 million people age 5 and over have a physical or mental impairment. It is difficult to know how many of these 41.1 million people are receiving informal care in the United States. The best estimates we have come from the U.S. Census Bureau (2007), which counts those who have serious difficulties (1) hearing and/or seeing (even when wearing glasses), (2) concentrating, remembering, and/or walking or climbing stairs, and (3) dressing, bathing, and doing errands alone, such as shopping and going to a doctor. Figure 11.6a shows just the percentage of 5- to 15-year-old children by state with an impairment.

Figure 11.6a Percentage of Non-Institutionalized Persons Age 5 to 15 Reporting a Physical, Mental, or Sensory Impairment, 2007

Generally when one thinks of disabled populations, those age 65 and over come to mind; 14.5 million in that age group are disabled in the United States. But there are a significant number of disabled age 5 to 15. Which states have the highest percentage of youth age 5 to 15 with an impairment? Which states have the lowest percentages? Notice that in some states as many as 1 in 10 youth ages 5 to 15 has a physical or mental impairment. The total number of people age 5 to 15 with an impairment is 2.8 million.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2007).

Caregiving, especially when it is long-term or ongoing, creates strain and tension for both the provider and receiver of care. The relationship between provider and receiver is subject to any number of strains and stresses related to

- the amount of time the caregiver is able to devote and the time those receiving care need or require,
- balancing the demands of caregiving with the caregiver's other commitments, including job and family,
- the physical and emotional demands of caring and being cared for, and
- dignity and privacy (changing diapers, using the toilet, bathing) (Day 2009).

People take on caregiving responsibilities for any number of reasons, including

- the desire to pay back recipients for the sacrifices they made,
- the emotional bond between the caregiver and the recipient,
- a desire to live a life free of regret or guilt—and the belief that failure to fulfill the caregiver role would lead to a life of regret,
- a feeling of accomplishment for a job well done, especially when the recipient expresses appreciation and satisfaction, and
- personal growth derived from the caregiving experience (Yamamoto and Wallhagen 1997).

To gain insights about caregiving, I routinely ask my students to consider the six questions the U.S. Census Bureau asks to determine physical or mental impairment and to describe anyone in their family who would answer “yes” to one or more of those questions. Virtually all my students are able to write about such a person. The last time I asked my students to write on this topic, 85 students wrote about a total of 109 family members. Four examples follow:

- *My uncle has a learning disability. He can barely read and write. His speech is slurred and it is very difficult to understand him. His disability does not affect him very much though; he gets around and goes to work everyday just like anyone else. Even with his learning disability he is great at working on cars and fixing miscellaneous things around the house. His disability isn't physical but whenever he has to read or sign something, my mom will have to read it and tell him what it means.*
- *My mother has severe arthritis. Her bones are deteriorating in her wrist and her ankles. My mother used to be a hairdresser but four years ago she was no longer able to move her hands and stand on her feet. My mom has had two wrist replacements and one ankle operation. She has been on disability for four years now and it's time to reapply. My mom takes many pills every morning and every night, about 20 each time. She often uses her wheelchair. She's able to take care of herself but if she pushes herself too much, she needs help and becomes stiff.*
- *My younger brother is 19 and was born with several problems. He is mentally retarded and has scoliosis and a club foot. He could not walk until he was 4; he cannot talk other than making simple sounds and he has had one major surgery to correct his scoliosis (he had a metal rod put into his back) and will have another next year after he graduates high school . . . He uses a handheld computer to communicate, and he just got his first job at Kroger. Growing up with him I have come to know many disabled people . . . It's unbelievable how many disabilities exist and the seriousness of those disabilities.*
- *The person in my family who would answer “yes” to one of the questions would be me. Because I have epilepsy I cannot drive. I cannot consume certain foods that cause migraines, which trigger seizures. When I get a migraine, I have so much pressure on my head my sight blurs and it is hard to see or want to move . . . It's scary because you don't know when you are going to have one and it's embarrassing when you do. I get sick easily. I would be stuck if it weren't for my friends and family who drive me places.*

Impairment and Disability

The four previous case studies provide insights about the diverse nature of physical and mental impairments and what can only be described as the heroic qualities of many who possess them. Because the student writers know the person so well about whom they wrote, they do not see their relative as fitting a stereotype. The four cases alert us to a distinction sociologists make between impairment and disability. An **impairment** is a physical or mental condition that interferes with someone's ability to perform a major life activity that the average person can perform without technical or human assistance or without changing the physical environment around them (e.g., a person confined to a wheelchair could cook if the stove had not been designed to accommodate only those who can stand).



Cpl. Brian A. Turhill

◀ Clearly, people without legs cannot pedal a traditionally constructed bike, but they can pedal with their hands and arms. The example shows that working assumptions guide the design of technologies: a design changes dramatically when the guiding assumptions change.

From a sociological point of view a **disability** is something society has imposed on those with certain impairments because of how inventions and social activities have been organized to exclude them but to accommodate others. In this vein, one might argue that humans invented bicycles to assist those with legs in overcoming barriers to how fast they could travel by foot. The point is that bicycles were designed to remove barriers for only those who can pedal with their legs. Disability is imposed when the emphasis is placed on the loss of some mental or physical capacity and no consideration is given to ways of reducing barriers to full participation (Barton 1991). Those with impairments often experience what many have called the **tyranny of the normal**—a point of view that measures differences against what is thought to be normal and that assumes those with impairments fall short in other ways. Pam Evans (1991), a wheelchair-bound woman, clarifies further this tyranny by outlining common assumptions held about the life of impaired individuals:

- That our lives are a burden to us, barely worth living.
- That we crave to be normal and whole.
- That any able-bodied partner we have is doing us a favor and that we bring nothing to the relationship.
- That if we are particularly gifted, successful, or attractive before the onset of disability our fate is infinitely more tragic than if we were none of these things.
- That our need and right to privacy isn't as important. . . .

While it would be naive to believe that these kinds of thoughts never occur to those with impairments, these common assumptions capture the indirect and direct messages leveled against impaired individuals.

Caregiving for an Aging Population

Although there has always been a very small proportion of people who lived to age 80 or 90, “there is no historical precedent for the aging of our population” (Soldo and Agree 1988). The family must find ways to adapt to this situation, especially as regards caregiving. With regard to the elderly and their caregivers, we will detail the caregivers’ characteristics, time spent giving care, and the **caregiver burden**, the extent to which caregivers believe that their emotional balance, physical health, social life, and financial status suffer because of their caregiver role (Zarit, Todd, and Zarit 1986).



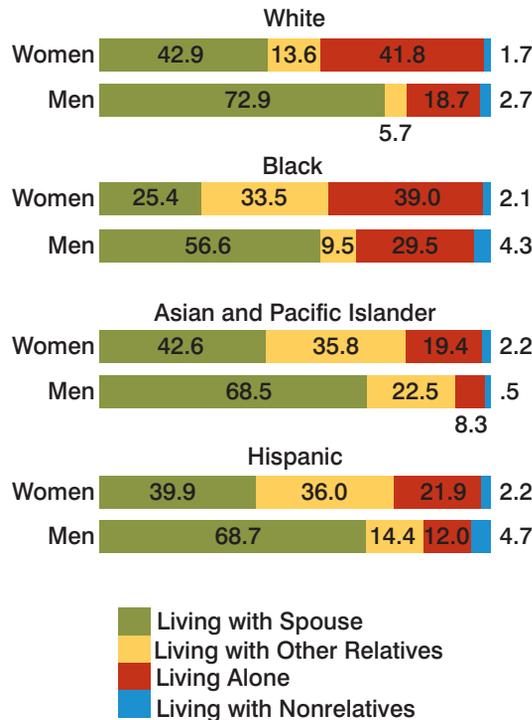
Lisa Southwick

◀ Keep in mind, however, that family caregiving is a complex activity that goes beyond time commitments and perceived burdens.

Figure 11.6b shows the living arrangements of the U.S. population age 65 and older by race and sex. The percentage living with other relatives varies by racial/ethnic category and gender.

Figure 11.6b Living Arrangements of People Age 65 and Older in the United States, by Racial or Ethnic Classification

What percentage of men 65 and older live with their spouse compared to women for each race and ethnic category? Which category of elderly is most likely to live alone? To live with other relatives?



Source: AgingStats.gov (2008)

Although most people 65 and over in the United States do not live in nursing homes, one in four does require assistance with daily activities such as bathing, walking, dressing, and eating. An estimated 17 percent of households (18.5 million) provide some kind of informal care to a person age 50 or older (National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP 2004). That percentage varies by racial classification, with 42 percent of Asian American households and 19 percent of white households offering such informal care (AARP 2001). One might conclude from these data that nonwhites are more willing to care for older members than whites. However, older whites are the most likely to rate their health as good to excellent, which reduces their need for caregiving. Almost 75 percent of men and women 65 and older who are classified as white rate their health as good to excellent, compared with 60 percent of those classified as black and 65 percent of those classified as Hispanic or Latino (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics 2000).

Ironically, members of ethnic groups that provide the most care are also the most likely to feel guilty about the amount of care given (AARP 2001). In the United States approximately 61 percent of all caregivers are women. This percentage holds for all racial groups except Asian Americans; in that group, 54 percent of caregivers are male. About 40 percent of all people caring for seniors are also caring for children younger than age 18. The typical caregiver is a 46-year-old employed woman caring for her 76-year-old mother, who lives nearby, for an average of 18 hours per week. The average person who cares for a senior does so for 4.3 years (Jackson 2003; National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP 2004).

Critical Thinking

Does someone in your family have an impairment? If yes, describe his or her situation. Be sure to indicate the category of difficulty to which that person would answer “yes.” (See page 408 for three categories of impairment as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.)

Key Terms

caregiver

formal care

tyranny of the normal

caregiver burden

impairment

disability

informal care

Applying Theory: Critical Social Theory

Objective

You will learn about the concept of sociological ambivalence and how it applies to family dynamics.



Missy Gish

Which of the four siblings do you think is the one on call to help older relatives or respond in times of need?

All four siblings in this photograph hold full-time jobs. Three of the four have children. Which sibling do you think works from home?

Which one takes time off from work when a child needs to see the doctor? If you guessed the sister, you are correct. That guess speaks to a social structure that “proclaims women as best suited and able to provide that care” (Connidis and McMullin 2002, p. 564) and that shifts a necessary burden disproportionately onto them. As we will learn, however, people are not passive actors but rather seek to exercise control over their situation, an ability that is largely affected by the resources available to them.

Critical Theory

Sociologists Ingrid Arnet Connidis and Julie Ann McMullin (2002) use what is known as a critical theory perspective to frame family dynamics as they relate to caregiving. The following themes guide their analysis:

- Social structure consists of social relationships involving people with varying and relative degrees of disadvantage and privilege associated with their class, gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other statuses.

- Relationships and interactions are shaped by the social structures in which they are embedded.
- A person's investment and interest in maintaining the status quo or current state of affairs depends on the extent to which he or she is privileged or disadvantaged by the social structures in which the person is embedded.
- Despite constraints imposed by social structure, people seek to exercise control over their lives. Human agency pushing against structural constraints is the source of conflict.

Connidis and McMullin introduce the concept **sociological ambivalence** to capture simultaneous positive and negative feelings toward a person or situation arising out of or on socially sanctioned inequalities that generate tensions and conflicts in relationships. Individuals *experience* ambivalence when these tensions and conflicts collide with their need to exercise agency or control over their lives. Connidis and McMullin argue that the responses to sociological ambivalence may reinforce the existing structure or push for its transformation.

Caregiving Dynamics

As critical theorists, Connidis and McMullin view the family as a “*potentially* oppressive structure” that is “linked to wider oppressive structures” (Morgan, 1985, p. 211). A structure is oppressive when it systematically advantages certain categories of people relative to others. From this critical theory perspective, conflict is a fundamental feature of family relationships because competing interests, needs, demands, and expectations among family members often collide.

In the context of family, for example, men face expectations and privileges with regard to caregiving that are different from those women face. Among other things, men are handed a “legitimate excuse” for not engaging in or for taking a limited role in caregiving. Legitimate excuses are considered as such because they are supported by longstanding beliefs and norms related to caregiving. “Hence, for men, paid employment is a legitimate excuse from caring for aging parents; for women, it is not” (Connidis and McMullin 2002, p. 562). Because women are expected to and do assume a disproportionate share of familial caregiving, their experience of and responses to structural constraints and accompanying ambivalence will differ from men's.

The disproportionate caregiving burden placed on women is often experienced as conflicting feelings of both resentment and love that manifests itself as tension or conflict in relationships and interactions with others. In response to those feelings and conflicts a person may choose between work and caregiving or assign higher priority to one area over the other. Of course, the response depends on the available resources from which a person can draw.

Connidis and McMullin argue that working women have fewer options than working men (and men in general) for resisting the societal pressures to provide care. As a result, they are more likely to experience an ambivalence intensified by the fact that they are “expected not only to provide the care but also to derive satisfaction and fulfillment” from it (p. 563).

► In family life men face considerably less pressure to assume caregiving roles. This lack of pressure is reinforced by their lack of public visibility in such roles. For example, less than 1 percent of daycare providers are male; fewer than 5 percent of nurses are male.

Women vary in their ability to exercise agency. Obviously, financially secure women have the option to hire others to provide some or all of the care. Employed women with few financial resources in low-paying jobs may be forced to use vacation and personal days, work fewer hours, change shifts, or drop out of the labor force to meet caregiving obligations. Simply hiring someone to provide care may not reduce ambivalence; in fact, financially secure women may experience greater ambivalence if they do not trust the providers to give their child, parent, or other relative high-quality care. On the other hand, their financially strapped counterparts with low job satisfaction may find that being a caregiver offers a sense of purpose that work does not. In other words, possessing financial and other advantages does not necessarily alleviate ambivalence.

Connidis and McMullin point out that, even in light of the increasing number of family-friendly workplace policies (e.g., parental leave, job sharing, onsite day care, telecommuting), it is female employees who take the most advantage of them and who sacrifice careers to meet familial responsibilities. Even with family-friendly policies, we must remember that women are still part of a society that defines them as best able to provide care.

Men, who face considerably less pressure to take on caregiving roles than do women, are likely to experience a different kind of ambivalence when they do so. They, too, are part of a society that tells them they are not primarily responsible for caretaking and that they are not naturally suited to provide it. Men may question their ability to provide such care, especially with regard to intimate aspects of caregiving—bathing, changing adult diapers, and dressing. Anecdotal evidence suggests that men feel unprepared for the job and isolated from support networks (Leland 2008; see Figure 11.7a). One man interviewed in the *New York Times* who is a caregiver to his elderly mother shared his feelings.

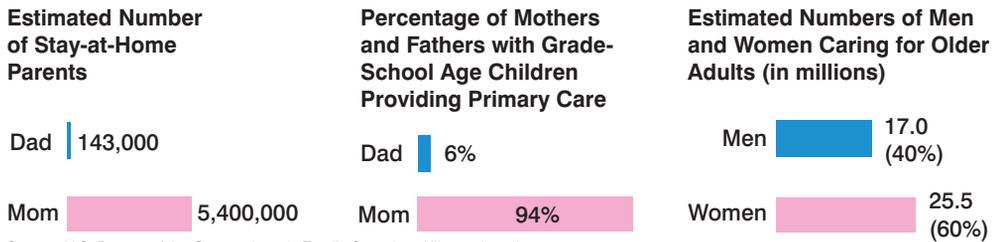
She doesn't know if I'm her husband or her boyfriend or her neighbor. She knows she trusts me. But there are times when it's very difficult. I need to keep her from embarrassing herself. She'll say things like, "I adore you." I don't know who she's loving, because she doesn't know who I am. Maybe I'm embarrassed about it—it's my mom, for Christ sakes. But it's weird how the oldest son becomes the spouse. (Nicholson 2008)

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Jason R. Wilson



Figure 11.7a Selected Statistics on Caregiving in the United States

Significantly fewer men than women engage in child care. The number and percentage of men caring for older adults is much higher, but we do not know the level of caregiving men provide relative to their female counterparts.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2006); Family Caregiver Alliance (2010)

Critical theory prompts us to explore the dynamics by which sociological ambivalence is negotiated. Connidis and McMullin point out that people employ many strategies for handling ambivalence, including humor, confrontation, substance abuse, acceptance, and abandonment. They hypothesize that the fewer perceived or real options or choices available to people, the more likely they are to deal with ambivalence by resigning themselves to the situation. When substantial numbers of people experience ambivalence created by current structural arrangements, there is a potential for fundamental change to occur. Those privileged by existing structural arrangements, however, are motivated to keep things as they are.



LOPL Cory Yenter, USMC

< One should not conclude that caregiving is only a burden. It can be a very rewarding experience. But it is also a labor-intensive experience that is best shared. When social structures define only half the population as naturally suited for caregiving, it eliminates an important source of

support. When social structures portray men as unsuited to caregiving, those structures alienate men from establishing meaningful bonds with others.

Critical Thinking

Has someone you know taken on the role of primary caregiver? Does that person experience ambivalence? Explain.

Key Term

sociological ambivalence

Summary: Putting It All Together

Family is a social institution that binds people through blood, marriage, law, and/or social norms. When sociologists study family, they do not have a particular family structure in mind as a standard. Functionalists emphasize the functions of family; conflict theorists emphasize the ways in which families perpetuate existing inequalities and social boundaries. Symbolic interactionists seek to understand the experiences of conforming to or resisting societal ideals about what family life should be.

Millions of seemingly personal decisions influence the variety of family arrangements that exist in any country—decisions about (1) whether to have children, and if so, how many to have, when to have them, and how to space them; (2) whether to marry, and if so, when; (3) whether to work for pay; and (4) whether to become a caregiver to dependent relatives. These decisions are informed, or perhaps even largely determined, by the larger social context, including life expectancy, employment opportunities, social norms about the ideal number of children, and ideas about who and when one should marry.

Sexual stratification is the system by which societies rank males and females on a scale of social worth such that the ranking affects life chances in unequal ways. The more access women have to agents of violence control and the more equal women's position relative to men in the labor market, the more likely women are to have an equal relationship with men. This principle seems to apply to all types of intimate relationships, not only heterosexual ones.

A generation is a category of persons passing through time that is distinguished from other generational categories by such characteristics as its cultural disposition, posture, access to resources, and socially expected privileges, responsibilities, and duties. Industrialization and dramatic increases in life expectancy have broadly affected relationships among generations of family members in terms of the length of time the generations spend with each other, the authority parents have over children, and the status of children.

Caregiving, especially when it is informal, long-term, or ongoing, creates strain and tension for both the provider and receiver of care, who are usually related. The relationship between provider and receiver is subject to any number of strains and stresses related to time, conflict with other commitments, physical and emotional demands of caring and being cared for, and dignity and privacy.

[Can You Top This Photo?]

Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo with a caption that shows two people who could potentially form a partnership and who appear essentially equal in strength, occupation, and income.

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Erik S. Holmes/Released



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ronald Guiridge/Released



Mario Tama/Getty Images

12

CHAPTER

EDUCATION AND RELIGION

- 12.1 Education
 - 12.2 Curriculum
 - 12.3 Learning Environments
 - 12.4 Costs and Rewards of Higher Education
 - 12.5 Religion
 - 12.6 Civil Religion and Fundamentalism
 - 12.7 Applying Theory: Contemporary Theoretical Syntheses
- Summary** Putting It All Together

In addition to family, education and religion are institutions that touch the lives of everyone living in the United States, where everyone is required by law to attend school and 90 percent of American adults indicate that as children they were affiliated with some religion. As we will learn, competition among various religious groups to influence the minds of school-age children helped produce Catholic, Lutheran, and other private schools, and even the public school system. This competition is an important factor in explaining the rise of what sociologists call the *credential society*.

Objective

You will learn why education, and schooling in particular, is an important area for sociological study.

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Chantel M. Clayton



U.S. Navy photo by Journalist 3rd Class Stephen P. Weaver

Think of something you remember learning. How did that learning occur?

Learning can take place in a spontaneous and unplanned way, as in the case of this little boy, who shows curiosity about a camera. Learning can also take place as the result of a deliberately designed experience with a specific outcome in mind, as when a surgeon uses a chicken to teach a student to suture (stitch). Both situations involve education.

Informal and Formal Education

Education includes any experience that trains, disciplines, and shapes the mental and physical potentials of the maturing person. Sociologists distinguish between informal and formal education. **Informal education** occurs in a spontaneous, unplanned way. Experiences that educate informally occur naturally; that is, they are not deliberately designed by someone to stimulate specific thoughts or to impart specific skills. Informal education takes place when a shopper observes that many items he or she purchases are made in China.

Formal education is a deliberate, planned effort to impart specific skills or information. Formal education, then, is a systematic process (for example, military boot camp, on-the-job training, or smoking cessation classes) in which someone designs the educating experiences. We tend to think of formal education as an enriching, liberating, or positive experience, but it can be impoverishing and narrowing as well (if it involves indoctrination or brainwashing). In any case, formal education is considered a success when those being instructed acquire the skills, thoughts, and information that those designing the experience seek to impart.

Sociologists are particularly interested in an educational experience that is largely formal in nature: schooling. **Schooling** is a program of formal, systematic instruction that takes place primarily in classrooms but also includes extracurricular activities and out-of-classroom assignments. In its ideal sense, “education must make the child cover in a few years the enormous distance traveled by mankind in many centuries” (Durkheim 1961, p. 862). More idealistically, schooling represents the means by which instructors instill a collective consciousness, “a complex of ideas and sentiments, of ways of seeing and of feeling, a certain intellectual and moral framework distinctive of the entire group” (p. 860). Schooling also involves passing on the values, knowledge, and skills believed to be important for success in the world.



Imaginechina via AP Images



Lisa Southwick

▲ For example, Chinese preschoolers (left) are taught to value the collective by suppressing individual impulses, playing cooperatively with other children, and attuning themselves to group enterprises. In contrast, American preschoolers (right) are taught to value individualism; teachers cultivate individual interests and encourage children to compete for success and recognition. Chinese educators seek to correct the sense of self-importance and individualism that can come with being an only child. American educators encourage individuality and verbal self-expression, which they see as vital to personal growth and development.

Sociologists grapple “with identifying key factors—inside and outside schools—that affect student outcomes” (Karen 2005). Among other things, sociologists examine how larger social forces such as family background, inequalities in funding, social policies, and the media shape learning environments and outcomes.

Functionalist Perspective

Schools perform important functions that serve the needs of society. Those functions include transmitting skills, facilitating personal growth, contributing to basic and applied research, integrating diverse populations, and screening and selecting the most qualified students for what are considered the most socially important careers.

TRANSMITTING SKILLS. Schools exist to teach children and others the skills they need to adapt to the society and world in which they live. To ensure that this end is achieved, stakeholders in education such as employers, parents, and government officials remind teachers what must be impressed on students. That might include patriotism, specific skills, and a sense of civic engagement.

FACILITATING PERSONAL REFLECTION AND CHANGE. Education can be a liberating experience that releases students from the blinders imposed by the accident of birth into a particular family, culture, religion, society, and time in history. Education can broaden students' horizons, making them aware of the conditioning influences around them and encouraging them to think independently of authority. In that sense, schools function as agents of personal change.

SOCIALIZING DIVERSE POPULATIONS. Schools function to socialize (for example, to Americanize, Europeanize, Brazilianize) people of different ethnic, racial, religious, and family backgrounds. In the United States, schools play a significant role in what is known as the melting-pot process. The creation of the United States involved the conquest of the native peoples, the annexation of Mexican territory along with many of its inhabitants (who lived in what is now New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California, and parts of Colorado and Texas), and an influx of millions of people from practically every country in the world (Sowell 1981). Early American school reformers—primarily those of Protestant and British backgrounds—saw public education as the vehicle for Americanizing a culturally and linguistically diverse population, instilling a sense of national unity and purpose, and training a competent workforce.



Photograph from U.S. War Relocation Authority



Phot. Daniel Boothe

▲ These schoolchildren are probably too young to appreciate the meaning of the words in the Pledge of Allegiance, but the act itself reminds them that they are Americans. The fact that the pledge was written in 1892 with schoolchildren in mind speaks to the Americanizing function of schools. The photos show schoolchildren in 1942 (left) and today (right) reciting the pledge.

SCREENING AND SELECTING. Schools use tests and grades to evaluate students and reward them accordingly by conferring or withholding degrees, issuing certificates, assigning students to academic tracks, rejecting or admitting students into college programs, and giving negative or positive recommendations. Ideally, they channel the most capable and skilled students into the most desirable and important careers and the least capable and skilled into careers believed to require few, if any, special talents.

SOLVING SOCIAL PROBLEMS. Societies use education-based programs to address a variety of social problems, including parents' absence from the home, racial inequality, drug and alcohol addictions, malnutrition, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and illiteracy. Although all countries likely support education-based programs that address social problems, the United States seems to place particular emphasis on education as a primary solution to many problems, such as childhood obesity, illegal drug use, poverty, hunger, unwanted pregnancy, and so on. The U.S. belief that education-based programs can be used to solve social problems and address community needs manifests itself in service-learning programs and partnerships with community-based organizations to address local, even global, problems and needs.

CONTRIBUTING TO BASIC AND APPLIED RESEARCH. Universities employ faculty whose job descriptions require them to do basic and applied research (in addition to teaching and sometimes in lieu of teaching). The following examples of university-based research centers or institutes suggest that universities add to society's knowledge base and influence policy in a variety of fields: the Center for Aging Research at Indiana University, the Artificial Intelligence Center at the University of Georgia, the Institute for the Study of Planet Earth at the University of Arizona, and the Institute for Drug and Alcohol Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University.

OTHER FUNCTIONS. Schools perform other, less obvious functions. For one, they function as reliable babysitters, especially for nursery-, preschool-, and grade school-age children. They also function as a dating pool and marriage market, bringing together students of similar and different backgrounds and ambitions whose paths might otherwise never cross.

Conflict Perspective

Schools are not perfect: not all minds are liberated; students drop out, refuse to attend, or graduate with skill deficiencies; schools misclassify students as slow learners; and so on. That is, from a conflict point of view, the functionalist analysis describes ideals, which some school systems realize better than others. The conflict perspective draws our attention away from order and stability and toward dominant and subordinate group dynamics and unequal power arrangements between those groups. Conflict theorists ask questions like, "Which schools have access to the most up-to-date computer or athletic facilities? Which types of students are most likely to drop out of high school, and which types of students are most likely to attend college?"

Conflict theorists argue that for the most part, schools simply perpetuate the inequalities of the larger society. This point is obvious when we consider that the poorest schools and most disadvantaged children usually have the highest

dropout rates, lowest high school graduation rates, and lowest college enrollments. In this regard, former Microsoft executive turned full-time philanthropist Bill Gates (2006) commented on the failure of the American system of education: “There’s an acceptance of a tiering approach, where over a third of the students never graduate, and another third are trapped into a situation where they don’t have the skills that are going to give them a good lifetime outcome.” Among other things, conflict theorists focus on the ways in which schools help determine life chances, including occupational success and placement.

Sociologist Randall Collins (1961) is associated with the classic statement outlining the conflict view of education. Collins points out that it is difficult to assess the role education plays in occupational success because there have been few, if any, systematic studies of how much of a particular job’s skills are learned on the job, through job training, or acquired through school background. In addition, it is the rare study that examines “what is actually learned in school and how long it is retained” (p. 39).

◀ Imagine that this employee works as a customer service rep at a bank and spends 90 percent of her workday talking to clients, fielding basic questions about their retirement accounts. Her answers follow a script from which she must not deviate. Do you think a college degree is needed for this job?

In spite of the untested role education plays in job success, Collins points to the steady increase in educational requirements for

employment throughout the last century that has created what he calls a **credential society**, a situation in which employers use educational credentials as screening devices for sorting through a pool of largely anonymous applicants. Employers have come to view applicants with college degrees as having demonstrated responsibility, consistency, and presumably, basic skills. In addition, employers often require a degree for promotion and advancement, even among those who have an excellent work record and have demonstrated a high level of competence. Likewise, employers use a high school diploma as a screening device for hiring low- and mid-level employees who are viewed (relative to high school dropouts) as people “who have acquired a general respect” for cultural values and styles (p. 36).

Collins asked what historical factors contributed to the emergence of a credential society. This is what he discovered:

1. The emergence cannot be traced to technical changes associated with full-scale industrialization because most jobs created as a result of industrialization did not require advanced technical knowledge beyond that of an 8th grade education.
2. The emergence can be traced to a long-standing belief going back to the colonial era that associated high economic status with educational attainment. Collins argues that simply “the existence of a relatively small group of experts in high status positions fostered the demand that opportunities to acquire such positions be available on a large scale” (p. 37).



Peter Dressel/Blend Images/Getty Images

3. The emergence can be traced to the fact that the United States federal government has always left decisions about what to teach to state and local communities. In addition, it maintains a separation between church and state (no national church). These two characteristics set the stage for various religious groups to establish their own schools. Collins argues that it was this large number of schools and colleges in the United States that helps explain, in part, the emergence of the credential society.

Religious rivalry helped produce the Catholic and Lutheran school systems and even the public school system. Collins maintains that white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) elites founded the public school system in response to large-scale Catholic immigration from Europe.



Thomas Nast

◀ This anti-Catholic political cartoon from the 1880s, titled “Wolf at the door, gaunt and hungry—Don’t let him in,” shows children trying to keep the wolf symbolizing the threat of Catholic education from bursting inside the door.

Of course, once the system of public mass education was established, the elite found private schools for their children as a “means of maintaining cohesion of the elite culture itself” (p. 38). These rivalries set the stage for religious

and elite groups to establish universities as well. As a result opportunities for education at all levels expanded faster in America than anywhere else in the world, so that today there are an estimated 4,301 (National Center for Education Statistics 2008).

Collins argues that it was this large number of schools and colleges in the United States that helped explain the emergence of the credential society. The employer’s demand for credentials in turn has fueled and perpetuated a widely held belief that a person must go to college to be successful. The increasing supply of college-educated persons, in turn, has made a college degree increasingly a requirement for many jobs.

With regard to this demand, at least 80 percent of the American public believes that a “young person is best advised to pursue a college education rather than take even a good job out of high school.” And 91 percent believe that “employers are less likely to hire people without degrees even though they could do the job” (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education 2008).

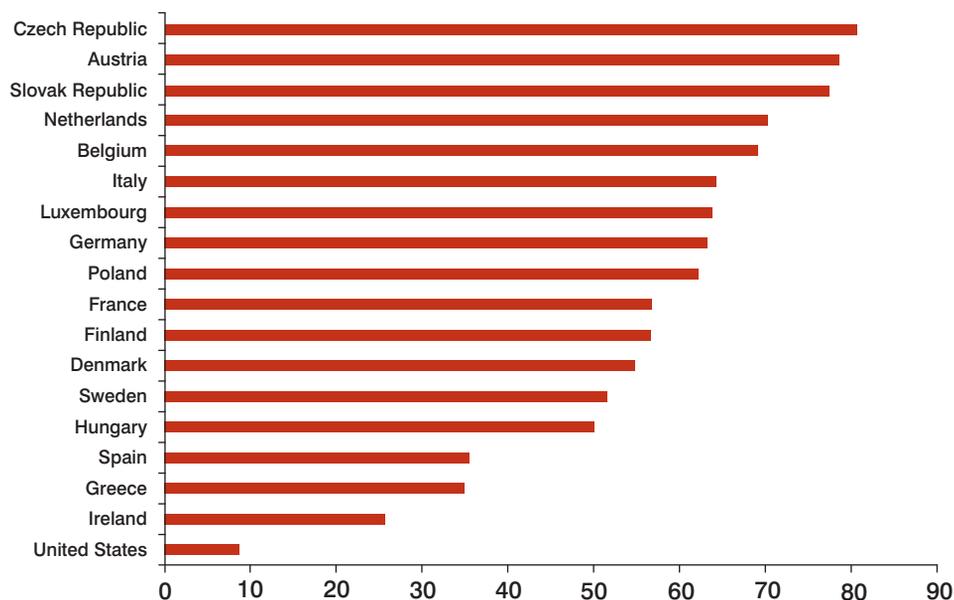
► In other words, the American public sends the message that a college degree is virtually the only option for obtaining a well-paying job, even though skilled electricians and plumbers, for example, earn more than many college-educated professionals (Reuters 2006).



White House photo by Paul Morse

The emphasis on a college degree may explain why fewer than 10 percent of American high school students are enrolled in vocational programs and why 60 to 70 percent are enrolled in the college preparatory track. In contrast, 35.6 to 80.7 percent of European high school students enroll in what those in the United States would call vocational programs (see Figure 12.1a). Such programs prepare students for direct entry into a specific occupation (OECD 2003).

Figure 12.1a Percentages of Students in Vocational Programs in European Countries and the United States



Source: OECD (2009)

Critical Thinking

Do you know someone who was turned down for a job or promotion because he or she did not have a degree? Describe the situation.

Key Terms

credential society

formal education

schooling

education

informal education

Curriculum

Objective

You will learn the ways in which sociologists define and assess the effects of curriculum on learning.



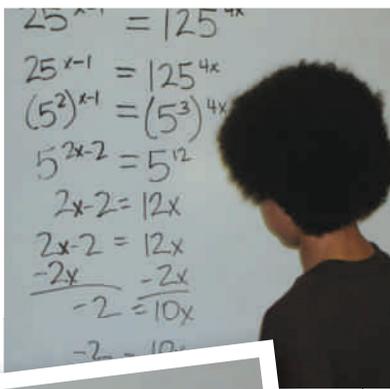
Think back on your school career. Which of these two photographs best describes a typical school day for you?

The two photos speak to ways in which curriculum is delivered. **Curriculum** encompasses subject content, assessment methods, and activities involved in teaching and learning for a specific course, grade, or degree. When sociologists study a curriculum, they focus on at least two questions: (1) Are students exposed to different kinds of curricula? (2) As students learn the curriculum, what other lessons do they learn?

Tracking

Most, if not all, educational systems sort students into distinct instructional groups according to past academic performance, performance on standardized tests, or even anticipated performance. Under this system, known as **tracking** or ability grouping, students may be assigned to

- separate instructional groups within a single classroom,
- programs such as college preparatory versus general studies, or
- advanced placement, honors, or remedial classes.

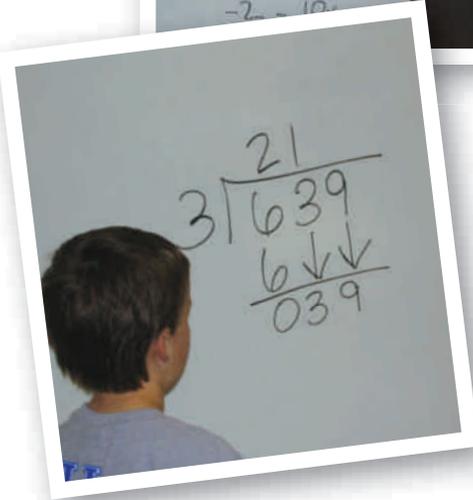


Missy Gish

◀ While most countries track students according to academic abilities, they do not offer students assigned to lower tracks a very basic math and those assigned to higher tracks algebra, geometry, or calculus. Everyone takes the same number and type of math courses.

Advocates of tracking offer the following rationales in support of the practice:

- Students learn better when they are grouped with those who learn at the same rate. The brighter students are not held back by the slower learners, and the slower learners receive the extra time and special attention needed to correct academic deficiencies.
- Slow learners develop more positive attitudes when they do not have to compete with the more academically capable.
- Groups of students with similar abilities are easier to teach than groups of students with differing abilities.



Missy Gish

There is little evidence to indicate that placing students in remedial or basic courses in which students participate in passive ways contributes to their intellectual growth, corrects their academic deficiencies, prepares them for success in higher tracks, or increases their interest in learning. The special curricula to which advanced-track students are exposed actually helps widen differences between them and students in different tracks (Oakes 1986a, 1986b).

In a now-classic study, sociologist Jeannie Oakes (1985) investigated how tracking affected the academic experiences of 13,719 middle school and high school students in 297 classrooms and 25 schools across the United States. “The schools themselves were different: some were large, some very small; some in the middle of cities; some in nearly uninhabited farm country . . . but the differences in what students experienced each day in these schools stemmed not so much from where they happened to live and which school they happened to attend but rather, from differences within each school” (Oakes 1985, p. 2).

Oakes’s findings are consistent with the findings of other studies that assess tracking:

Placement: Poor and minority students were placed disproportionately in the lower tracks.

Treatment: The different tracks were not treated as equally valued instructional groups. Clear differences existed in classroom climate and in the quality, content, and quantity of instruction, as reflected in the teachers’ attitude, in student-student relationships, and in teacher-student relationships. Low-track students were consistently exposed to inferior instruction—watered-down curricula and endless repetition—and to a more rigid, more emotionally strained classroom climate.

Self-image: Low-track students did not develop positive self-images because they were publicly identified and treated as educational discards, damaged merchandise, or even as unteachable. Among average- and low-track groups, tracking seemed to foster lower self-esteem and promote misbehavior, higher dropout rates, and lower academic aspirations. In contrast, placement in a college preparatory track had positive effects on academic achievement regardless of “family background and ability differences” (Hallinan 1988, p. 260).

Oakes argues that although many educators recognize the problems associated with tracking, efforts to undo tracking have collided with demands from politically powerful parents of high-achieving or gifted students; these parents insist that their children must get something more than the other students (Wells and Oakes 1996). As a result, tracking persists.

Formal and Hidden Curricula

Teachers everywhere teach two curricula simultaneously: a formal one and a hidden one. The various academic subjects—mathematics, science, English, reading, physical education, and so on—make up the **formal curriculum**. Students do not learn in a vacuum, however. As teachers instruct students and as students learn the subject matter and complete their assignments, other activities are occurring around them. These other activities are the **hidden curriculum**, which encompasses the teaching method, type of assignments, kinds of tests, tone of the teacher’s voice, attitudes of classmates, the number of students absent, the frequency of teacher absences, and the subjective criteria teachers use to assign grades. These so-called extraneous factors convey messages to students not only about the value of the subject but also about the values of society, the place of learning in their lives, and their role in society—as the case of spelling baseball illustrates.

Anthropologist Jules Henry (1965) used typical classroom scenes (acquired from thousands of hours of participant observation) to demonstrate the seemingly ordinary way hidden curriculum is transmitted and to show how students are exposed simultaneously to the two curricula. Simply asking students to form into teams to play an educational game such as spelling baseball teaches lessons about popularity and perceived ability unrelated to the subject of spelling.

The children form a line along the back of the room. They are to play spelling baseball, and they have lined up to be chosen for the two teams. . . . The teacher has selected a boy and a girl and sent them to the front of the room as team captains to choose their teams. As the boy and girl pick the children to form their teams, each child chosen takes a seat in orderly succession around the room. Apparently they know the game well. Now Tom, who has not yet been chosen, tries to call attention to himself in order to be chosen. Dick shifts his position to be more in the direct line of vision of the choosers, so that he may not be overlooked. He seems quite anxious. . . . (Henry 1965, pp. 297–298)



Missy Glish

◀ As another example, Jules Henry maintains that when children are sent to the board, especially to do math problems in front of the class, they learn a hidden curriculum, to fear failure and “envy success.” If they get the problem wrong, a classmate will be asked to identify and correct the mistake; hence, one student’s success is achieved at the expense of another’s failure.

Henry argues that a hidden curriculum that teaches students to envy success and to fear failure prepares students to fit into a competitive and consumption-oriented culture.

Critical Thinking

Think back to when you were in grade school or high school. Did you experience tracking? Describe how it was done, and how it shaped your educational experience.

Key Terms

curriculum

hidden curriculum

formal curriculum

tracking

Learning Environments

M O D U L E

12.3

Objective

You will learn how the learning environment affects academic achievement and other learning.



U.S. Census Bureau

Think about the teachers you had during grade school and high school. How many of those teachers were classified as white, black, or another race?

If you are classified as white, it is likely that you have never been taught by someone of a race different from your own. Or, at best, you can probably count on one hand the number of nonwhite teachers you've had. Research tells us that most schools, no matter the racial composition of the student body, have mostly white faculty. The research also tells us that schools with the most white students have very few, if any, teachers classified as a race other than white (see Table 12.3a).

Table 12.3a: Students' Racial Profile and Percentage of Faculty Considered White

This table shows the average percentage of a school faculty that is white when the student body consists of various percentages of students considered black and/or Hispanic. Notice that white faculty always constitute a majority of teachers, except when the student body is 90 to 100 percent black and/or Hispanic. Even then, 40 percent of the faculty is white.

When the Percentage of the Student Body That Is Black/Hispanic Is Then the Average Percentage of Faculty Who Are White Is . . .
0–10%	96.3%
10–19.5%	90.8%
19.6–29.5%	87.1%
29.6–39.5%	83.6%
39.6–49.5%	82.6%
49.6–59.5%	73.0%
59.6–69.5%	74.7%
69.6–79.5%	73.3%
79.6–89.5%	53.7%
89.6–100%	40.1%

Source: Frankenberg (2006)

Research also shows that white students are the most segregated racial group in the American school system (Frankenberg 2006). At the same time, the United States is undergoing a racial shift—39 percent of the under-18 population is classified as a nonwhite race or Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). To put it another way, the average white student, who is part of an increasingly racially diverse society, does not have the opportunity to learn from teachers with different experiences and perspectives (Frankenberg 2006).

Racial Inequalities: Then and Now

More than 45 years ago sociologist James Coleman was the principal investigator behind the congressionally mandated report *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, popularly known as the Coleman Report. Coleman and his colleagues surveyed 570,000 students and 60,000 teachers, principals, and school superintendents in 4,000 schools across the United States. Coleman found that a decade after the 1954 Supreme Court's famous desegregation decision (*Brown v. Board of Education*), U.S. schools were still largely segregated: 80 percent of white children attended schools that were 90 to 100 percent white, and 65 percent of black students attended schools that were more than 90 percent black. Furthermore, almost all students in the South and the Southwest attended schools that were 100 percent segregated. The Coleman Report also found that white teachers taught black children, but that black teachers did not teach white children. In his study approximately 60 percent of the teachers who taught black students were black, whereas 97 percent of the teachers who taught white students were white.

Today, almost 50 years after the Coleman Report was published, school-based racial segregation is still a problem, even though the percentage of nonwhite and Hispanic students has increased from 12 to 40 percent. Regardless, 70 percent of blacks attend schools that are 90 percent black and 76 percent of Hispanics or Latinos attend schools that are 90 percent minority. Illinois, Michigan, New York, and California have been identified as the most segregated states; more than 50 percent of their schools are composed of 90 to 100 percent minority students (Celis 1993; Civil Rights Project 2006; Schemo 2001).



Thomas J. O'Halloran/Library of Congress

◀ *Brown v. Board of Education* declared unconstitutional state laws that established separate public schools for black and white students on the grounds that such an arrangement denied black children equal access to educational opportunities. This 1955 photograph taken shortly after the decision shows a newly integrated class at Barnard School in Washington, DC. However, one can hardly claim this classroom to be truly integrated.

TEST SCORES. Coleman's study also looked at test scores and did find sharp differences across racial groups with regard to verbal ability, nonverbal ability, reading comprehension, mathematical achievement, and general knowledge as measured by the standardized tests. The white students scored highest, followed by Asian Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics (Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans), and African Americans. For the most part these sharp differences across racial groups still persist more than a half century later. The latest data show that as a group Asian students tend to score highest, followed by whites. Hispanics, blacks, and Native Americans retain their disadvantaged positions. As one example of these differences, Table 12.3b considers writing proficiency scores among fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders according to race.

Table 12.3b: Percentage of Fourth-, Eighth-, and Twelfth-Grade Students Considered Proficient-to-Advanced in Writing by Race

What percentage of Asian students in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade are considered proficient-to-advanced in writing achievement? What percentage of black students in those same grades are considered proficient-to-advanced in writing? Notice, however, that for no racial group are a majority of students considered proficient.

Racial Classification	Percentage of Fourth-Graders	Percentage of Eighth-Graders	Percentage of Twelfth-Graders
Asian	42%	42%	26%
American Indian	16%	18%	Unknown
Black	15%	13%	9%
Hispanic	18%	17%	13%
White	35%	39%	28%

Source: U.S. Department of Education (2007)

NEIGHBORHOOD. Coleman determined that academic success as measured by test scores was affected by neighborhood. The average minority student was likely to come from an economically and educationally disadvantaged household located in a disadvantaged neighborhood. Thus significantly fewer of his or her classmates complete high school, maintain high grade point averages (GPAs), enroll in college preparatory curricula, or are optimistic about their future. As in the 1960s, today black and other minority students are significantly more likely than white students to find themselves in school environments characterized by high levels of poverty and low levels of academic achievement (see Table 12.3c).

Table 12.3c: Percentage of Student Population That Is Black/Hispanic and Poverty Status of Student Population

To read this table plug in the percentages in each row to X and Y above as follows: among those schools with a student population that is 0–10 percent black there is an 11.7 percent chance that 50 percent or more of the student body is classified as poor. What about those schools in which 79 to 100 percent are black/Hispanic? What does this table say about the relationship between racial/ethnic composition and poverty?

Among those schools with a student population that is X percent black/Hispanic.there is Y percent chance that 50 percent or more of the student population is classified as poor
0–10%	11.7%
10–19.5%	12.2%
19.6–29.5%	15.4%
29.6–39.5%	33.3%
39.6–49.5%	60.7%
49.6–59.5%	50.9%
59.6–69.5%	73.2%
69.6–79.5%	74.3%
79.6–89.5%	78.8%
89.6–100%	85.7%

Source: Frankenberg (2006)

Among other things the Coleman Report also examined the progress of disadvantaged blacks who had participated in school integration programs and found that their test scores were higher than those of their disadvantaged counterparts who did not participate. Clearly, then, the important variable in determining academic success is not race. If race was the factor, test scores would remain unchanged even when black students changed schools. Rather, Coleman attributed this newfound academic success to neighborhood and peer environment, both of which affect the social context in which learning occurs.

THE ROLE OF FAMILY BACKGROUND. Coleman maintained that neighborhood and peer environment are closely intertwined with family background. After all, a family’s economic standing determines the housing it can afford and by extension the neighborhood in which it lives. That does not mean that students are trapped by their family background. In fact Coleman noted that family background alone did not explain all of the variation in test scores and that it was not easy for him to separate out the effects of family background, neighborhood, and peer influences. He did note, however, that family was the most important factor in his study.

Many other research studies confirm the importance of family background in educational achievement (Hallinan 1988). For example, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (2003) tested students in 22 countries on six subjects. That study found that home environment is the key factor in determining the level of academic achievement, interest in learning, and years of schooling. Nevertheless, family background defined in terms of parents’ race, income, education, and occupation explains only about 30 percent of the variation in student academic performance. Clearly, factors other than home background must also be involved.

➤ In most, if not all, societies, youth learn more of the behavior important for constructive participation in the society outside of school than within. This fact does not diminish the importance of school but underscores the influence of home, peer groups, and community on academic performance and success.



Lisa Southwick

Peer Groups

Think back to your high school days; how would you most like to be remembered by your classmates—as an athlete, as a brilliant student, as a leader in extra-curricular activities, as attractive to the opposite sex, or as the most popular student? If you answered “athlete,” it is likely you are male. If you answered “attractive to the opposite sex,” it is likely you are female. These are the kinds of questions sociologist James Coleman (1961) asked in his now-classic study, *The Adolescent Society*.

The emergence of an adolescent society can be traced to industrialization. Around the turn of the 20th century—the early decades of late industrialization—fewer than 10 percent of teenagers attended high school in the United States. Young people attended elementary school to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, but they learned the skills needed to make a living from their parents or neighbors. As the pace of industrialization increased, jobs began to move away from the home and the neighborhood and into factories and office buildings. Parents no longer trained their children, because the skills they knew were becoming obsolete. Children came to expect that they would *not* make a living in the same way as their parents. As a result of this shift, opportunities for parents and children to work together disappeared, and the family became less involved in children’s lives.



Lewis Wickes Hine/Library of Congress

◀ This 1910 photograph shows an Italian American family in which everyone works as berry pickers. The children are between ages 3 and 11. Imagine the extent to which the family influenced day-to-day activities. How might relationships be different if the children were in school for six or seven hours each day?

This shift in training from the family to the school cut adolescents off from the rest of society such that they came “to constitute a small society, one that has most of its important interactions within itself, and maintains only a few threads of connection with the outside adult society” (Coleman, Johnstone, and Jonassohn 1961, p. 3). Peer groups exert more pressure on adolescents than do teachers, and a significant number of adolescents are influenced more by their peer group than by their parents.

Coleman surveyed students from 10 high schools in the Midwest to learn about the **adolescent status system**, a classification system in which participation in

some activities results in popularity, respect, acceptance, and praise, and participation in other activities results in isolation, ridicule, exclusion, disdain, and disrespect. He selected schools representative of a wide range of environments: five schools were in small towns, one in a working-class suburb, one in a well-to-do suburb, and three in cities of varying sizes. Also, one was an all-male Roman Catholic school. Coleman asked students questions similar to the following:

- How would you like to be remembered—as an athlete, as a brilliant student, as a leader in extracurricular activities, or as the most popular student?
- Who is the best athlete? The best student? The most popular? The boy the girls go for most? The girl the boys go for most?
- Which person in the school would you most like to date? To have as a friend? What does it take to get in with the leading crowd in this school?



© Tom Gill/Corbis

◀ Based on the answers to these questions, Coleman found that a popular boy could often be a good student or dress well or have enough money to meet social expenses, but to be truly admired he also had to be a good athlete. Girls, on the other hand, gave the highest value to social success with boys, which could be achieved through good looks and/or becoming a cheerleader.

Coleman wondered why the adolescent society penalized academic achievement. He maintained that the manner in which students are taught contributes to their lack of academic interest: when they are prescribed assignments and tests at a teacher's command, there is no room for creativity, only conformity. Students show their discontent by choosing to become involved in and to acquire things they can call their own: athletics is one of the major avenues open to adolescents, especially males, in which they are considered important to the school and the community. Athletic competition between schools generates an internal cohesion among students as no other school-sponsored event can. It is for this reason that the male athlete gains so much status.

Critical Thinking

Imagine the Coleman study on adolescent society had been done at your high school at the time you were a student. Would his findings apply?

Key Term

adolescent status system

Costs and Rewards of Higher Education

Objective

You will learn about the factors that affect access to higher education and the rewards and costs associated with that access.



Missy Gish

How are you paying for college? From savings? From borrowed sources such as federal loans or credit cards? With a scholarship? Or some combination of sources?

The United States is one of a relatively small group of countries where the college-educated constitute a significant share (30 percent or more) of the population. About 40 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds have at least a college education (OECD 2009).

Who Goes to College?

One distinctive feature of the U.S. educational system is that academically unprepared and unqualified students can attend a college, even those who did not graduate from high school or did not earn a general equivalency diploma (GED). A U.S. Department of Education study found that 400,000 students—2 percent (1 in 50) of all college students—did not have a high school diploma or GED (Arenson 2006). Among those who do graduate from high school, almost 68.6 percent enroll in college the following year (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009). Racial or ethnic classification has little effect on which high school graduates attend college, but it does affect the chances of dropping out of high school. Keep in mind that at least 30 percent of American students entering ninth grade do not graduate from high school four years later. That dropout rate varies

for students classified as Asian (21 percent), white (24 percent), Native American (43 percent), black (45 percent), and Hispanic (47 percent). If we consider all 18-year-olds—high school graduates and dropouts—the percentage attending college is 40 (U.S. Department of Education 2007).

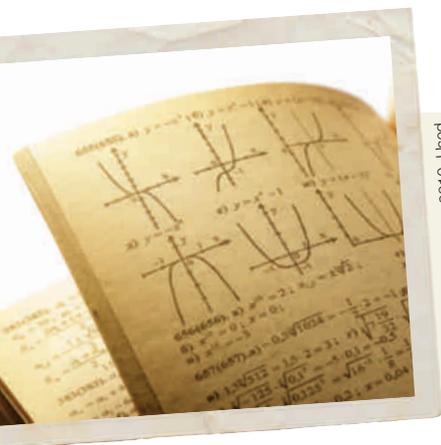


Image copyright Sychugina, 2010. Used under license from Shutterstock.com

◀ Graduating from high school does not necessarily mean that a student is prepared for college. About 70 percent of colleges and universities offer noncredit-bearing remedial courses, such as college algebra, for students who lack the skills needed to do college-level work. An estimated 30 percent of entering freshmen take one or more remedial courses in reading, writing, or mathematics (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

Funding Higher Education

Although the United States makes it easier for people to enroll in college in spite of academic deficiencies, it places a greater share of the funding burden on the private sector. Compared with its EU counterparts, the United States ranks last in the percentage of post-secondary education costs paid by public (tax dollar) funds (see Table 12.4a).

Table 12.4a: Average Cost per Student of Post-Secondary Education and Percentage of Cost Supported by Public Expenditures, 2006

The average annual cost per student to attend post-secondary education at a public institution in the United States is \$25,447, making its post-secondary system the most expensive on the list, \$8,500 more than Sweden. In addition the U.S. taxpayer absorbs about 34 percent of that cost, a much smaller percentage than that absorbed by taxpayers in countries of comparable wealth.

Country	Average Annual Cost per Student (in US\$)	Percentage of Cost Supported by Public Expenditures
Austria	\$15,284	84.5%
Belgium	\$15,148	90.6%
Denmark	\$15,391	96.4%
Finland	\$12,845	95.5%
France	\$11,568	83.7%
Germany	\$13,016	85.0%
Ireland	\$11,832	85.1%
Italy	\$ 8,725	73.0%
Netherlands	\$15,196	73.4%
Portugal	\$ 9,724	66.7%
Spain	\$11,087	78.2%
Sweden	\$16,991	89.7%
United Kingdom	\$15,447	64.8%
United States	\$25,447	34.0%

Source: OECD (2009)

The U.S. system relies more heavily on private sources—such as school fundraising, college endowment funds, fees, tuition reimbursement from employers, and bank loans—rather than taxpayer dollars (Lyll 2003). The Gallup Poll

Organization and Fannie Mae (the biggest provider of college loans) surveyed a random sample of college students, ages 18 to 24, and parents of college-age students to learn the various borrowed sources (see Table 12.4b).

Table 12.4b: Percentage of Families with 18- to 24-Year-Olds in College by Source and Average Amount of Borrowed, 2007-2008

What percentage of parents reported borrowing money in 2007–2008? What is the most cited source? What percentage of college students borrow? What is the most common source?

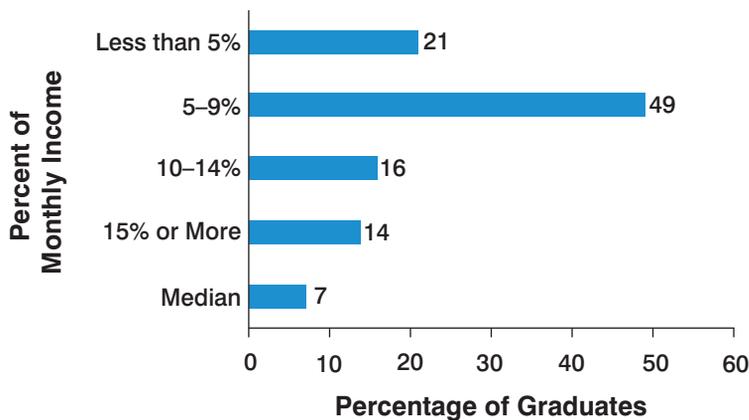
	Percentage of All Families with 18- to 24-Year-Old College Students	Average Amount Borrowed, 2007-2008
Parent Borrowing	16%	—
Federal PLUS	6%	\$10,701
Private Education Loans	4%	\$ 6,910
Home Equity	3%	\$10,853
Credit Cards	3%	\$ 5,822
Retirement Account Loan	1%	\$ 6,299
Other Loans	5%	\$ 9,894
Student Borrowing	39%	—
Federal Loans	28%	\$ 5,075
Private Education Loans	8%	\$ 7,694
Credit Cards	3%	\$ 2,542
Other Loans	8%	\$ 7,922

Source: Sallie Mae and Gallup (2009)

Because of its heavy reliance on private funds to finance a college education, 65 percent of U.S. college students of all ages borrow money to pay for college. Among those who take out loans to finance college, 30 percent spend at least 10 percent of their monthly income paying back the loans (see Figure 12.4a).

Figure 12.4a Debt Burden Four Years after College as a Percentage of Monthly Income Among Those Who Took Out Loans

The figure shows the debt burden or the monthly student loan payment as a percentage of monthly income of students who graduated from college in 2001. The average undergraduate loan is estimated to be \$18,900. Note that 14 percent of borrowers use 15 percent or more of their monthly income to pay back this debt.



Source: Baum and O'Malley (2003)

Despite the debt burden, the American way of funding higher education may have some advantages. Claude Allègre, a former French education minister and

reformer, argues that the French government simply does not invest in higher education. It promises a college education to any high school graduate who passes the baccalaureate exam, but it does not deliver the facilities, which are considered to be rundown, crowded, and uninspiring (Sciolino 2006).



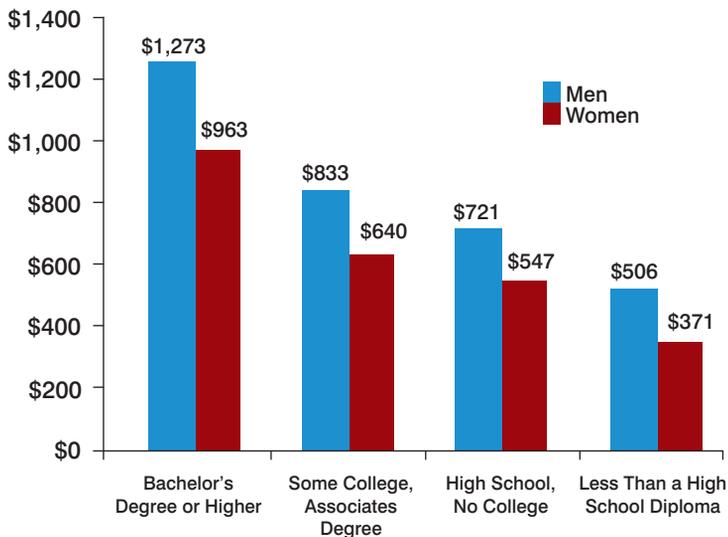
◀ Unlike their European counterparts, American students have come to expect more of their universities because they are paying more. Most universities offer apartment living, gyms, food courts, smart classrooms, and other amenities (Chace 2006).

Rewards of Higher Education

Most Americans are taught to equate more education with increased job opportunities and higher salaries. This belief has a basis in reality. Figure 12.4b shows that income rises as the level of education increases. On average, both males and females with four-year college degrees earn more than their same-sex counterparts who have less education. On the other hand, earnings are still affected by factors such as gender.

Figure 12.4b Usual Weekly Earning of Full-Time and Salaried Workers Age 25 Years and Over by Sex and Educational Attainment, 2009 Annual Averages

Which education level had the greatest gap between male and female earnings? Which had the lowest gap? Does the income gap between males and females rise or fall as education level increases?



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010)

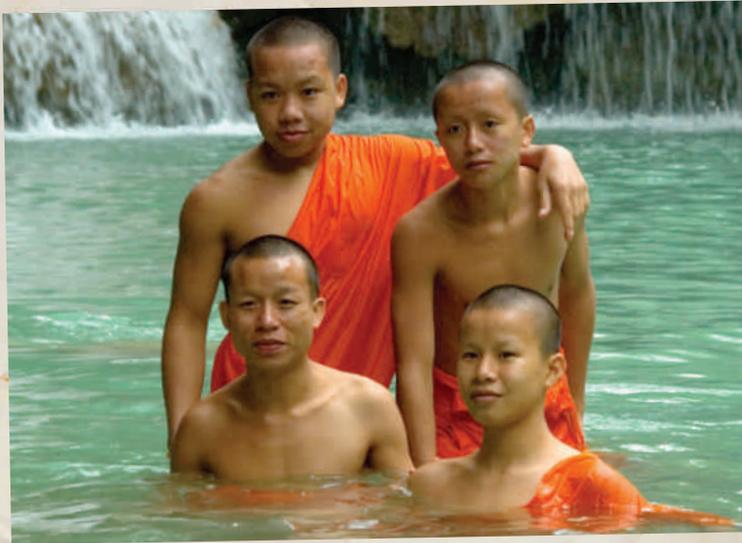
Critical Thinking

How are you paying for college? What do you project as your debt burden?

Religion

Objective

You will learn how sociologists approach the study of religion.



Tony Rotundo

Can you tell the religion with which these young men identify? Do you think it is important to have a framework by which to think about your own and another's religious experiences?

When sociologists study religion, they do not investigate whether God or some other supernatural force exists, whether certain religious beliefs are valid, or whether one religion is better than another. Sociologists investigate the social aspects of religion, which include the ways in which people have used religion to justify the most constructive and destructive actions, the conflicts within and between religious groups, the way religion shapes people's behavior and their understanding of the world, and the way religion is intertwined with social, economic, and political issues.

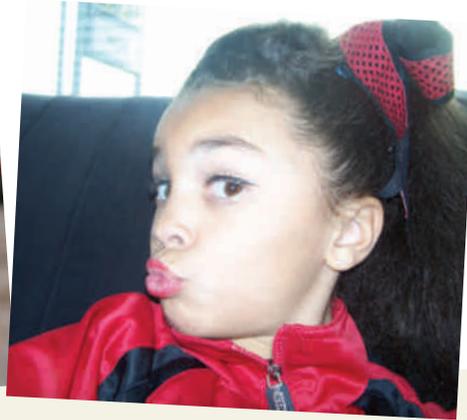
Defining Religion

Max Weber (1922) believed that no one definition could capture the varieties and essence of religion. For him religion encompasses those human responses that give meaning to the ultimate and inescapable problems of existence—birth, death, illness, aging, injustice, tragedy, and suffering (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1988). To Weber, the hundreds of thousands of religions, past and present, represent a rich and seemingly endless variety of responses to these problems.

Like Weber, Émile Durkheim (1915) believed that *religion* is difficult to define. He cautioned that when studying religions, sociologists must assume that “there are no religions which are false” (p. 3). Durkheim maintained that all religions are true in their own fashion; all address the problems of human existence, albeit in different ways. Consequently, he said, those who study religion must first rid themselves of all preconceived notions of what religion should be. We cannot study religion using standards that reflect our own personal experiences and preferences. Preconceived notions and uninformed opinions about the meaning of religious symbols and practices can close people off to a wide range of religious beliefs and experiences.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Timothy Dimheen



Missy Gish

▲ It is a challenge to see through one’s own preconceptions about what is “right” in everyday life. A Western woman may look on the traditional Muslim female head covering, the *hijab*, as a sign of oppression. On the other hand, a Muslim woman may look on Western female makeup and presentation of self as a sign of oppression because many women, even young girls, seem to feel a need to present themselves as sex objects.

In formulating his ideas about religion, Durkheim remained open to the many varieties of religious experiences throughout the world. He identified three essential features that he believed were common to all religions, past and present: (1) beliefs about the sacred and the profane, (2) rituals, and (3) a community of worshipers. Thus, Durkheim defined **religion** as a system of shared rituals and beliefs about the sacred and the profane that bind together a community of worshipers.

BELIEFS ABOUT WHAT IS SACRED AND PROFANE. The **sacred** includes everything that is regarded as extraordinary and that inspires in believers deep and absorbing sentiments of awe, respect, mystery, and reverence. Sacred things may include objects (such as chalices), living creatures (such as cows), elements of nature (such as mountains), places (such as mosques), states of consciousness (oneness with nature), holy days, ceremonies (such as baptism), and other activities (pilgrimages).

The **profane** encompasses everything that is not considered sacred, including things opposed to the sacred (such as the unholy, the irreverent, and the blasphemous) and things that stand apart from the sacred (such as the ordinary, the commonplace, the unconsecrated, and the bodily) (Ebersole 1967). Believers often view contact between the sacred and the profane as being dangerous and sacrilegious, as threatening the very existence of the sacred, and as endangering the fate of the person who makes or allows such contact. Consequently,



Katie Englert

people take action to safeguard sacred things. For example, some people refrain from speaking the name of God when they feel frustrated; others believe a man must remove his hat during worship.

◀ The two major religions of Japan are Shinto and Buddhism. Both regard Mount Fuji, pictured here, as sacred. Durkheim maintains that sacredness springs not from the object itself but from its symbolic power and from the emotions that people experience when they think about the sacred thing, or when they are in its presence.

RITUALS. In the religious sense, **rituals** are rules that govern how people behave in the presence of the sacred. These rules may take the form of instructions detailing the appropriate day(s) and occasions for worship, acceptable dress, and wording of chants, songs, and prayers. Participants follow rituals to achieve a specific goal, whether it be to purify the body or soul (as through immersion, fasting, or seclusion), to commemorate an important person or event (as by celebrating Passover), or to transform profane items into sacred items (for example, changing water to holy water and bones to sacred relics) (Smart 1976). Although rituals are often performed in sacred places, some are codes of conduct aimed at governing the performance of everyday activities such as sleeping, walking, eating, defecating, washing, and dealing with members of the other sex.

➤ Buddhist monks (left) of the Shingon sect located in Daishoin, Japan, participate in a ritual that involves walking over burning coals as a way of honoring the “Three Awesome Forest Deities” believed to inhabit Mount Misen. These coals were lit by a fire that is believed to have been burning continuously for the past 1,200 years.

According to Durkheim, the manner in which a ritual is performed is relatively insignificant. What is important is that the ritual is shared by a community of worshipers and evokes certain ideas and sentiments that help individuals feel themselves to be part of something larger.



Lance Cpl. Lukas J. Blom

COMMUNITY OF WORSHIPERS. Durkheim (1915) uses the word **church** to designate a group whose members hold the same beliefs regarding what is considered sacred and profane, who share rituals, and who gather in body or spirit at agreed-on times to share and reaffirm their commitment to those beliefs and practices. The gathering and the sharing create a moral community and allow

worshippers to share a common identity. The gathering need not take place in a common setting, however. When people perform a ritual on a given day or at given times of day, the gathering may be spiritual rather than physical.

Society as the Object of Worship

Durkheim (1915) argued that some form of religion appears to have existed for as long as humans have lived (at least 2 million years). In view of this fact, one might argue that religion must serve some vital social function for the individual and for the group.

► All religions strive to raise individuals above themselves—to help them achieve a better life than they would lead if left to their own impulses. In this sense, religion offers ideas of proper conduct that apply to everyday life. When believers violate this code of conduct, they feel guilt and remorse. Such feelings, in turn, motivate them to make amends. Religion also functions in ways that promote group unity and solidarity; shared doctrines and rituals create emotional bonds among believers.



Tony Rotundo

Religion serves as a stabilizing force in times of severe social disturbance and abrupt change. During such times, many norms that guide behavior may break down. In the absence of such forces, people are more likely to turn to religion in search of a force that will bind them to a group. In addition, Durkheim observed that whenever any group of people has a strong conviction, that conviction almost always takes on a religious character. Religious gatherings become vehicles for affirming convictions and mobilizing the group to uphold them, especially when the group is threatened.

The idea that religion functions to meet societal needs led Durkheim to reach a controversial but thought-provoking conclusion: the “something out there” that people worship is actually society. In reaching this conclusion Durkheim asked, how else might we explain the endless variety of religious response? The answer is that people create everything encompassed by religion—images of gods, rites, sacred objects. That is, people play a fundamental role in determining what is sacred and how to act in the presence of the sacred. Consequently, at some level, people worship what they (or their ancestors) have created. This point led Durkheim to conclude that the real object of worship is society itself—a conclusion that many critics cannot accept (Nottingham 1971).

► Artist Stephen Sawyer is shown sitting in front of an artwork of his titled “Call to Repentance.” Sawyer, a self-described Christian, says that he paints these images of Christ on his own terms. Given that Jesus was born in Bethlehem (according to the Christian Bible), a town in the Middle East, is the image an accurate representation of Jesus’s physical appearance? Archaeological evidence suggests that the average man at the time of Jesus was 5 feet, 3 inches tall and weighed approximately 110 pounds (Gibson 2004).



AP Photo/Ed Reinke

The Opiate of the People

Conflict theorists focus on ways in which people use religion to repress, constrain, and exploit others and how religion turns people’s attention away from social and economic inequality. This perspective draws inspiration from the work of Karl Marx (1843), who believed that religion was the most humane feature of an inhumane world and that it arose in response to the tragedies and injustices of human experience. Marx described religion as the “sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opiate of the people.” According to Marx, people need the comfort of religion to make the world bearable and to justify their existence. In this sense, he said, religion is analogous to a sedative.

Even though Marx acknowledged the comforting role of religion, he focused on its repressive, constraining, and exploitative qualities. In particular, he conceptualized religion as an ideology that justifies the status quo. That is, religion is used to rationalize existing inequities or downplay their importance. This aspect of religion is especially relevant with regard to the politically and economically disadvantaged. For them, Marx said, religion serves as a source of **false consciousness**. That is, religious teachings encourage oppressed individuals or groups to accept the economic, political, and social arrangements that constrain their chances in this life because they are promised compensation for their suffering in the next world.

This kind of ideology led Marx to conclude that religious teaching inhibits protest and revolutionary change. He went so far as to claim that religion would be unnecessary in a truly classless society—that is, a propertyless society providing equal access to the means of production. In the absence of material inequality, exploitation and injustice would not occur.

Critics argue that conflict theory underestimates the way people are inspired by religion to confront social and economic inequalities. Sometimes religion is a catalyst that inspires change and justice.



◀ Historically, African American churches have reached out to millions who have felt excluded from the U.S. political and economic system (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). For example, African American churches contributed greatly to the overall successes of the civil rights movement. Indeed, some observers argue that the movement would have been impossible if the churches had not been involved (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). One of the most visible leaders of this movement was Reverend Jesse Jackson.

The Protestant Work Ethic

Max Weber wanted to understand the role of religious beliefs in the origins and development of modern capitalism—an economic system that involves careful calculation of costs of production relative to profits, borrowing and lending money, accumulating all forms of capital, and using workers and resources around the world to make products (Robertson 1987). In his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber (1958) asked why modern capitalism emerged and flourished in Europe rather than in China or India. He also asked why business leaders and capitalists in Europe and the United States were overwhelmingly Protestant.

To answer these questions, Weber focused on how norms generated by different religious traditions influenced the adherents' economic orientations and motivations. Based on his comparisons, Weber concluded that a branch of Protestant tradition—Calvinism—supplied a “spirit” or an ethic that supported the motivations and orientations required by capitalism. In particular Calvinism emphasized **this-worldly asceticism**—a belief that people are instruments of divine will and that God determines and directs their activities. Calvinists glorified God when they accepted a task assigned to them, carried it out in an exemplary and disciplined fashion, and did not indulge in the fruits of their labor (that is, they did not use money to eat, drink, or otherwise relax to excess). In addition Calvinists conceptualized God as all-powerful and all-knowing; they also emphasized **predestination**—the belief that God has foreordained all things, including the salvation or damnation of individual souls. According to this doctrine, people could do nothing to change their fate. To compound matters, only relatively few people were destined to attain salvation.

Weber maintained that beliefs in this-worldly asceticism and predestination created a crisis of meaning among adherents. This crisis led them to look for concrete signs that they were among God's chosen people, destined for salvation. Consequently, accumulated wealth became an important indicator of whether one was among the chosen. At the same time, this-worldly asceticism “acted powerfully against the spontaneous enjoyment of possessions; it restricted consumption, especially of luxuries” (Weber 1958, p. 171). Frugal behavior encouraged people to accumulate wealth and make investments—important actions for the success of capitalism.

► The caption to this print speaks to a belief that people are instruments of divine will. The print features men who are considered empire builders in U.S. history, including Andrew Carnegie, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and John D. Rockefeller. The caption reads: “Those Christian men to whom God in his infinite wisdom has given control of the property interests of the country.”



Bernarda Blyson/Library of Congress

Do not misread the role that Weber attributed to the Protestant ethic in the rise of a capitalist economy. According to Weber, that ethic was a significant ideological force; it was not the sole cause of capitalism but “one of the causes of certain aspects of capitalism” (Aron 1969, p. 204). Unfortunately, many people who encounter Weber’s ideas draw conclusions that Weber himself never reached: the reason that some groups and societies are disadvantaged is simply that they lack this Protestant work ethic. Finally, note that Weber was writing about the origins of industrial capitalism, not about the form of capitalism that exists today, which places a heavy emphasis on consumption and self-indulgence. He maintained that once established, capitalism would generate its own norms and become a self-sustaining force. In such circumstances, religion becomes an increasingly insignificant factor in maintaining the capitalist system (Aron 1969).

Critical Thinking

Whose ideas—Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx, or Max Weber—do you find most compelling? Why?

Key Terms

church

profane

sacred

false consciousness

religion

this-worldly asceticism

predestination

rituals

Civil Religion and Fundamentalism

Objective

You will learn that civil religion and fundamentalism share some essential characteristics.



U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class David Didier

This photo shows a football team praying before a game. Is there a religious quality about this scene?

Sociologist Émile Durkheim defined religion as a system of shared rituals and beliefs about what is sacred and what is profane that bind together a community of worshippers. This combination of characteristics applies not just to religion but to religious-like events such the gathering of a football team to pray together before the “big game.” The football team no doubt qualifies as a community of worshippers gathering to pray (ritual) before the game in uniforms that assume a sacred-like quality. This combination of characteristics also applies to **civil religion**, an institutionalized set of beliefs about a nation’s past, present, and future and a corresponding set of rituals. These beliefs and rituals can take on a sacred quality and elicit feelings of patriotism.

Civil Religion

A nation's values, such as individual freedom and equal opportunity, and its rituals, such as parades, fireworks, singing the national anthem, and 21-gun salutes, often assume a sacred quality. Even in the face of internal divisions based on race, religion, or gender, national rituals and core values can inspire awe, respect, and reverence for the country. These sentiments are most evident during times of crisis and war, on national holidays (Veterans Day), and in the presence of national monuments or symbols (the Vietnam Memorial, the flag).

Sociologist Roberta Cole (2002) argues that America's civil religion found its voice in a 19th-century political doctrine known as manifest destiny, a long-standing ideology that the United States, by virtue of its moral superiority, was destined to expand across the North American continent to the Pacific Ocean and beyond (Chance 2002). Manifest destiny included the beliefs that the United States had a divine mission to serve as a democratic model to the rest of the world, that the country was a redeemer exerting its good influence upon other nations, and that it represented hope to the rest of the world (Cole 2002).

► A U.S. marine places this flag over a monument to then-president of Iraq Saddam Hussein in 1991 after the fall of Baghdad. Symbolically, the flag suggests that the United States is fulfilling its divine mission to bring democracy to the world.

Especially in times of war presidents offer a historical and mythological framework that gives moral justification for the involvement and offers the public a vision and a national identity. We consider statements U.S. presidents have made to illustrate how in times of war the nation's values assume a sacred quality and how the president projects moral certitude.

We are Americans, part of something larger than ourselves. For two centuries, we've done the hard work of freedom. And tonight, we lead the world in facing down a threat to decency and humanity. . . . Among the nations of the world, only the United States of America has both the moral standing and the means to back it up. We're the only nation on this Earth that could assemble the forces of peace. This is the burden of leadership and the strength that has made America the beacon of freedom in a searching world. (George H.W. Bush upon sending 540,000 troops to the Persian Gulf in 1990.)

All of you . . . have taken up the highest calling of history . . . and wherever you go, you carry a message of hope—a message that is ancient and ever new. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, to the captives “come out,” and to those in darkness, “be free.” (George W. Bush upon sending troops to Iraq in 2003.)

. . . and we will use all elements of our national power to defeat Al Qaida and to defend America, our allies, and all who seek a better future because the United States of America stands for peace and security, justice and opportunity. That is who we are, and that is what history calls on us to do once more. (Barack Obama upon escalating U.S. presence in Afghanistan in 2009.)



Courtesy of Derrick Jensen



United State Air Force Photo

◀ The 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group hangs an American flag in what is known as the Air Force Theater Hospital's Hero's Highway at Balad Air Base, Iraq. Wounded service members are rolled under the flag as they make their way from the helicopter pad to the hospital. The message to the wounded soldiers is that they put their bodies and lives on the line for the United States of America.

Critics of war liken this moral certitude characteristic of civil religion to “a kind of fundamentalism” and a “dangerous messianic brand of religion, one where self-doubt is minimal” (Hedges 2002).

Fundamentalism

Anthropologist Lionel Caplan (1987) defines **fundamentalism** as a belief in the timelessness of sacred writings and a belief that such writings apply to all kinds of environments. In its popular usage, the term *fundamentalism* is applied to a wide array of religious groups around the world, including the Moral Majority in the United States, Orthodox Jews in Israel, and various Islamic groups in the Middle East. Religious groups labeled as fundamentalist are usually portrayed as “fossilized relics . . . living perpetually in a bygone age” (Caplan 1987, p. 5). Americans frequently use the term fundamentalism to explain events in the Middle East, especially the causes of political turmoil that threatens the interests of the United States. Such oversimplification misrepresents fundamentalism.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of fundamentalists is their belief that a relationship with God, Allah, or some other supernatural force provides answers to personal and social problems. In addition, fundamentalists often wish to “bring the wider culture back to its religious roots” (Lechner 1989, p. 51). Caplan (1987) identifies a number of other traits that seem to characterize fundamentalists. First, fundamentalists emphasize the authority, infallibility, and timeless truth of sacred writings as a definitive blueprint for life. This characteristic does not mean that a definitive interpretation of sacred writings actually exists. Indeed, any sacred text has as many interpretations as there are groups that claim it as their blueprint.

Second, fundamentalists usually conceive of history as a “process of decline from an original ideal state,” which includes the “betrayal of fundamental principles” (p. 18). They see human history as a cosmic struggle between good and evil: the good embodies the principles outlined in sacred scriptures, and the evil results from countless digressions from those principles. To fundamentalists, truth is not relative, varying across time and place. Instead, truth is unchanging and knowable through the sacred texts.

Third, fundamentalists do not distinguish between what is sacred and what is profane in their day-to-day lives. Religious principles govern all areas of life, including family, business, and leisure. Religious behavior, in their view, does not take place only in a church, a mosque, or a temple.

► Religious principles guide the business of producing and supplying kosher meats, which are prepared according to strict Jewish dietary laws. Kosher laws are considerably stricter than USDA standards. Kosher laws govern how animals are fed, killed, and processed. Kosher laws prohibit, for example, slaughtering cows with broken bones or that are known to be sick.



© David Anthony / Alamy

Fourth, fundamentalist religious groups emerge for a reason, usually in reaction to a perceived threat or crisis, whether real or imagined. Consequently, any discussion of a particular fundamentalist group must include some reference to an adversary.

Finally, fundamentalists believe that the trends toward gender equality are symptomatic of a declining moral order and need to be reversed. In fundamentalist religions, women's rights often become subordinated to ideals that the group considers more important to the well-being of the society, such as the traditional family or the "right to life." Such a priority of ideals is regarded as the correct order of things.

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM. We cannot apply the term *fundamentalism* to the entire Muslim world, especially when we consider that Muslims make up the majority of the population in at least 45 countries (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010). Religious studies professor John L. Esposito (1986) believes that a more appropriate term is *Islamic revitalism* or *Islamic activism*. While the form of Islamic revitalism may vary from one country to another, it seems to be characterized by a belief that existing political, economic, and social systems have failed; a disenchantment with, and even rejection of, the West; soul-searching; a quest for greater authenticity; and a conviction that Islam offers a viable alternative to secular nationalism, socialism, and capitalism.

Esposito (1986) asks, "Why has religion become such a visible force in Middle East politics?" He believes that Islamic revitalism represents a "response to the failures and crises of authority and legitimacy that have plagued most modern Muslim states" (p. 53). Those crises can be traced to France and Great Britain's division of the Middle East into nation-states after World War I.

The citizens of these Western-created countries viewed many of the leaders who took control as autocratic, corrupt, and "propped up by Western governments and multinational corporations" (Esposito 1986, p. 54). Questions of social justice also arose as oil wealth and modernization policies opened up a vast chasm between the oil-rich countries, such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and the poor, densely populated countries, such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Western capitalism, which was seen as one of the primary forces behind these trends, seemed blind to social justice, instead promoting unbridled consumption and widespread poverty.

For many people, Islam offers an alternative vision for society. According to Esposito (1986), five beliefs guide Islamic activists who follow many political persuasions, ranging from conservative to militant:

1. Islam is a comprehensive way of life relevant to politics, law, and society.
2. Muslim societies fail when they depart from Islamic ways and follow the secular and materialistic ways of the West.
3. An Islamic social and political revolution is necessary for renewal.

4. Islamic law must replace laws inspired or imposed by the West.
5. Science and technology must be used in ways that reflect Islamic values, to guard against the infiltration of Western values.

Muslim groups differ dramatically in their beliefs about how quickly and by what methods these principles should be implemented. Most Muslims, however, are willing to work within existing political arrangements; they condemn violence as a method of bringing about political and social change. However, some do use violence to try to effect change, and in those cases the concept of jihad is often evoked. In thinking about the meaning of jihad, it is important to distinguish between religious and political jihad. Many Islamic scholars have pointed out that in the religious sense of the word, true jihad is the “constant struggle of Muslims to conquer their inner base instincts, to follow the path to God, and to do good in society” (Milten 2002). But other scholars point out that jihad as used by the most radical organizations targets anyone—Muslim or non-Muslim—who stands in the way of their goals.

Secularization

In the most general sense, **secularization** is a process by which religious influences on thought and behavior are gradually removed or reduced. More specifically, it is a process by which some element of society, once part of a religious sphere, separates from its religious or spiritual connection or influences. It is difficult to generalize about the causes and consequences of secularization because they vary across contexts. Americans and Europeans tend to associate secularization with an increase in scientific understanding and in technological solutions to everyday problems of living. In effect, “science and technology give people control over life and death matters once left in the hands of God” (Esposito 1986, p. 54).

Muslims, in contrast, tend not to attribute secularization to science or to modernization; indeed, many devout Muslims are physical scientists. From a Muslim perspective, secularization is a Western-imposed phenomenon—specifically, a result of exposure to what many people in the Middle East consider the most negative of Western values as reflected in its consumer culture, its violent movies and television programs, and the way its popular culture portrays women and sexualizes young children.



U.S. Army photo by Leslie Angulo

◀ Here we see orphaned Afghan girls holding up dolls and other toys given to them by U.S. troops. One might argue that Western secular principles governed the design and creation of dolls and their wardrobes. What does it mean to these girls to receive such toys, which contradict fundamental Islamic beliefs about modest dress and other aspects of life?

Critical Thinking

Can you think of a “nonreligious” ceremony or event in which participation took on a religious quality?

Key Terms

civic religion

fundamentalism

secularization

Applying Theory: Contemporary Theoretical Syntheses

M O D U L E

12.7

Objective

You will learn how the concept of habitus applies to the way the educational system perpetuates social class.



Imagine that a professor projected this photograph onto a screen and asked you to comment about it in writing. What would you write?

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu used this line of questioning to document the perceptual schemes that individuals draw upon to think about and react to the world around them. Working-class respondents tend to use plain, concrete language to describe the woman's hand (e.g., "This woman looks like she's got arthritis. Her hands are all knotted. I feel sorry seeing that poor old woman's hands.") Respondents from more advantaged classes tend to use abstract, aesthetic language that transcends the situation of the particular woman pictured: "This photograph is a symbol of toil. It puts me in mind of Flaubert's old servant-woman . . . It's terrible that work and poverty are so deforming" (Bourdieu 1984).

Bourdieu was interested in how these perceptual schemes or points of view come into being. He found that the schemes people draw upon are shaped in large part by their social position (Appelrouth and Edles 2007). Bourdieu's work falls under the category of contemporary theoretical synthesis, because he worked to bridge the divide between the individual and society.

Bourdieu maintained that the social positions people come to occupy depend on the amount of economic and cultural capital upon which they can draw. **Economic capital** refers to a person's material resources—wealth, land, money. **Cultural capital** refers to a person's nonmaterial resources, including educational credentials, the kinds of knowledge acquired, social skills, and aesthetic tastes.

Both forms of capital are distributed unequally throughout society. When people locate themselves relative to others, they gain a sense of their place in society, and of what is objectively possible.

Table 12.7a: Distribution of Educational Credentials among U.S. Population 25 Years and Over

The table represents the distribution of a specific kind of cultural capital—educational credentials. Locate yourself in this distribution and project your future hopes. Notice that 15 percent of the U.S. population 25 years and older have no high school diploma or GED. What percentage has earned a four-year college or graduate degree?

Educational Credentials	Percentage	Median Income	Poverty Rate
Less Than Ninth Grade	6.40%	\$17,422	No data
Ninth to Twelfth Grade, No Diploma	9.10%	\$19,405	23.30%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	30.10%	\$26,894	11.30%
Some College, No Degree	19.50%	\$32,874	7.60%
Bachelor's Degree	17.40%	\$46,805	3.90%
Graduate or Professional Degree	10.10%	\$61,287	2.80%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2007)

According to Bourdieu's theory, high school dropouts come to know or internalize what is objectively possible for someone with their educational credentials. As a result they are *likely* to expect an income of \$19,405 or less as reasonable and may even aspire to earn that income. They are also likely to assume that higher incomes are out of reach and to feel that they are just a step away from poverty. Someone with a graduate degree, on the other hand, will likely *expect* to live free of poverty and to earn a salary of at least \$60,000.

Habitus and Reproduction

The **habitus** is a frame of mind that has internalized the objective reality of society. This objective reality becomes the mental filter that structures people's perceptions, experiences, responses, and actions. It is through the habitus that the social world is understood and that people acquire a sense of place and a point of view that informs how they interpret their own and others' actions. Bourdieu believed that the habitus also affects how people physically hold themselves and move about the world (i.e., posture, facial expressions, gestures).

The habitus plays a vital role in a process sociologists call **social reproduction**, the perpetuation of unequal relations such that almost everyone, including the disadvantaged, come to view this inequality as normal and legitimate and tend to shrug off or resist calls for change. According to Bourdieu, no institution does more to ensure the reproduction of inequality than education (Appelrouth and Edles 2007). He argues that the system of education is widely misperceived as meritocratic—that grades are awarded according to demonstrated academic abilities and not family connections or class privilege. Upon close scrutiny, however, educational systems actually perpetuate the pre-existing inequalities. For example, we accept tests as an objective measure of academic achievement. Tests

dominate the educational experience in that students' mental energies are organized around taking them and their grades are largely dependent on their test results.

► Bourdieu sees the exam as the “clearest expression of academic values” (1984, p. 142). Tests are treated as a valid measure of knowledge. Thus, test performance is the socially accepted, largely unchallenged way to demonstrate that a specified body of knowledge has been acquired.

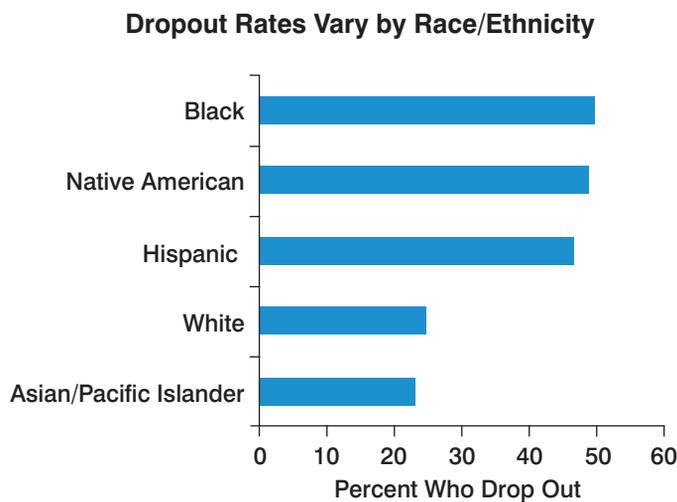


© Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Public Affairs

Bourdieu believes that most students who drop out make the decision to do so, not the school system. For them studying for tests is what education is. Therefore, it is the prospect of failing tests, studying for tests, and a dislike for the kinds of knowledge one must possess to pass tests that spurs them to “voluntarily” drop out. Bourdieu views examinations as one of the most powerfully effective ways of impressing upon students the dominant culture and its values. Bourdieu argues that we can learn about the inequalities perpetuated by the educational system by identifying which groups are likely to eliminate themselves by declining to return to high school after summer breaks or simply disappearing. Bourdieu urges us to grasp the significance of the differential educational mortality rate, illustrated in Chart 12.7a.

Chart 12.7a Probability of Graduating from High School by Race and Ethnicity

The chart shows the percentages of ninth-graders by racial classification who do not graduate from high school four years after entering ninth grade. It is also a rough indicator of the percentages of high school students who manage to remain in the system. The survival rate is highest for those classified as Asian/Pacific Islanders and white.



Source: Harvard Civil Rights Project (2006)

Bourdieu argues that the act of self-elimination both reflects and sustains the pre-existing hierarchy. Thus, to give a full account of the process by which people are sorted, selected, and eliminated within the educational system we must take into account not only the judgments of educators, which are supported by test scores, but also the convictions that disadvantaged individuals hold about themselves.

Critical Thinking

Use Bourdieu's theory to frame your educational experiences.

Key Terms

cultural capital

habitus

economic capital

social reproduction

Summary: Putting It All Together

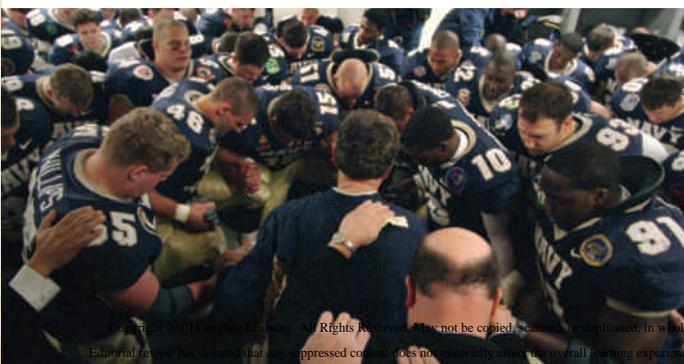
Sociologists make a distinction between informal and formal education. One type of formal education is schooling. From the functionalist perspective schools perform a number of important functions. The conflict perspective draws our attention to unequal power arrangements between those groups. One concept that has come out of the conflict perspective is the idea of the credential society, one in which employers give an advantage to those holding degrees apart from a proven track record such that people come to feel they need a degree to advance. Religion played a role in creating the credential society as competition among religions created a proliferation of schools, including colleges, in the United States. In addition, there is no doubt that the more education one has, the greater are the available job opportunities and salaries.

Sociologists study school curriculum, a topic that encompasses tracking and the hidden curriculum. When they study curriculum they look at racial differences in learning and achievement. Generally speaking, minority students as a group do not do as well as their white counterparts on standardized testing and find themselves in school environments that are disadvantaged. Student learning is also affected by the adolescent subculture, which defines being an athlete as extremely important to boys and social success with boys as extremely important to girls.

Religions (past and present) have three essential features: (1) beliefs about the sacred and the profane, (2) rituals, and (3) a community of worshipers. Because some form of religion appears to have existed for as long as humans have, functionalists maintain that religion must serve some vital social functions for the individual and for the group. Conflict theorists inspired by Marx emphasize religion's repressive, constraining, and exploitative qualities. Weber focused on understanding how norms generated by different religious traditions influenced adherents' economic orientations and motivations. Specifically, Weber concluded that a branch of the Protestant tradition—Calvinism—supplied a “spirit” or an ethic that supported the motivations and orientations of capitalism.

Civil religion is an institutionalized set of beliefs about a nation's past, present, and future and a corresponding set of rituals that take on a sacred quality and elicit feelings of patriotism. The dynamics of civil religion are most notable during times of crisis and war and on national holidays. During these times civil religion can take on qualities we associate with fundamentalism.

[Can You Top This Photo?]



U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class David Dittler

Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo with a caption to illustrate the characteristics of civil religion.



Kevin Dooley

13

CHAPTER

THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

- 13.1 Social Change**
- 13.2 Human Societies and Carbon Footprints**
- 13.3 Population Dynamics**
- 13.4 Social Movements**
- 13.5 Environmental Sociology**
- 13.6 Applying Theory: Rational Choice Theory**
- Summary Putting It All Together**

When sociologists study social change they study any significant modification, or transformation, in the way human activities are organized. One of the most significant forces that has drastically changed the way human activities are organized is mechanization, an innovation that made our society one in which burning fossil fuels for energy shapes virtually every aspect of our personal and social lives. In fact, mechanization eventually created societies in which energy consumption was woven into their society. For a variety of reasons—not just climate change—significant numbers of people believe that we have to transition to using renewable sources of energy. Sociologists emphasize the process by which that transition will occur and its effects on human activities and relationships.

Objective

You will learn the factors that trigger social change and the consequences of change.



Missy Gish

Name a device invented in your lifetime that has changed the way you do something—communicate with others, listen to music, obtain news, do your homework, or do some other activity.

Sociologists define **social change** as any significant alteration, modification, or transformation in the way social activities and human relationships are organized. When sociologists study change, they ask at least three key questions: What has changed? What factors trigger change? What are the consequences of the change?

What Has Changed?

Social change is an important sociological topic. In fact, sociology first emerged as an attempt to understand social change. Recall that the early sociologists were focused on understanding the nature and consequences of the Industrial Revolution—an event that triggered dramatic and seemingly endless changes in human relationships and in every area of human social activity. The discipline of sociology offers concepts that we have covered in more detail elsewhere in this text to help us identify and describe key changes driven by industrialization, such as globalization, rationalization, McDonaldization, urbanization, and the

information explosion. It is worth noting that these key changes could not have occurred without fossil fuels.

INDUSTRIALIZATION. The Industrial Revolution changed our society into a **hydrocarbon society**—one in which the use of fossil fuels shapes virtually every aspect of our personal and social lives. The energy source that lights the night, cools our houses and offices, and powers appliances and tools is likely coal; the energy source that heats our houses, workplaces, and water is likely natural gas; and the energy source that enables trains, planes, cars, and buses to move people and goods is most certainly oil. It is fair to say that industrialization wove energy consumption into the fabric of society. The extent to which that has occurred, however, varies by country.

► In comparison to Americans, people in Vietnam are more likely to be seen pushing, carrying, and otherwise using their muscles to perform tasks. Simply consider that per capita (per person) energy consumption in Vietnam is 22.5 gigajoules (GJ); in the United States it is 327 GJ per capita (International Energy Agency 2006). A gigajoule is a metric measure of energy consumption. One GJ is equivalent to the energy needed to cook over 2,500 hamburgers or to keep a 60-watt bulb lit for six months (Natural Resources Canada 2010).



Chris Caldera

GLOBALIZATION. In the most general sense, global interdependence is when social activity transcends national borders and local, regional, and national problems—water shortages, natural disasters, unemployment, drug addictions—are part of a larger global situation. Because the level of global interdependence is constantly changing, it is part of a dynamic process known as globalization—the ever-increasing flow of goods, services, money, people, information, and culture across political borders (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton 1999). While sociologists debate the events that triggered globalization, there is no question that current levels of globalization would be impossible if not for fossil fuels.

RATIONALIZATION. The term *rationalization* refers to the way in which daily life is organized socially to accommodate large numbers of people. Rationalization is a process whereby thought and action rooted in emotion (such as love, hatred, revenge, or joy), superstition, respect for mysterious forces, and tradition are replaced by the most efficient ways (fastest and/or cheapest) to achieve a valued goal or result. One important outcome of the fastest, cheapest way to make a profit is **planned obsolescence**, which involves producing goods that are disposable after a single use (paper cups), have a shorter life cycle than the industry is capable of producing (appliances), or are quickly replaced by upgraded models (computers, cell phones, printers).

MCDONALDIZATION. The organizational trend refers to a process whereby the principles governing the fast-food industry come to dominate other sectors of the American economy and society and the world (Ritzer 1993).

There is no question that McDonaldization is a fossil fuel–driven phenomenon. For example, pharmacies, car washes, banks, and liquor stores have adopted drive-thru services to facilitate their goal of accommodating customers. Of course, drive-thru service is not all there is to McDonaldization. Whatever the service offered—a college degree in 18 months, a medical checkup integrated into a one-stop shopping establishment, matchmaking with success guaranteed in six weeks, a prepaid funeral, or the cheapest plane ticket—we can find one or more of the McDonaldization principles operating.

URBANIZATION. Another fossil fuel–driven phenomenon is **urbanization**—a transformative process in which people migrate from rural to urban areas and change the ways they use land, interact, and earn a living. Today, urban populations include not only city dwellers but also suburbanites and even residents of small towns that have been pulled in by urban sprawl.



U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Chad Dulac

Lisa Southwick

▲ Urban sprawl spreads development beyond cities by as much as 40 or 50 miles; puts considerable distance between homes, stores, churches, schools, and workplaces; and makes people dependent on automobiles and by extension on fossil fuels (Sierra Club 2007). In addition, the automobile and highway system have permitted people to live in places that give them access to more space than they need for a comfortable life. In the past 30 years, the average house size has increased from 1,400 to 2,330 square feet (National Association of Home Builders 2007). Highways and automobiles have contributed to urban sprawl and have made it difficult to establish the exact boundaries of cities, suburbs, and nonurban environments.

Urbanization corresponds with a shift from labor-intensive agriculture-based occupations to manufacturing, information, and service occupations—all of which depend heavily on fossil fuels, not only to provide the energy to make, distribute, and deliver goods and services, but also to transport employees from home to work (World Resource Institute 1996).

THE INFORMATION EXPLOSION. Amazingly, sociologist Orrin Klapp (1986) wrote about the **information explosion** 25 years ago. He defined it as an unprecedented increase in the amount of stored and transmitted data and messages in all media (including electronic, print, radio, and television). One can argue that the information explosion began with the invention of the printing press. Today, the information explosion is driven by the Internet, a vast fossil fuel–powered computer network linking billions of computers around the world. The Internet has the potential to give users access to every word, image, and sound that has ever been recorded (Berners-Lee 1996). Specifically, the Internet and related technologies have speeded up old ways of doing things; allowed

individuals to create their own writings, produce their own videos, and so on; changed how students learn; and allowed people around the world to exchange information on and communicate about any topic of interest.

What Factors Trigger Change?

When we think about what triggers a specific social change, we usually cannot pinpoint a single factor. Change—whether it be globalization, industrialization, urbanization, or something else—is part of an endless sequence of interrelated events. Even though it is difficult to disentangle the causes of social change, we can identify key factors that trigger change in general. The triggers include, but are not limited to, technological innovation, revolutionary ideas, conflict, the pursuit of profit, and social movements.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION. **Technology** involves using knowledge, tools, applications, and other inventions in ways that allow people to adapt to and exercise control over their surroundings. Technology can be material (cell phones, hammers, and ATMs) or conceptual (ways of organizing human activity such as the assembly line); it also includes the capability to apply knowledge in practical ways (convert burning fossil fuels into electricity; use computer applications to accomplish a task). Technologies change the nature of human activity and social relationships: they save time; they dissolve social and physical boundaries, as when x-rays allow physicians to see into the body; mobile phones blur boundaries between personal, home, and work lives; and the Internet and other digital technologies make location and time irrelevant to learning.

REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, philosopher Thomas Kuhn (1975) defines paradigms as the dominant and widely accepted theories and concepts in a particular area or field of study that seem to offer the best way of looking at the world at a particular time. A scientific revolution occurs when enough people in the community reject an existing paradigm by accepting the new paradigm. The new paradigm causes converts to see the world in an entirely new light and to wonder how they could possibly have taken the old paradigm seriously. “When paradigms change, the world itself changes with them” (p. 111).

CONFLICT. Sociologist Lewis Coser (1973) argues that conflict occurs when those who control valued resources strive to protect their interests from those who hope to gain a share. Conflict can be a constructive and invigorating force that prevents a social system from becoming stagnant, unresponsive, or inefficient. Conflict—whether it involves military buildups, violent clashes, or public debate—is both a consequence and a cause of change. In general, any kind of change has the potential to trigger conflict between those who stand to benefit from the change and those who stand to lose because of it. Conflict can lead to change as well. Consider that the Internet emerged as a result of conflict. During the Cold War, when the United States was involved in a nuclear arms race with the then Soviet Union, Americans feared that the Soviets would launch an atomic attack against the United States. The fear of such an attack generated a search for a computer network designed so that if part of the network failed or was knocked out by a bomb, the other parts could continue to operate. The Internet began in the late 1960s, and at first it linked four universities. Today, an estimated 1.17 billion people—25.6 percent of the world’s population—are connected to the fossil fuel–driven Internet (Internet World Stats 2009).

THE PURSUIT OF PROFIT. The profit-driven capitalist system drives change by seeking to revolutionize production, create new products, and expand markets. To maximize profit, the successful entrepreneur must find ways to produce goods and services in the most cost-effective manner. The capitalist system acts as a vehicle of change, because the labor market is constantly transformed and because new products and services change the way people organize their day-to-day activities and relationships with others.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS. Social movements occur when enough people organize to resist a change or to make a change. Usually those involved in social movements work outside the system to advance their cause, because the system has failed to respond. To draw attention to their cause and accomplish their objectives, supporters may strike, demonstrate, walk out, sit in, boycott, go on hunger strikes, riot, or terrorize. Social movements include the environmental, civil rights, women's, abortion rights, and anti-abortion movements.

Sociology offers a rich set of concepts, theories, and questions to guide any analysis of social change and its consequences. Three basic questions can be applied to thinking about almost any change: What are the recognized and unanticipated consequences of X? Who benefits from X and at whose expense? Does the emergence of X challenge, sustain, or alter existing meanings? Moreover, the sociological perspective can direct an analysis of change toward many different areas of social life. For example, how does a specific innovation (i.e., the Internet) change culture, racial boundaries, concept of masculinity and femininity, and so on?

[Write a Caption]

Write a caption that highlights how “garbage” has come to include computers and other digital technologies.

Write a caption here



Hints: In writing this caption

- think about how rationalization is involved in creating computers, especially upgrades;
- consider how planned obsolescence is an outcome of rationalization.

Critical Thinking

List at least five ways in which your lifestyle depends on the burning of fossil fuels.

Key Terms

hydrocarbon society

planned obsolescence

technology

information explosion

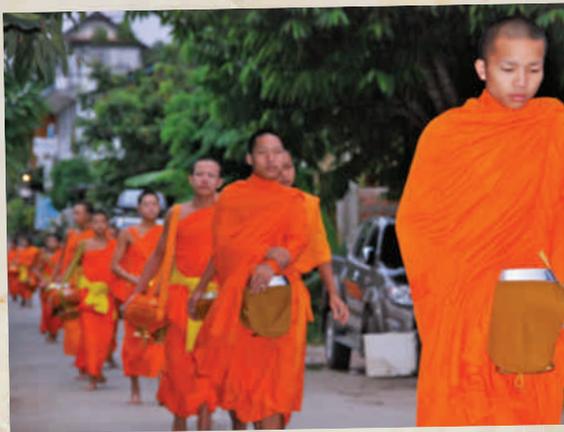
social change

urbanization

Human Societies and Carbon Footprints

Objective

You will learn about the relationship between the amount of surplus wealth a society is able to create and the carbon footprints its members leave.



Chris Caldeira



Photo by Scott Halleran/Getty Images

Which lifestyle—that of a Buddhist monk or a professional golfer living in the United States—creates a larger carbon footprint?

A **carbon footprint** is the impact a person makes on the environment by virtue of his or her lifestyle. That impact is measured in terms of fossil fuels consumed or units of carbon dioxide emitted from burning that fuel. We can think of carbon footprints as primary or secondary. The primary carbon footprint is the total amount of carbon dioxide emitted as the result of someone's direct use of fossil fuels to heat and cool a home, run appliances, facilitate travel, and so on. The secondary footprint is the total amount of carbon dioxide emitted to manufacture a product or deliver a service to that person.

Lifestyles and Carbon Footprints

Tim Gutowski (2008a), a professor of mechanical engineering at MIT, and 21 of his students studied 18 different lifestyles in the United States, including a person without a home (homeless), Buddhist monks, a patient in a coma, and a professional golfer. After extensive interviews they estimated the energy each lifestyle requires. They estimated that no lifestyle uses less than 120 gigajoules of energy, even that of a Buddhist monk, whose lifestyle is devoted to simple

living, modest dress, and a vegetarian diet. A gigajoule (GJ) is a metric measure of energy consumption. It is a particularly useful measure because it can be applied to different types of energy consumption, such as kilowatts of electricity, liters of heating oil or gasoline, and cubic feet of natural gas. One GJ is equivalent to the energy needed to cook over 2,500 hamburgers or to keep a 60-watt bulb lit for six months (Natural Resources Canada 2010).

Gutowski and his students estimated that the Buddhist monk interviewed consumed 120 GJ of energy each year and the professional golfer interviewed consumed 8,000 GJ. The Buddhist monk consumes about one-third as much energy as the average American (350 GJ) but double the average amount of energy each person on the planet consumes (64 GJ). The Buddhist monk's 120 GJ emits 8.5 metric tons of carbon dioxide each year; the professional golfer's lifestyle (8,000 GJ) produces 566 metric tons of carbon emissions.

Gutowski's study (2008b) has important implications: the United States has a "very energy-intensive system" that in effect sets the lower limits on how much energy any American uses. If the Buddhist monk uses 120 GJ, then we might conclude that energy use is woven into the fabric of our society (Revkin 2005). We consider the work of sociologist Douglas Massey (2002) and others who were heavily influenced by Gerhard and Jean Lenski (1986) to understand just how energy-dependent societies come to be.

Types of Societies

In this module we consider six broad types of human societies defined by the technologies each employs to produce food and exploit resources. The six societies are hunting and gathering, pastoral, horticultural, agrarian, industrial, and post-industrial. Each of the six is distinguished by the amount of surplus wealth that society is able to produce. **Surplus wealth** is a situation in which the amount of available food items and other products exceed that which is required to **subsist**, or to meet basic needs for human survival. Of course, the greater the surplus wealth a society creates, the larger its carbon footprint.

HUNTING AND GATHERING SOCIETIES. **Hunting and gathering societies** do not possess the technology that allow them to create surplus wealth; people subsist on wild animals and vegetation. As the name suggests, hunters and gatherers do not reside in a fixed location; they are always on the move, securing food and other subsistence items. A typical hunting and gathering society is composed of 45 to 100 members related by blood or marriage. The institution of family is central to people's lives, and emphasis is placed on group welfare (Massey 2002). The division of labor is simple, and most people engage in activities related to achieving subsistence. The statuses people occupy revolve around gender, age, and kinship. Because almost no surplus wealth exists, there is little inequality.

Basic economic tasks for men might include agriculture, carpentry, hunting, and fishing. For women, they might include weaving, cloth making, and oil making. Women also do routine fishing or hunting for small prey (Cote 1997). There is evidence that women work longer hours than do men and their direct contribution to subsistence surpasses that of men. Men are off hunting large animals, for example, while women gather most of the food and hunt smaller animals.

Sociologist Douglas Massey (2002) predicts that by 2020 the last hunter-gatherers on the planet will cease to exist, ending six million years of dedication to "the most successful and long-persistent lifestyle in the career of our species"

(Diamond 1992, p. 191). It may already be impossible to find a society that meets all its needs from hunting and gathering. There are some societies such as the San of Namibia (Africa) that gather wild honey on which they subsist, but they do not rely on hunting and gathering strategies alone to meet subsistence needs (Heunis 2007).

PASTORAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETIES. About 10,000 to 12,000 years ago humans began domesticating plants and animals. Now instead of searching for and gathering wild grains and vegetation, people planted seeds and harvested crops. Instead of hunting for wild animals, people captured, tamed, and bred them. Domestication of plants gave people a predictable food source and an ability to secure more grain, meat, and milk than they needed to survive. Domestication of animals gave people a source of food and another source of power—animal muscle—to transport heavy loads, to guard sheep, and so on. Surplus food gave some people the freedom to spend time on pursuits other than securing subsistence, such as making vases to store food.

Domestication is the hallmark of two types of societies: pastoral and horticultural. **Pastoral societies** rely on domesticated herd animals to subsist. Pastoralism was adopted by people living in deserts and other regions in which vegetation was limited. Those able to acquire and manage the largest herds assumed powerful statuses and passed their advantaged positions on to their children, creating hereditary-based political systems.



U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. John Cumper

Gysgt Erik S. Hansen, USMC

▲ Today in Afghanistan there are an estimated 1.2 million people considered pastoral; in Iraq there are about 250,000. The left photo shows the nomadic Kuchi people moving their goats, donkeys, camels, and cattle through the Panjshir Valley in Afghanistan to the high country for the summer. The right photo shows an Iraqi Bedouin nomad moving camels down a dirt road.

Most pastoral peoples are nomadic, moving their herds when grazing land and/or water sources are depleted. Even though they may be on the move, pastoralists are able to accumulate possessions such as tents, carpets, bowls, and other cultural artifacts, because now they have animals to carry those possessions. In the course of their travels, pastoralists encounter other nomads and settled peoples with whom they trade and/or fight to secure grazing land. The statuses people occupy revolve around gender, age, and kinship, but material possessions and success in conflicts are now also important to determining status.

In contrast to pastoralists, people who live in **horticultural societies** rely on hand tools such as hoes to work the soil and digging sticks to punch holes in the ground into which seeds are dropped. Horticultural peoples grow crops rather

than gather food and employ slash-and-burn technology in which they clear land of forest and vegetation to make fields for growing crops and grazing animals. When the land becomes exhausted, people move on, repeating the process. In contrast to pastoralists, horticultural societies are relatively settled, with their members migrating to new locations only after the soil is depleted. The horticultural system offers a level of predictability and residential stability that gives people the incentive and means to create surplus wealth, including houses, sculptures, and jewelry. The creation of surplus wealth is accompanied by conflict over available resources and by inequality with regard to its distribution.

AGRARIAN SOCIETIES. The invention of the plow 6,000 years ago triggered a revolution in agriculture and marked the emergence of **agrarian societies** built on the cultivation of crops using plows pulled by animals to achieve subsistence. The plow made it possible to cultivate large fields and increase food production to a level that could support thousands to millions of people, many of

whom lived in cities and/or were part of empires. Although the plow was a significant invention, planting and harvesting food still depended largely on human and animal muscle.

◀ The major agricultural revolution that launched the agrarian societies occurred around 5000 BC with the invention of the scratch plow (still used in some parts of the world); its forward-curving blade cut deep into the soil, bringing nutrients to the surface and turning weeds under. The plow was a great advance over hoes (left). The plow supported permanent settlements because farmers and their descendants could replenish the soil year after year (Burke 1978, p. 9).

Agrarian societies are noted for dramatic inequality; power is concentrated in a hereditary monarch such as a king, queen, or emperor. Monarchs hold absolute power over

their subjects, who for the most part do not question such power. In agrarian societies there is a small number of landowning elites and large numbers of people known as serfs, peasants, or enslaved. There are also small numbers of merchants, traders, and craftspeople.

In addition to dramatic inequality, agrarian societies are often engaged in wars to protect and/or expand their territory and to exercise control over resources. The empires in the ancient and medieval periods numbered well over 150.



U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Chuck Bell



George G. Hawthurst © California Academy of Sciences

► One well-known symbol of ancient and medieval empires is the 4,500-mile-long Great Wall of China, built during the Qin, Han, and Ming dynasties (Slackman 2008). The technological complexity of the wall offers insights about the kinds of human activity that surplus wealth made possible—including centralized government, roads, systems of writing, militaries, palaces, and much more.



Gunneary Sgt. Demetrio J. Espinosa

Once the plow created surplus wealth, that wealth, along with a newfound ability to shape metal into weapons and blades, is believed to have changed the status of women relative to men in dramatic ways. As surplus wealth and populations increased in size, warfare between peoples fighting over land and resources became commonplace. The invention and proliferation of metal weapons supported military forces created to advance and protect the interests of the political elite. The military excluded women, who spent much of their reproductive life pregnant or nursing, to offset the high death rates and low life expectancy (Boulding 1976).

Women's status was reduced in yet another way. The plow increased the amount of land that could be cultivated and by extension it increased the amount of food produced. It was men who operated the plows and managed heavy draft animals in fields away from home. Women's reproductive lives and caretaking responsibilities, in conjunction with the efficient technology men operated, made it difficult for women to outproduce men. As a result women's share of the production diminished. Elise Boulding (1976) described women's situation as follows:

The shift of the status of the woman farmer may have happened quite rapidly, once there were two male specializations relating to agriculture, plowing and the care of cattle. The situation left women with all the subsidiary tasks, including weeding and carrying water to the fields. The new fields were larger so women had to work just as many hours as they did before but at more secondary tasks . . . this would contribute further to the erosion of the status of women.

INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES. Industrial societies rely on mechanization or on externally powered machines to subsist. That power, derived from burning wood and fossil fuels, allowed humans to produce food, extract resources, and manufacture goods at revolutionary speeds and on an unprecedented scale. Mechanization allowed a small percentage of the population to grow the food needed to sustain a society that could encompass hundreds of millions of people. Mechanization changed everything: how goods were produced, how people negotiated time and space, the relationships among geographically distant peoples, how people made their livings, the density of human populations, the relative importance and influence of the home in people's lives, and the proportion of people with access to formal education. The products of industrialization improved nutrition and living standards, which increased human life expectancy, decreased fertility, and lowered death rates so that the number of older people eventually came to outnumber the young. Population size increased from about 954 million people in 1800 to 2.5 billion by 1950 (Massey 2002).

The ability to create surplus wealth supported a diverse economy and many institutions, including education, medicine, sports, government, and so on. The mass production of goods allowed people not only to buy products that distinguished them from others but also to buy more products than they needed, creating great social differences. On the one hand, industrialization allowed many more people to experience a high standard of living and social mobility. On the other hand, it created dramatic differences in material wealth between those in the top 10 percent and the bottom 20 percent (Massey 2002).

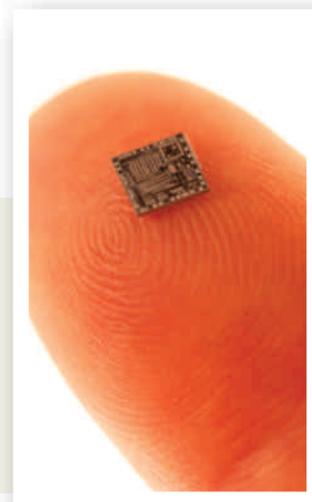


◀ This shopping cart and the food choices shown in the background illustrate the degree of mass production and consumption made possible by industrialization. Now a large share of the masses, not just an elite few, consumed more than they needed. And, of course, each item has a carbon footprint.

If we study patterns of conflict in the world, the record shows industrial societies have used their military strength and technological advantages to invade and control what are often referred to as developing countries. This control extends to natural resources such as oil and coltan on which industrial countries have come to depend (Robertson 1987).

POST-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES. Massey (2002) estimates that humans spent 300,000 generations as hunter-gatherers, 500 generations as agrarians, 9 generations in the industrial era, and only 1 generation in the post-industrial era. Sociologist Daniel Bell, who has been writing about the coming of a **post-industrial society** since the 1950s, described it as a society that relies on intellectual technologies of telecommunications and computers (Bell 1999, p. xxxvii). According to Bell, this intellectual technology encompasses four interdependent revolutionary innovations: (1) electronics that allow for incredible speed of data transmission and calculations, which can be made in nanoseconds; (2) miniaturization or the drastic size reduction of electronic devices; (3) digitalization, which allows voice, text, image, and data to be integrated and transmitted with equal efficiency; and (4) software, applications that allow people to perform a variety of tasks and generate a variety of simulated experiences.

➤ One example of intellectual technology is the microchip, the brain of many electronic products, including computers, cell phones, cameras, iPods, and televisions. Microchips run pacemakers and mechanical hearts. They are installed in microwave ovens and cars. Microchips control the deployment of air bags, the movement of artificial limbs, and much more. Microchips have created many new products and services, yet they are ultimately powered by fossil fuels.



Lucidio Studio Inc./Getty Images

According to Bell, post-industrial societies, built upon these intellectual technologies, are distinguished by

- a substantially greater share of the working population employed in service, sales, and administrative support occupations (in the U.S., from 29 percent in 1950 to 41 percent in 2010);

- an increased emphasis on education as the avenue of social mobility (in the U.S., in 1950, 6 percent of the population had at least a four-year college degree; in 2010, 28 percent did);
- a recognition that capital is not only financial but also social (that is, access to social networks serves as an important source of information and opportunity);
- the dominance of intellectual technology grounded in mathematics and linguistics that takes the form of what are known as apps;
- the creation of an electronically mediated global communication infrastructure that includes broadband, cable, digital TV, optical fiber networks, fax, e-mail, and integrated system digital networks (ISDN); and
- an economy defined not simply by the production of goods but by applied knowledge and the manipulation of numbers, words, images, and other symbols.

What do these changes mean? In answering this question, keep in mind that Bell does not believe that technology determines the nature of any social change. Rather, it is the ways people choose to use and respond to the technology that shapes social change. Although it is virtually impossible to catalog all the changes associated with the intellectual technologies, they have (1) sped up old ways of doing things; (2) given individuals access to the equivalent of personal libraries, publishing houses, and production studios; (3) changed how people learn; and (4) permitted real-time exchange of information on a global scale.

The unprecedented and immediate access to information and people can be overwhelming. Although computer software and telecommunications technologies have increased the speed of information generation and exchange, keep in mind people must still read, discuss, and contemplate the information to give it meaning. These activities are very slow compared with the speed at which the information is generated.

Relative to other types of societies, the post-industrial society presents its members with a distinct set of challenges that are interpersonal in nature. The communication infrastructure and service economy multiply interactions among people, making interpersonal relationships a primary focus. That focus is complicated by our leaving permanent and easily accessible records of our transactions with others. The great difference in the post-industrial society is the tremendous change in the number of people one knows or can potentially know (Bell 1976, p. 48).

Critical Thinking

Do you hold an occupation that creates products or delivers services that are not needed for subsistence? Explain.

Key Terms

agrarian societies

carbon footprint

horticultural societies

hunting and gathering societies

industrial societies

pastoral societies

post-industrial society

subsist

surplus wealth

Population Dynamics

Objective

You will learn how births, deaths, and migration determine population size.

U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jera T. Stubblefield



U.S. Navy photo Photographer's Mate 3rd Class John E. Woods

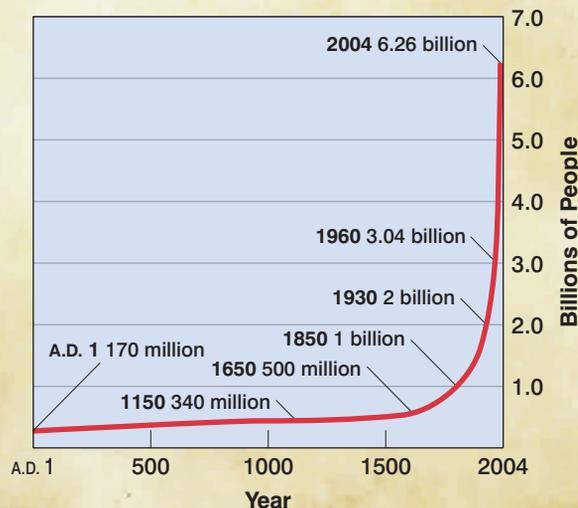


Image copyright devi, 2010. Used under license from Shutterstock.com

What do these photos say about how a country's population size increases or decreases?

Population size increases as a result of babies being born or people moving in; population decreases as a result of people dying or moving away. Note that the population has doubled in size five times in the last 2,000 years and that the time between doublings has decreased dramatically. Figure 13.3a shows that it took about 1,150 years for the world's population to double from 170 million in AD 1 to 340 million in 1150. By 1850 the world's population reached 1 billion; it took until 1930 (80 years) for it to double. The chart below shows world population growth since 1950 and projected to 2050. In 1960 the world's population reached 3.04 billion, and it took just 30 years to double to 6 billion.

Figure 13.3a World Population by Selected Years in Human History



Population Size

Births increase population size. Deaths reduce it. **Migration**, the movement of people from one country to another, increases population size if the people are moving in (in-migration) and reduces it if they are moving out (out-migration). The population size of a country constantly changes, depending on births, deaths, and migration flows. For comparison purposes, sociologists convert the number of births, deaths, or migrations into rates. **Crude rates** represent the annual number of incidents (e.g., births, deaths, or in- and out-migrations) per every 1,000 people in a country (see Table 13.3a).

Table 13.3a: Changes in Population Size, January 1-December 31, 2000

Sociologists calculate annual population growth according to the following formula: (number of births – number of deaths) + (in-migration – out-migration). Worldwide, how many babies were born in 2009? How many people died? In the United States, how many births and deaths occurred? How many people moved in and out of the United States in 2009? By how much did world population increase in 2009? How much did the U.S. population increase?

Vital Event	World	United States
Population, January 1, 2009	6,717,750,229	305,222,746
Births	+131,645,078	+4,196,000
Crude Birth Rate (per 1,000)	19.6	13.7
Deaths	-56,044,664	-2,417,000
Crude Death Rate	8.3	7.9
Out-migrations	—	-3,000,000*
In-migrations	—	+4,388,000
Population, December 31, 2009	6,793,350,643	308,389,746
Change in Population (December 31 – January 1)	+75,600,414	+3,167,000

Sources: Tolson (2008); U.S Census Bureau (2010)

*Although in- and out-migration has no bearing on the size of the world's population, because people do not move into or out of the planet, migration does affect the size of a country.

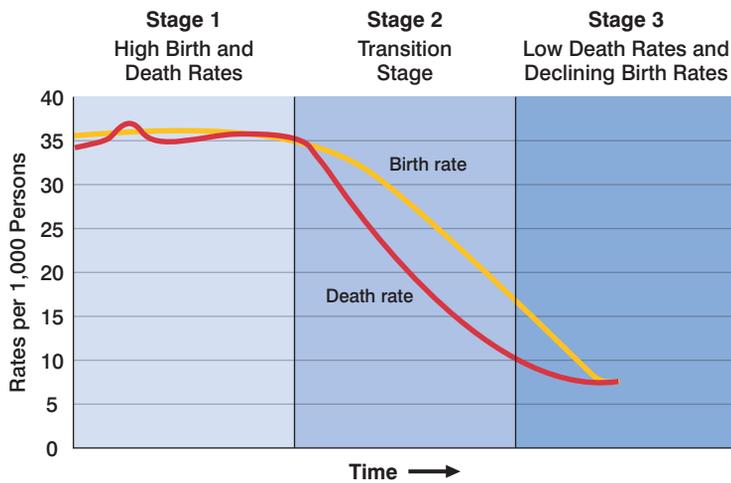
In the history of the human species, births have outnumbered deaths to the point that the world's population now is more than 6.7 billion. Note that population size varies by country. China has the largest population with 1.3 billion people, followed by India with about 1.2 billion people. Together, China and India account for 36 percent of the world's population. The country with the third largest population is the United States with 307 million people (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2010). Although China has 4.5 times the population of the United States, its people live in a space equivalent to the physical size of the United States. India's 1.2 million people live in a physical space about one-fourth the size of the United States.

Theory of the Demographic Transition

Sociologists are interested in how population size and growth vary by country. The theory of the demographic transition postulates that a country's birth and death rates are linked to its level of industrial or economic development and that the so-called developing countries will eventually achieve birth and death rates like those of Western Europe and North America; in fact, to get there they would follow the same pattern as industrialized countries (see Figure 13.3b).

The demographic transition includes three stages: in stage 1, birth and death rates are both high; in stage 2, death rates decrease, causing population size to increase dramatically; and in stage 3, both birth and death rates drop below 20 per 1,000 persons. Since the theory was put forth in the 1930s a fourth stage has been added.

Figure 13.3b The Demographic Transition



STAGE 1: HIGH BIRTH AND DEATH RATES. For most of human history—the first 2 to 5 million years—populations grew very slowly, if at all. The world population remained at less than 1 billion until around AD 1850, at which point it began to grow explosively. Demographers speculate that growth until that time was slow because **mortality crises**—violent fluctuations in the death rate caused by war, famine, or epidemics—were a regular feature of life. Stage 1 of the demographic transition is often called the stage of high potential growth: if something happened to cause the death rate to decline—for example, improvements in agriculture, sanitation, or medical care—the population would increase dramatically. In this stage, life is short and brutal; average life expectancy at birth remained short—perhaps 20 to 35 years—with the most vulnerable groups being women of reproductive age, infants, and children younger than age 5. It is believed that women gave birth to large numbers of children and families remained small because 1 of every 3 infants died before reaching age 1, and 2 of every 3 died before reaching adulthood.

STAGE 2: TRANSITION. Around 1650, mortality crises became less frequent and by 1750, the death rate began to decline slowly. This decline was triggered by a complex array of factors associated with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. The two most important factors were (1) increases in the food supply, which improved the nutritional status of the population and increased its ability to resist diseases; and (2) public health and sanitation measures, including the use of cotton to make clothing and new ways of preparing food. Over a hundred-year period, the death rate fell from 50 per 1,000 to less than 20 per 1,000, and life expectancy at birth increased to approximately 50 years of age. As the death rate declined, fertility remained high, such that the **demographic gap**—the difference between the birth and death rates—widened, and the population grew substantially. Accompanying the unprecedented growth in population was urbanization.

Around 1880 birth rates began to drop. The decline was not caused by innovations in contraceptive technology, because the methods available in 1880 had been available throughout history. Instead, the decline in fertility seems to have been associated with several other factors. First, the economic value of children declined; children no longer represented a source of cheap labor but rather became an economic liability to parents. Second, with the decline in infant and childhood mortality, women no longer had to bear a large number of children to ensure that a few survived. Third, a change in the status of women gave them greater control over their reproductive life and made childbearing less central to their life.

STAGE 3: LOW DEATH RATES AND DECLINING BIRTH RATES.

Around 1930, both birth and death rates fell to less than 20 per 1,000, and the rate of population growth slowed considerably. Life expectancy at birth surpassed 70 years. The remarkable successes in reducing infant, childhood, and maternal mortality placed accidents, homicides, and suicide among the leading causes of death of young people. The risk of dying from infectious diseases declined, allowing those who would have died of infectious diseases in an earlier era to survive into middle age and beyond, at which point they faced an elevated risk of dying from degenerative and environmental diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and strokes. For the first time in history, people age 50 and older accounted for the largest share of deaths. Before stage 3, infants, children, and young women accounted for the largest share (Olshansky and Ault 1986). As death rates declined, disease prevention becomes important. As a result people become conscious of the link between health and lifestyle factors such as sleep, nutrition, exercise, and bad habits.

STAGE 4: DEATH RATES EXCEED LOW BIRTH RATES. Since the demographic transition was first proposed, a fourth stage has been added, in which both birth rates and death rates are low. Birth rates drop to a level below that needed to replace those who die. While death rates are low, there is an increase in lifestyle diseases caused by lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and obesity. Birth rates fall below replacement when the average woman has fewer than two children over the course of her reproductive life. Eastern European countries, Italy, and Japan are examples of countries in which this is the case.

► Consider that in Japan, the average woman has 1.13 babies; the death rate is 9.26 per 1,000 and the birth rate is 7.87. As the population ages, the proportion of the population over 65 rises and may exceed the population of youth (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).



Katie Englert

Developing Countries

The theory of the demographic transition forecasted that developing countries would follow this three-stage model. But their path has deviated in some fundamental ways. Most countries we call developing were once colonies of today's industrialized countries. Colonization created economies in developing countries that supported the colonizing countries' industrialization, but it did not put the developing countries on the path to industrialization—the path that the demographic transition predicts would result in lower birth and death rates.

BIRTH RATES. Birth rates, although still relatively high, are declining in most developing countries. Some important thresholds associated with declines in fertility, including (1) less than 50 percent of the labor force is employed in agriculture. (The economic value of children decreases in industrial and urban settings.) (2) At least 50 percent of those 5 and 19 are enrolled in school. (Especially for women, education “widens horizons, sparks hope, changes status concepts, loosens tradition, and reduces infant mortality” [Samuel 1997].) (3) Infant mortality is less than 65 per 1,000 live births. (When parents have confidence that their babies and children will survive, they limit the size of their families.)

(4) Eighty percent of the females between the ages of 15 and 19 are unmarried. (Delayed marriage is important when it is accompanied by delayed sexual activity or protected premarital sex) (Berelson and Samuel 1978).

DEATH RATES. Death rates in the developing countries have declined at a faster rate than they did in the industrialized countries. That decline has been attributed, in part, to imported Western technologies such as pesticides, fertilizers, immunizations, and antibiotics. Because birth rates were slower to decline, some countries have been caught in a **demographic trap**—the point at which population growth overwhelms the environment’s carrying capacity. That is, people’s needs for food and shelter exceed the sustainable yield of surrounding forests, grasslands, croplands, or aquifers to the point that people begin to consume the resource base itself (Brown 1987).

URBANIZATION. Urbanization in developing economies differs in several major ways from urbanization in developed economies. For one, in the 18th and 19th centuries, millions of Europeans who were pushed off the land were able to migrate to sparsely populated places such as North America, South America, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia. If these millions had been forced to make their living in the European cities, the conditions there would have been much worse than they actually were (Light 1983). The problem of urbanization in developing countries is compounded by the fact that many people who migrate to the cities come from some of the most economically precarious sections of their countries. In fact, most rural-to-urban migrants are not pulled into the cities by employment opportunities; rather, they are forced to move there because they

have no alternatives. When these migrants come to the cities, they face not only unemployment but also a shortage of housing and a lack of services (electricity, running water, and waste disposal).

◀ One distinguishing characteristic of cities in developing countries is the prevalence of slums and squatter settlements, which are much poorer and larger than even the worst slums in industrialized countries.

Sociologist Kingsley Davis uses the term **over-urbanization** to describe a situation in which urban misery—poverty, unemployment, housing shortages, and insufficient infrastructure—is exacerbated by an influx of unskilled, illiterate, and poverty-stricken rural migrants who have come to the cities out of desperation (Dugger 2007).



Photo by Crystal Davis, World Resources Institute 2007

Critical Thinking

Look up the rates of birth, death, and in- and out-migration of the state in which you live. In recent years, has your state gained or lost population? See if you can find the same information about the city or town in which you live.

Key Terms

crude rates

demographic trap

mortality crises

demographic gap

migration

over-urbanization

Social Movements

Objective

You will learn about types of social movements and some conditions under which people join them.



Courtesy of Institute for Research on World-Systems

Is there something about the world you would like to see changed? If so, have you joined a social movement dedicated to making that change happen?

A **social movement** is formed when a substantial number of people organize to make a change, resist a change, or undo a change to some area of society. For a social movement to form there must be (1) an actual or imagined condition that enough people find objectionable; (2) a shared belief that something needs to be and can be done about that condition; and (3) an organized effort to attract supporters, articulate the mission, and define a change-making strategy. Usually those involved in social movements work outside the system to advance their cause, because the system has failed to address the problem. To draw attention to their cause and accomplish their objectives, supporters may strike, demonstrate, walk out, boycott, go on hunger strikes, riot, or terrorize.

Examples of social movements include the environmental, civil rights, women's, abortion rights, and pro-life movements. Generally any social movement encompasses dozens to hundreds of specific groups that have organized to address some conditions they find intolerable. The environmental movement, for example, consists of thousands of different organizations devoted to reducing air and water pollution, preserving wilderness, protecting endangered species, changing lifestyles, and limiting corporate activities that harm the environment.

Types of Social Movements

Social movements can be placed into four broad categories, depending on the scope and type of change being sought: regressive, reformist, revolutionary, and counterrevolutionary. Definitions and examples of each category follow. Keep in

mind that the distinctions between the four categories are not always clear-cut. As a result you might find that some examples fit into more than one category.

REGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS. Regressive, also called reactionary, movements seek to return to an earlier state of being, sometimes considered a golden era. The International Forum on Globalization (2010) represents such an effort. It is a global alliance of 60 organizations in 25 countries that takes issue with the widely held belief that a globalized economy trickles down to even the poorest peoples. This movement seeks to reverse the globalization process by revitalizing local economies, advocating for local food production, and critically examining trade policies that make people dependent on distant sources.

REFORMIST MOVEMENTS. These movements identify a specific feature of society as needing change. The nonprofit organization Polar Bear Sustainability Alliance (2010) focuses on saving the polar bear population and its habitat from extinction. Its goals are to use education and research to protect the world's polar bears, offer educational resources to the public, encourage constructive dialogue, and build an international organization dedicated to saving this population.

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS. When people take action to make broad, sweeping, and radical structural changes to society's basic social institutions, they are engaged in revolutionary movements (Benford 1992). The Earth Liberation Front (ELF) is an underground eco-defense movement with no formal leadership or membership. Its members anonymously and autonomously engage in economic sabotage, including property destruction and guerrilla warfare, against those seen as exploiting and destroying the natural environment. ELF members have made news for setting fire to SUVs on dealership parking lots and at logging companies (Goldman 2007; Gillespie 2008).



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

◀ Radical environmentalists claim to have committed 1,100 acts of arson and vandalism without killing a single person (Goldman 2007). The home in this photo was one of four torched in Seattle, Washington. ELF left a sign disputing the claim that this and other homes were built green—“Built Green? Nope black!”—black being a reference to torched homes that are actually not green (Gillespie 2008).

COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS. When people join together to maintain a social order that reform and revolutionary movements are seeking to change, they are part of a counterrevolutionary movement. The Global Warming Petition Project (2010) qualifies as such a movement; it seeks to challenge movements demanding that greenhouse gas emissions be reduced. The Petition Project recruits basic and applied scientists to sign a Global Warming Petition urging the U.S. government to reject international agreements to limit greenhouse gas emissions. The signers believe that limiting greenhouse gases will actually harm the environment and that increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide produce many beneficial effects upon the natural plant and animal

environments of the Earth. The movement's website lists the names of 31,500 basic and applied American scientists who have signed the petition.

On the surface, it would appear that social movements form when enough people feel deprived either in an objective or a relative sense. **Objective deprivation** is the condition of those who are the worst off or most disadvantaged—the people with the lowest incomes, the least education, the lowest social status, the fewest job opportunities, and so on. It might seem only logical that the objectively deprived would benefit from antiglobalization movements seeking to slow or stop outsourcing of jobs. **Relative deprivation** is a social condition that is measured not by objective standards but rather by comparing one group's situation with the situations of groups who are more advantaged. Someone earning an annual income of \$100,000 is not deprived in any objective sense. He or she may, however, feel deprived relative to someone making \$300,000 or more per year (Theodorson and Theodorson 1969). The research on social movements shows that those who are objectively deprived are less likely than those who are relatively deprived to form or join social movements. The research also shows that people join social movements not to address real or imagined personal deprivations but rather to address larger moral issues, such as mistreatment of animals. The point is that an actual deprivation alone cannot explain why people form or join social movements or how social movements take off.

The Life of a Social Movement

Sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf (1973) offers a three-stage model to capture the life of a social movement. Progression from one stage to the next depends on many things. In the first stage those without power decide to organize against those with power.

► Dahrendorf maintained that it is “immeasurably difficult to trace the path on which a person . . . encounters other people just like himself, and at a certain point . . . [says] ‘Let us join hands’” against those in power to change the system (p. 240). Such encounters occurred in fall 2009, when thousands of California college students found each other and came together to protest a 32 percent hike in the price of tuition imposed as a result of state budget shortfalls.



David McNew/Getty Images

Often, some event—a tuition hike, a shooting, a toxic emission into the air—makes seemingly disconnected and powerless people aware that they share an interest in changing the system. After that event people dare to complain openly and loudly to one another (Ash 1989). At other times, people organize because they have nothing left to lose. They have reached the point when they do not care anymore about what happens if they speak out (Reich 1989).

In the second stage of conflict, those without power organize, provided that they find ways to communicate with one another, they have some freedom to organize, they can garner the necessary resources, and a leader emerges. At the same time, those in power often censor information, restrict resources, and undermine

attempts to organize. Resource mobilization theorists maintain that having a core group of sophisticated strategists is key to getting a social movement off the ground. Effective strategists can harness and channel the energies of the disaffected, attract money and supporters, capture media attention, forge alliances with those in power, and develop an organizational structure. Cell phones, text messaging, and the Internet have made organizing easier by allowing interested parties to connect in ways that defy place and time (Lee 2003).

In the third stage of conflict, those seeking change enter into direct conflict with those in power. The capacity of the ruling group to stay in power and the amount and kind of pressure exerted from below then affect the speed and depth of change. The intensity of the conflict can range from heated debate to violent civil war. It depends on many factors, including the belief that change is possible and that those in power can control the conflict. If protestors believe that their voices will eventually be heard, the conflict is unlikely to become violent or revolutionary. If those in power decide that they cannot compromise and they mobilize all of their resources to thwart protests, two results are possible. First, the protesters

may withdraw from the fray because they believe that the sacrifices are too great if they continue. Alternatively, the protesters may decide to meet the enemy head-on, in which case the conflict may become violent.

◀ In spite of protests, California college students were unable to prevent hikes in tuition and fees. What factors do you think prevented them from engaging in perpetual protest until their demands were met?



AP Photo/Danny Moloshok

Critical Thinking

Is there a contemporary or historical social movement with which you are familiar? Under which of the four types of social movements would it fall?

Key Terms

objective deprivation

relative deprivation

social movement

Environmental Sociology

Objective

You will learn that environmental sociologists focus on how human activities, especially profit-making activities and overconsumption, affect the quality of life on the planet.



Is there a product you routinely buy that is designed to be thrown away after one or two uses? Have you ever considered where those products go after you throw them away?

If you think about how the manufacturing and disposal of these products impacts the environment, then you share the interests of sociologists who make the relationship between the environment and human society their focus of study.

Environment and Society

Environmental sociologists seek to identify the social, political, economic, and technological factors that contribute to pollution, overconsumption, and waste, which in turn threaten ecosystems, human life, and other species that share the planet (ASA 2009). This perspective differs from classic sociological inquiry that makes humans the center of study. Environmental sociologists seek to uncover the ways in which human activities influence and affect the natural environment (Catton and Dunlap 1978; Buttel and Humphrey 2002).

There is no doubt that human activities impact the environment. For example, consider that the United States makes up less than 5 percent of the world's

population but consumes 25 percent of the world's energy resources (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2008). Also consider that the United States, with 4.6 percent of the world's population, and China, with 18 percent, together produce 40 percent of the world's greenhouse gases. Each year, China creates 6.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide (from burning fossil fuels); the United States, 5.8 billion (New York Times 2007). When we consider that much of what the United States consumes is made in China and other countries, then Americans must acknowledge that a significant proportion of China's carbon dioxide emission results from their consumption.

Much of the focus of environmental sociology has been on explaining how the consumption patterns of the United States and other industrialized countries are connected to environmental destruction. Sociologist Allan Schnaiberg (2008) associates environmental problems with the global economy's ever-increasing drive for profit. He coined the term **treadmill of production** in reference to the ceaseless increases in production and, by extension, consumption that are needed to sustain the global economy's success, which is measured by increased profits (Schnaiberg 1980).



◀ Would you cut a hole in a shirt that had never been worn, making it defective and thus unsaleable and unwearable? In an attempt to maximize profits, some corporations destroy and dispose of unsold clothing, which contributes to the amount of waste in landfills and amount of energy used to make new products (Dwyer 2010).

This never-ending cycle or treadmill has a devastating impact on the environment

because the relentless focus on producing and consuming increases energy consumption, waste, and harmful emissions. Environmental sociologists contend that the damage to the environment is not shared equally; minority and low-income people who consume much less than the wealthy are disproportionately overexposed to environmental pollutants (Stretesky and Lynch 2003; Hooks and Smith 2004; Downey 2005). For example a disproportionate share of toxic waste dumps and hazardous emissions are found in minority communities within the United States and in poorer nations abroad. This unequal distribution of environmental hazards based on race or socioeconomic status is evidence of **environmental injustice** (Bullard et al. 2007). For example, studying factors that affect exposure to hazardous waste found that the majority of people living within 1.8 miles of hazardous waste facilities in the U.S. are minorities (Bullard et al. 2007).

Changing Consumption Habits

In thinking of ways to change consumption habits, we must recognize that energy consumption is woven into the fabric of American society and, to varying degrees, woven into the fabric of the world's countries. Changing these habits requires a revolution in thinking and behaving. This revolution will not look like the so-called Green Revolution that to date seems to emphasize consuming green products and taking easy steps to change the way we live, as described by the following headlines: "21 Ways to Save the Earth and Make More Money,"

“365 Ways to Save the Planet Earth,” and “Ten Ways to Green Up Your Sex Life” (Friedman 2008). Our current energy system took more than a hundred years of investments to establish (the age of oil in the United States began in 1901); it may take a hundred years of investments to put a clean energy system in place (Friedman 2008). If we consider the total energy consumed from all fossil fuel sources on a global scale (although it is unequally distributed) humans consume the equivalent of ten million barrels or 420 million gallons per hour—the United States consumes 84 million gallons of that hourly total (Friedman 2008). This is the scale of demand that is only expected to increase in coming years.

Environmental sociologists are particularly interested in identifying realistic strategies that countries, communities, and individuals are taking to promote sustainable relationships between humans and their natural environment. Examples of successful strategies can be found at the country level where Sweden, considered the world’s most energy-conscious and efficient country, increased energy efficiency by 24 percent in 2004 alone. And there are many examples of individuals and communities working to realize and/or promote sustainable living (Zumbrun 2008).

► Would you take clothing, furniture, food, and other items from the trash if you could afford to purchase them new? Freegans are people who choose to minimize their carbon footprint by reusing or salvaging items that have been thrown away but are still usable, including food (Freegan.info 2010).



Zane Selvans



Zane Selvans

Critical Thinking

Are there areas of your life in which you are guilty of overconsumption? Explain.

Key Terms

environmental injustice

treadmill of production

Applying Theory: Rational Choice Theory

Objective

You will learn why farmers overuse pesticides.



Image copyright PHOTO 999, 2011. Used under license from Shutterstock.com

Why do you think a farmer might overuse pesticides or use them in ways that are not recommended by manufacturers?

Sociologist Julia S. Guivant (2003) sought to understand why farmers overuse pesticides or fail to use them in ways that are recommended by manufacturers. Her findings give support to rational choice theory.

Rational Choice Theories

Rational choice theories are many and diverse. However, all assume that people act rationally. That is, people are viewed as conscious decision makers whose behaviors are largely influenced by weighing the costs and benefits of different possibilities before taking action. For the most part, rational choice sociologists do not seek to predict individual behavior per se. Rather, they use cost-benefit analysis to explain how collective action (such as norms guiding behavior, residential patterns, fashion trends, and so on) emerge, are sustained, or get dismantled. Specifically, a series of rational choices made by many individuals add up to explain collective actions (Hedström and Stern 2008). Guivant applies rational choice theory to farmers' decisions to overuse and misuse pesticides. Her research gives attention to the critical role economic incentives play in directing behaviors in environmentally unfriendly directions.

In trying to understand why pesticide contamination is so widespread across the globe, Guivant identified two positions: one position holds that farmers do not

know about the associated health and environmental risks, nor are they able to calculate the savings they will gain from using less pesticide. A second position holds that the sales staffs who work for pesticide companies and agricultural supply stores pressure or encourage farmers to overuse pesticides. Guivant argues that both positions fail to see farmers as independent and knowledgeable agents.

The Case of Brazilian Farmers

In an effort to learn the farmers' point of view, Guivant studied farmers working land along the Cubatão River in southern Brazil. This river supplies drinking water to a population of 500,000. The river and surrounding environment was well-known for pesticide contamination from fungicides, insecticides, and herbicides. (Note: keep in mind that Brazil ranks among the top five agricultural exporting countries in the world.) Of 1,278 samples of fruits and vegetables produced in this region, 81.2 percent were found to be contaminated with pesticide residues. Serious irregularities were found in 18 percent of these samples and 5 percent of the samples showed residues from illegal pesticides.

► Pesticides and other agricultural technologies were introduced to the region in the 1960s, ending subsistence farming and ushering in a relatively prosperous market-oriented economy—the earnings of which supported middle class-level consumption by locals. Even though Brazil has laws requiring professional supervision of pesticide use, the laws were not enforced. In fact, Guivant found that farmers she studied routinely violated recommended use by spraying a mixture of pesticides every four days for preventive purposes.



Against this backdrop Guivant studied 48 small- to medium-sized family-run and family-owned farms producing mostly tomatoes and potatoes. In addition, she interviewed agronomists, doctors, sales agents, and bank lenders familiar with pesticide use in the area. The farmers in Guivant's study held the following beliefs:

1. It is best to eliminate all pests, even harmless ones.
2. One can never apply too much pesticide. The farmers pointed to relatively high profit margins that increased as their pesticide use increased.
3. There are no viable alternatives to pesticides.

Farmers indicated that they were aware of recommendations for using pesticides. Most claimed that they followed guidelines regarding the waiting period between pesticide applications but that other farmers did not. They also reported seeing farmers throw empty pesticide containers in the river, disregard weather conditions when spraying, and fail to use safety equipment. The farmers did not seem to know that pesticides could penetrate through the skin, nor that there were ways to reduce pesticide use. While farmers had some knowledge of risk, most did not take steps to protect themselves from exposure. The farmers argued if the risks were real, why then did they not see more deaths among farmers? Farmers defined cases of poisoning, dizziness, vomiting, and headaches as not particularly harmful; those symptoms were just things that came along with

the job of farming. If such symptoms occur, “the farmer simply waits for them to pass, usually without going to the doctor” (p. 46). If the symptoms last for more than one day, the farmer may go to a doctor and stay in the hospital for a couple of days. These occasional symptoms are not enough to stop farmers from using pesticides or from ignoring recommendations regarding usage. However, Guivant did find that interviewees who had been hospitalized tended to use protective gear when mixing and applying pesticides.

When farmers did experience pesticide-induced health problems, they offered one of three explanations absolving pesticides as the cause:

1. A farmer can do nothing to protect himself from fate.
2. A contaminated person is to blame for disregarding the safety recommendations.
3. A contaminated person has some physical weakness or genetic deficiency such as allergies or weak blood. In fact, some farmers reported mixing pesticides barehanded, claiming an immunity to pesticides’ effects.

Guivant also found that farmers had a deep mistrust of technicians and sales staff as a source of information about pesticides. The farmers believed that the technicians considered them ignorant and inferior, labels that the farmers outright rejected.



dpa / Landov

◀ The technicians and sales staff in Guivant’s study reported difficulties in convincing farmers to use lower and less toxic doses of pesticides. The farmers saw the experts as not having an economic stake in the advice they offer them. That is, it is easy to make recommendations and not have to live with the perceived economic consequences.

Research Implications

Guivant’s research has clear implications for any plan to reduce pesticide use—because farmers believe that their way of applying pesticides works, no pesticide reduction program can be effective without addressing their economic fears. An effective program has to allow farmers an opportunity to change their pesticide-dependent method of farming while guaranteeing them the profit margin to which they have become accustomed. Once farmers have proof that they can still turn a profit upon reducing pesticide use, the likelihood that they will change their farming will certainly increase. Guivant’s research suggests that warning farmers about the health effects of pesticide misuse is not in itself an effective strategy for changing farmers’ behavior. Rather, farmers must believe that lowering pesticide use and following recommended standards will not result in lost income.

Critical Thinking

What implications does Guivant’s research have for changing behavior in more environmentally friendly directions?

Summary: Putting It All Together

Sociologists define social change as any significant transformation in the way social activities are organized. The discipline of sociology offers concepts to help us identify and describe key changes driven by industrialization, such as globalization, rationalization, McDonaldisation, urbanization, and the information explosion. It is worth noting that these key changes could not have occurred without fossil fuels. Social change—whether it be globalization, industrialization, urbanization, or something else—is part of an endless sequence of inter-related events. Even though it is difficult to disentangle the causes of social change, we can identify key factors that trigger change in general. The triggers include, but are not limited to, technological innovation, revolutionary ideas, conflict, the pursuit of profit, and social movements.

We gave special attention to social movements, which are formed when a substantial number of people organize to make a change, resist a change, or undo a change to some area of society. For a social movement to form there must be (1) an actual or imagined condition that enough people find objectionable; (2) a shared belief that something needs to be and can be done about that condition; and (3) an organized effort to attract supporters, articulate the mission, and define a change-making strategy. Usually those involved in social movements work outside the system to advance their cause, because the system has failed to address the problem.

Over time we have created societies in which energy use is woven into the fabric of society. There are six broad types of human societies defined by the technologies each employs to produce food and exploit resources: hunting and gathering, pastoral, horticultural, agrarian, industrial, and post-industrial. Each society is distinguished by the amount of surplus wealth it is able to produce. Of course, the greater the surplus wealth a society creates, the larger its carbon footprint. The Industrial Revolution made our society a hydrocarbon society—one in which the use of fossil fuels shapes virtually every aspect of our personal and social lives.

There are approximately 6.7 billion people living on the planet. Births increase population size. Deaths reduce it. The theory of the demographic transition offers one explanation for how birth and death rates combine over time to result in a global population of 6.76 billion people and societies in which the older population equals or outnumbers youth populations. A third factor contributing to population size is migration, the movement of people from one country to another. That movement increases population size if the people are moving in and reduces it if they are moving out.

[Can You Top This Photo?]

Log on to your Sociology CourseMate at www.CengageBrain.com.

Submit a photo with a caption to illustrate an aspect of your life that depends on burning of fossil fuels.



Missy Gish



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14

CHAPTER

SOCIOLOGY AT THE FOREFRONT

- 14.1 Human-Animal Relationships**
- 14.2 Commercialization of Childhood**
- 14.3 Tattoos and Body Piercing as Expressions of Identity**
- 14.4 Assessing a Public Health Policy**
- 14.5 Gender Transitions in the Workplace**
- 14.6 Stepping Outside Comfort Zones**
- Summary Sociology in the Forefront**

We have learned that when sociologists encounter a closed door they are compelled to open it. Opening closed doors is a metaphor for the sociologist's urge to study any human activity and relationship, but especially those activities that are hidden from view, that are controversial, or that go largely unchallenged. Keep in mind that it is not always easy to open doors because those on the other side are often reluctant to reveal hidden activities and thoughts. The six modules in this closing chapter profile the work of six of the thousands of sociologists who are opening doors to show us "that the first wisdom of sociology is this—things are not what they seem" (Berger 1963, p. 23).

Human-Animal Relationships

Objective

You will learn that sociology as a discipline excludes animals in its analyses of society but that some sociologists are working to change that approach.



Glenda Jordan

Do you think dogs and other nonhuman animals have distinct personalities, feel emotions, and possess a consciousness?

Do you think that animals who work for humans as police dogs, as guides to the blind, and as companions feel on some level a responsibility to perform the roles humans have assigned to them? If you think so, then you will support those sociologists who are challenging the anthropocentric roots of their discipline.

Animals and Society

Sociologist Amy J. Fitzgerald (2007) maintains that sociologists have neglected human-animal relationships because sociology is largely **anthropocentric**; that is, it puts humans at the center of analysis and excludes animals and their realities from serious consideration. Fitzgerald points out that sociology's intellectual roots are grounded in the belief that humans are unique, vastly different from and superior to animals, and socially and culturally created beings that are not instinct-driven.

Fitzgerald points to the work of two influential theorists—Karl Marx and George Herbert Mead—both of whom made a point of drawing a clear distinction between human and animal realities. Both argued that, unlike animals, humans possess a sense of self, language, and consciousness.



Lance Cpl. Matthew K. Hacker



Department of Defense

▲ Marx distinguished humans and animals according to how the two produce food and build shelter. Birds, for example, do not build fancy dwellings or stock up on worms. Humans, on the other hand, project their food needs beyond the moment and often eat amounts of food beyond what is needed to survive. These different approaches suggest that animals and humans possess a different consciousness about the self.

Specifically, Marx saw animals as having no self-awareness. He reasoned that consciousness arises out of social relations with others and argued that animals have “no relations with anything, no relations at all. An animal’s relation to others does not exist as a relation” (1845). By “no relations” Marx meant that animals could not take others’ expectations into consideration. Instead, animals respond by **instinct**, behavior that is not learned but part of their nature and elicited by reflex (Fitzgerald 2007).

Like Marx, Mead (1934) saw animals and humans as sharing few, if any cognitive traits. Mead argued that human interaction revolved around **significant symbols**, gestures or sounds that must be interpreted before a response is made. Mead argued that animals have “no mind, no thought” (Fitzgerald 2007, p. 959) because their sounds and moves are instinctual, immediate, and meaningless. Mead maintained that humans think and behave in reflective ways because they anticipate the consequences of their actions and take others into account before acting and responding (Fitzgerald 2007).

Research on Animal Consciousness

Because both Marx and Mead used human consciousness as the standard against which to compare animal consciousness, they concluded that animals were inferior and deficient by comparison. Sociologist Leslie Irvine (2007) asserts that this belief is challenged by a growing body of compelling research showing that animals are driven by more than instinct; they can feel emotions, are able to role-take, and can communicate (Irvine 2007; Morgana 2007). There is credible research on chimpanzees and gorillas that can communicate with sign language and on a parrot that speaks original thoughts. Researchers have also documented that primates, pigeons, and bottlenose dolphins recognize themselves when

gazing into a mirror (Irvine 2007). Recognizing oneself in a mirror suggests that animals can role-take—that is, they can imagine how others are seeing them.

From a sociological point of view, when someone can role-take they have developed a sense of self.



Courtesy Photo by Angela Elbern

◀ Researchers who have observed human interactions with cats have seen that people make their cats part of the social routines taking place within households and that cats assume specific roles. These roles include companion, entertainer, and so on.

Think about it—people everywhere have relationships with animals. “We study them, eat them, wear them, bless them, help them

when they are in need, and train them to help us when we are in need” (Bekoff 2007, p. xxxi–xxxii). If animals do possess a consciousness, then people are obligated to reconsider their relationships with all varieties of animals and reassess the ways in which they use animals (Irvine 2007). Sociologists who study animal-human relationships are challenging the longstanding anthropocentric point of view that has dominated the discipline. In addition to studying the complex bonds that form between humans and animals, these sociologists are interested in other topics, such as working animals.

▶ Working animals are trained to do specific tasks, such as pulling loads, plowing fields, performing search and rescue operations, carrying messages, assisting the disabled, guarding property, serving as research subjects, acting as companions, and providing entertainment. Hundreds of millions of animals around the world work alongside their owners (Bekoff 2007). The dogs shown in this photo have been trained to withdraw money from ATMs.



Canine Companions for Independence

Other topics of interest include learning how human bonds with animals can ease the symptoms of illness and promote mental and physical health and studying the conditions under which people treat animals as family members. The animal rights movement adds another interesting facet with emphasis on the kinds of strategies and tactics activists use to present their message and the role culture plays in impeding and enabling such efforts.

Critical Thinking

Do you agree with George Herbert Mead’s assessment that animals have “no mind, no thought”? Explain.

Key Terms

anthropocentric

instinct

significant symbols

Commercialization of Childhood

Objective

You will learn how corporations learn what attracts children to a product.



Would you allow a market researcher to observe and talk to your child while he or she was taking a bath?

Sociologist Juliet Schor (2004) is interested in the **commercialization of childhood**, a process by which children “are being turned into consumers almost from birth, and by adolescence, their social worlds [are] almost totally constructed around cool commodities, brand names, and the latest trendiest commercial music, films and lingo” (p. 298). This commercialization is especially prevalent in the United States, a country with 4.6 percent of the world’s population that consumes almost half the toys produced in the world each year. As one measure of the extent to which American children influence household consumption, Schor points to corporate research showing that 6- to 12-year-olds shop with an adult two to three times each week and put six items in carts on each occasion.

Corporate Construction of Childhood

Schor draws attention to the **corporate construction of childhood**, a term that refers to the reach, power, and influence of a small number of corporations that

sell and/or market most of the things children buy or want their parents to buy for them. Those corporations include Disney, Viacom, MTV Networks, Fox, AOL/Time Warner, Mattel, Hasbro, Nintendo, Sony, Microsoft, McDonald's, Burger King, Coca-Cola Company, and PepsiCo.

To gather data for her book about this process, Schor conducted 25 interviews, shadowed market researchers conducting focus groups with children, sat in on industry meetings, attended professional child marketing conferences, and read as many related publications as she could find. Among other things, Schor describes what she calls a new kind of intrusive research that takes place in settings previously off-limits to strangers. This research goes far beyond survey questions and focus groups, the traditional venues by which marketers learn about consumer tastes. Schor maintains that marketers began using these new intrusive methods in the 1980s because they were not satisfied with the limited information survey questions yield. Only so much can be gleaned from questions like “What shampoo do you use? What do you like about that shampoo? Have you ever heard of brand X? What do you think of it?” As Schor describes it, corporations used to survey thousands of potential consumers or actual consumers about their products or their competitor's products. With the advent of caller ID, answering machines, cell phones, and unlisted numbers, surveys became a less reliable and impractical way to gather data.

This new research “scrutinizes the most intimate details of children's lives” in naturalistic settings. That is, marketers videotape, interview, and observe children as they play, eat, take baths, do homework, and get ready for bed. They do an “in-depth analysis of the rituals of daily life” (p. 22). Studying children in this way allows corporations to learn about the intimate details of children's lives and, based on information gleaned, develop strategies to market their products to them.



Arthur McQueen (USAG Miami)

◀ Industry researchers patrol aisles watching, even recording, parents while they shop with their children in toy, department, and grocery stores. These researchers are looking for insights that might help them build strategies to get children to notice and want their products. Schor learned that industry researchers visit playgrounds, stores, schools, homes, clubs, and any setting that attracts children.

Ethnographic Methods

Ethnographic methods involve the holistic study of people—in this case children—in the places/setting where they live or carry out the activities of interest. So a company that makes bubble bath or other grooming products sends researchers to observe and interview children in bathrooms; a company that sells music would observe and interview children in the places where they listen to music, including their bedroom, bathroom, or other private settings; or a company that makes children's clothes would observe and interview children as they choose clothes from a closet or drawer.

Ethnographic research allows the child to set the pace, subject, and direction of the conversation. As one researcher told Schor, the “one shot approach does not work. She needs three visits . . . by the third time they are used to you . . .

creating enough trust that the children will be willing to open up” (p. 100). One-on-one sessions that allow the researcher to focus on one child at a time are preferred over focus groups in which one member can dominate the session or participants may censor their responses due to fear of what others may think.

Ethnographic research allows marketers to be there during the “moments of truth” (p. 101) in children’s lives—those moments when feelings and emotions that are difficult to articulate surface. Being a part of those moments allows industry researchers to capture the images, metaphors, and symbolic meanings that children keep private but that drive their motivation and behavior.

Schor learned that these researchers pay parents for private time with children in a bedroom, bathroom, or playroom. One researcher recounts sitting on the toilet seat taking notes while the child she was observing showered behind a pulled curtain. “She explained that after a few minutes the kids forget she is in the room. That’s when they perform the private behaviors it’s her job to discover, such as grabbing the shampoo container and pretending it’s a microphone, singing the latest Britney Spears tune and play-acting a super hero” (p. 102).

Some marketing firms plant hidden cameras on children ages 6 to 9 before placing them in a store setting and instructing them to “purchase” a designated number of products.

► Cameras record children as they move through the store looking for things to buy. Researchers learn what products children look at, how long they look, to which aisles children are drawn and linger, and what products they put into a shopping cart. After shopping, the researcher reviews the tape and talks to the child about what he or she was doing and thinking.



Missy Gish

◀ Industry researchers also use eye-tracking technologies to follow eye movement and other eye activities (pupil dilation, blinks) as children interact with specific products, look through magazines, and watch television shows and commercials. The researchers are interested in how easy it is for the child to see a particular brand on a shelf with other brands, how long



Missy Gish

the child gazes at a product relative to another, what part of an advertisement loses a child’s attention, and at which of two monitors a child looks when two different shows or ads are playing. Eye tracking offers valuable insights as to what product and packaging best captures children’s attention.

Critical Thinking

Can you think of a product you simply had to have as a young child? Describe your memories of this product and your need to obtain it.

Key Terms

commercialization of childhood

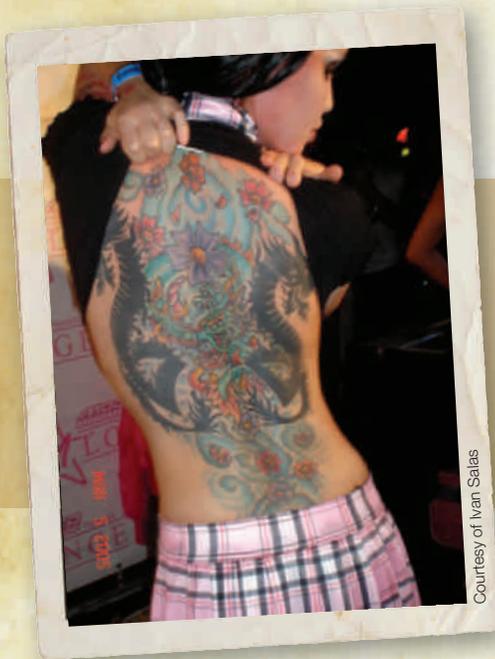
corporate construction of childhood

ethnographic methods

Tattoos and Body Piercing as Expressions of Identity

Objective

You will learn why tattoos and body piercing have become popular forms of self-expression.



Courtesy of Ivan Salas

Do you have a tattoo or a body piercing? Why did you decide to modify yourself in this manner?

An estimated 36 percent of 18- to 25-year-olds have a tattoo and 30 percent in that age group have a body piercing other than on an ear lobe (Pew Research Center 2007). The age group representing their parents' generation (ages 40–64) has considerably fewer tattoos (10 percent) and body piercing (6 percent). How do sociologists explain this generational difference in the presentation of self? To answer this question we will consider the work of sociologist Lauren Langman (2003), who traces body modification in part to the economic instability that has accompanied globalization.

Globalization and Identity

There is no question that globalization has transformed local economies and the global workforce—it has eliminated many occupations, created new ones, moved jobs to new locations, and radically changed the structure of opportunity. In the mid-to-late 1980s, many workers in Europe and the United States lost manufacturing jobs to outsourcing and technological innovations; the re-employed

often found themselves underemployed or working part-time. Beginning in the late 1990s, a second wave of outsourcing occurred that moved information and customer service jobs to locations such as India and China. These two waves of economic transformation disrupted not just the affected workers' lives but their families and communities.

Langman (2003) argues that the status system in Western capitalist societies has until recently been based on occupational attainment, but that that system's instability has supported a proliferation of identity-granting subcultures that provide its members with some form of recognition and dignity. The websites Second Life, Gaia Online, WeeWorld, and Meez are examples of identity-granting subcultures. Members can take on a persona, a career, and an appearance that has little to no relation to their real selves.

Langman maintains that body modification represents another venue by which people acquire an alternate identity. His thesis is this: in a world without job security, predictable careers, or enduring relationships, body modification offers a sense of permanency, connection, and personal empowerment. We develop his thesis in the sections that follow.

Body Modification as a Fashion Statement

Every society has conventions about how to dress. People dress in ways that distinguish themselves from others. Clothes, accessories, hairstyles, jewelry, and other appearance-enhancing products announce to others “who one is and who one is not” (Langman 2003, p. 238). The fashion we choose presents an identity that locates us inside and outside particular groups. Globalization, and the consumption-oriented societies it has fostered, offers many fashion choices for sale, including some that signal their wearers are outside the mainstream. One fashion choice, body modification—especially when it is visible and extreme—announces contempt for and rejection of the mainstream culture. In its extreme forms body modification can include splitting tongues, decorating genitalia, wearing dozens of rings, implanting studs or earrings in the nose, and saltings (injections of saline solution to grossly enlarge and distort a body part). While these body adornments elicit shock, disgust, and fear among those considered mainstream, they are still sources of status. Such extreme body modifications assure that one will be noticed—that one has enough power over others to command their gaze. “Whether the gaze invokes disgust by the mainstream, or acceptance by the subculture, to be viewed as different is to gain empowering recognition” (Langman 2003, p. 242).

For significant numbers of college-age students, tattoos and body piercing have become a rite of passage. Body modification is now so common it is considered ordinary. Still, when done in excess—multiple rings, implants, studs—body modification signals a rejection of mainstream culture and its values.

Symbolic Significance

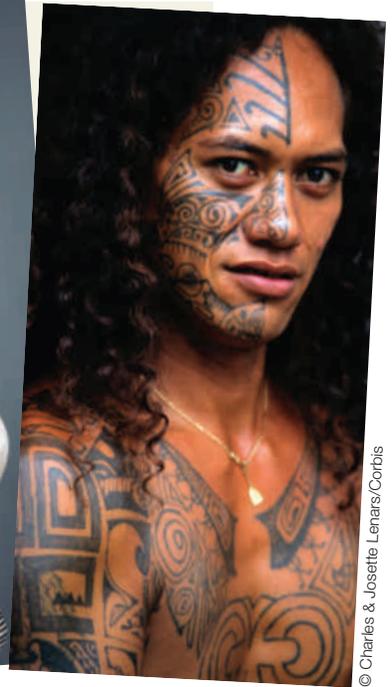
In Western culture tattoos, scarification, and body piercing have typically been regarded as a regression to primitive practices. According to Langman, those who engage in body modification often identify as modern primitives.

► Symbolically, the modern primitive identifies with cultures that consider body modification to be sacred and magical and that treat it as a symbolic means for people to connect with a larger community. The rituals accompanying tattoos and other body modification dramatize that passage into a desired group.

In the West body modifications can symbolize a disdain for or a rejection of the dominant culture and an embracing of a de-civilizing act that gives one a sense of connection. Langman argues that “to decorate one’s body is to claim authorship. Although this may involve pain, the pain is an expression of agency, recognition and inclusion.” Insofar as globalization has caused great pain to many displaced people, the pain of body modification becomes a way of authoring one’s own pain rather than having it imposed by impersonal forces. Ironically, it does little to change reality; in fact, one could argue that it is a harmless form of protest that does nothing to change the dominant moral codes or the structure of opportunity.



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Critical Thinking

Do you or does someone you know have tattoos or body piercing that might be considered excessive? Does Langman’s theory apply to you or this person? Explain.

Assessing a Public Health Policy

Objective

You will learn the kinds of questions sociologists ask to assess public health policy.



Missy Glish

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has pronounced water fluoridation one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century. Do you agree with that assessment?

When I teach applied sociology, I use water fluoridation as a vehicle for demonstrating how sociologists assess public health policies. I explain to my students that sociologists gain focus and perspective by asking questions such as (1) What is water fluoridation? (2) For what official reason was fluoride added to the water? (3) What meaning have people attached to water fluoridation? (4) What are the intended and unintended consequences of that practice? (5) How do we evaluate water fluoridation's effectiveness? (6) Who benefits from water fluoridation and at whose expense? This last question is key to understanding water fluoridation, but the answer is so complex that I cannot address it in these pages. For one answer to that question I recommend *Fluoride Deception* by Christopher Bryson. I do not give students the answers to the six questions sociologists pose; instead, I ask them to use those questions to determine whether water fluoridation is one of the great public health achievements of the 20th century.

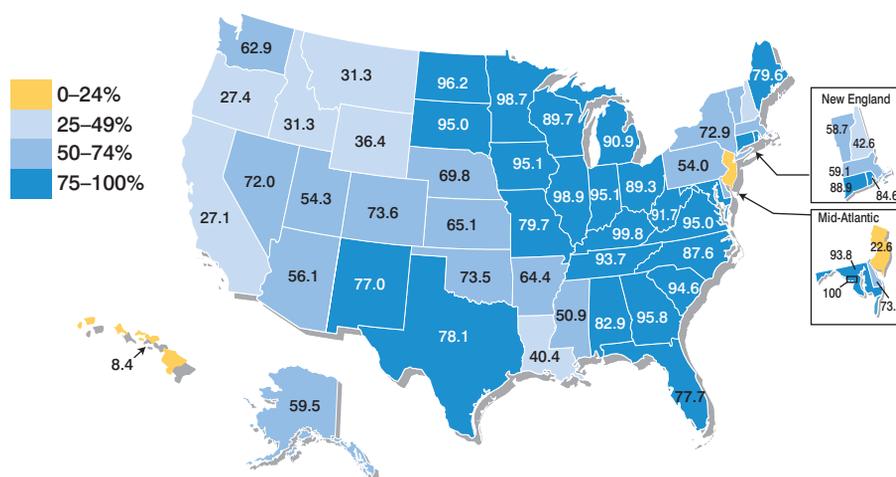
A 60-Year-Long Controversy

Water fluoridation is the adjustment of fluoride-deficient water to the levels recommended for *optimal* dental health. Since 1964 those levels have been set at between 0.7 and 1.2 parts of fluoride per million parts of water (ppm). Water fluoridation has been controversial in the United States since the 1940s, the decade fluoride was first added to a public water system. Officially, fluoride was

added because it is a safe and cost-effective way to reduce cavities, especially among those populations considered most vulnerable to cavities—the poor who lack access to regular dental care. About 70 percent of the U.S. population served by public water systems has fluoride added to the water. That percentage varies by state from a high of 99.8 percent (Kentucky) to a low of 8.4 percent (Hawaii).

It is important to know, however, that water fluoridation is not a universally accepted practice in the United States; not everyone values it as a cavity fighter. Simply do an Internet search of news sites (e.g., Google news) using the term “water fluoridation” and you will see headlines announcing community division over whether to add or remove fluoride from water systems: “City Councilors Vote to Keep Fluoride” or “Yutan Says No to Fluoride.” In addition, it is important to recognize that water fluoridation is largely an American practice. Apart from the United States only about 2 percent of the world’s population receives *optimally* fluoridated water. In parts of Africa, China, and India, natural fluoridation exceeds recommended optimal levels and the concern is how to remove fluoride from the water system (British Fluoridation Society et al. 2004).

Figure 14.4a Percentage of State Population Served by Public Water Systems That Receive Optimally Fluoridated Water



Source: Centers for Disease Control (2008)

Intended and Unintended Consequences

Despite the controversy over whether to add fluoride to water, those for and against water fluoridation do agree that on some level fluoride has the intended consequence of reducing cavities. However, anti-fluoride groups cite very small reductions and pro-fluoride groups cite very high reductions. One comprehensive review of hundreds of studies shows that water fluoridation is associated with a reduction in cavities ranging from a low of 5 percent to a high of 64 percent. The median reduction in cavities is 14.6 percent. That means that 50 percent of studies showed cavity reductions of less than 14.6 percent and 50 percent of studies showed cavity reductions greater than 14.6 percent. That review of research studies also showed that water fluoridation saves between 0.05 and 4.4 teeth from decay or loss over a lifetime. The median number of reported teeth saved is 2.25 teeth (NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination 2000).

Both sides also agree that regular exposure to fluoride exceeding recommended optimal levels has a variety of adverse effects as unintended consequences. There is complete agreement that dental and skeletal fluorosis are among the side effects considered adverse.

► Dental fluorosis is a condition resulting from consuming more than optimal amounts of fluoride. It can range in severity from an attractive pearlized appearance to brown (and even black) spots on the teeth's surface. The Centers for Disease Control (2005) estimated that in the United States 30 percent of those between the ages of 6 and 19 have dental fluorosis. The severity varies by age, with 1 in 5 6- to 11-year-olds showing a mild case of dental fluorosis and 1 in 25 12- to 15-year-olds showing the most severe levels. Pro-fluoride advocates argue dental fluorosis is a cosmetic problem that can be fixed. Fluoride critics argue that this is a sign of fluoride poisoning and structural damage to teeth. Skeletal fluorosis (right) is a bone disease caused by excessive consumption of fluoride. Some argue that early stages of skeletal fluorosis can be misdiagnosed as rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis (Savas et al. 2001; Roschger et al. 1995; Singh and Jolly 1970; Marier and Rose 1971).

British Fluoridation Society, Manchester, (2004)
Dr. P. Marazzi/Photo Researchers, Inc.



REUTERS/Krishendu Halder/Landov

The two sides disagree bitterly over whether other adverse side effects exist, with fluoride critics naming attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, bone cancer, irritable bowel syndrome, joint pain, and other illnesses. The American Dental Association, which is pro-water fluoridation, maintains that “of the thousands of credible scientific studies of fluoridation, none has shown health problems associated with the consumption of *optimally* fluoridated water” (American Dental Association 2006). Notice that emphasis is placed on the word *optimally*.

Is It Possible to Maintain Optimal Levels?

Given that both sides emphasize the importance of maintaining optimal levels of fluoride, the obvious question is this: is it possible to maintain optimal levels of fluoride consumption? It is important to note that when public health officials announced the cavity reduction benefits associated with water fluoridation, that announcement had the unintended consequence of fueling a drive to create a variety of fluoride products that promised the health benefits of fluoridated water. Fluoride was added to some salts, flour, and toothpaste. Fluoride supplements in the form of pills and drops hit the market. To complicate matters, crops are irrigated and processed with water that has been fluoridated; we eat animals that drink fluoridated water; many fertilizers contain fluoride and so do many medications such as Prozac (Bryson 2004; Narendran et al. 2006). We know that fluoride from drinking fluoridated water contributes to the total body burden, the amount of fluoride stored in the bones and teeth and the amount of fluoride moving through the body at a particular time. That total burden varies for each person depending on how much water they drink, the foods they consume, the medicines they take, their age, their weight, and so on. The American Dental Association recognizes total body burden when it recommends that an infant less than six months old ingest 0.01 ppm (or approximately 0.01 mg of fluoride per day) because that “amount will maximally reduce occurrences

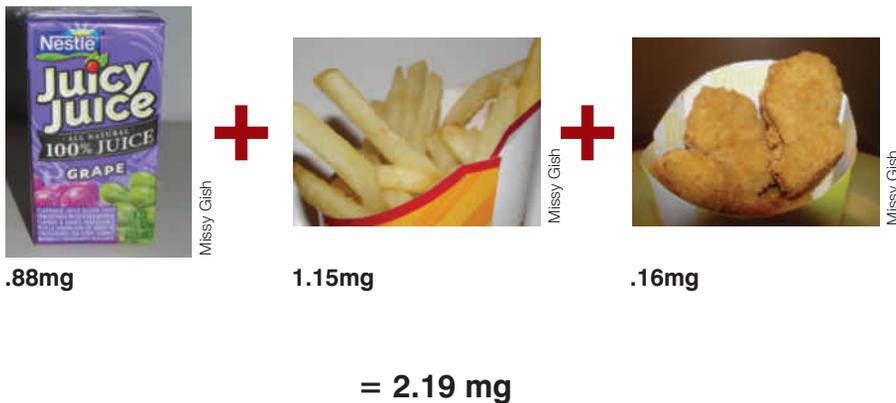
of dental cavities without causing unwanted side effects including moderate enamel fluorosis” (Centers for Disease Control 2009, 2001).

One thing is clear, however; over the past 60 years, the recommended *optimal* levels of fluoride have been consistently lowered because exposure to fluoride from sources other than water has increased dramatically (Narendran et al. 2006). Some examples include baby foods (turkey dinner, 0.44 ppm), apple and grape blended juice (1.07 ppm), carbonated cola (0.78 ppm), instant tea (3.35 ppm), and French fries (1.15 ppm) (U. S. Department of Agriculture 2005).

Figure 14.4b Example of Fluoride Consumed in a Typical Lunch

2.19 mg of fluoride is equivalent to 2.19 ppm, which exceeds the recommended optimal level of .7–1.2 ppm by .99 to 1.49 ppm.

Just one meal consisting of



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (2005)

Because water fluoridation is only one source of fluoride, it is impossible to attribute cavity reduction, dental fluorosis, or skeletal fluorosis to water fluoridation alone. There appears to be no scientific study that has successfully isolated the effect that water fluoridation by itself has on cavity reduction or on any adverse side effects such as dental fluorosis and skeletal fluorosis. In spite of this drawback, we can still determine whether water fluoridation is one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century by answering these questions:

- Is it possible to not exceed daily recommended optimal levels of fluoride consumption? (My students are unanimous that it is not possible.)
- Is a 5 to 64 percent decrease (or a median decrease of 14 percent) in cavities worth the risk of potential side effects? (Most students—99 percent—say “no.” A few students believe that it is very important to make sure everyone gets fluoride through water to reduce cavities even if only by a small amount.)
- To whom does the optimal level of 0.7 to 1.2 ppm best apply? (My students answer that this level clearly does not apply to children; it applies to adults whose only source of fluoride is water fluoridated at optimal levels.)

Critical Thinking

After reading this module, do you think water fluoridation is one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century? Explain.

Gender Transitions in the Workplace

M O D U L E

14.5

Objective

You will learn how the two-category conceptions of gender in the context of the workplace are affected when an employee transitions from one gender to another.



The photo shows a woman holding a photograph of her “old self” before transitioning to female. How would you react if this were your colleague?

Sociologists Kristen Schilt and Catherine Connell (2007) did in-depth interviews with 28 transsexual/transgender people living in Los Angeles, California, and Austin, Texas, to learn the process by which they transitioned in the workplace from their birth gender to their destination gender. The two researchers sought to understand how transmen (female-to-male)/transwomen (male-to-female) and their colleagues at work negotiated gender identity.

Schilt and Connell recruited participants from transgender activists and support groups, from personal contacts, and from listservs. Schilt and Connell questioned the recruits about how their sex change affected interactions with co-workers.

Negotiating Cross-Gender Interactions

Transmen (female-to-male transition) and transwomen (male-to-female transition) found that they had to adjust to new gender boundaries, areas where they were once included but now found themselves excluded. Transmen noticed that they were less frequently included in “girl talk” at work. For those transmen who said they always felt like a man, even before their transition, this exclusion

came as a relief; now they did not have to notice and talk about clothes and changes in hairstyles. But for those transmen who identified as queer, bisexual, or lesbian before the sex change, this exclusion caused them to feel sadness and loss over the new distance between them and their female co-workers.

Transwomen, on the other hand, tended not to participate in guy talk (sports and sexual objectification of women) before their surgery and felt that their male colleagues now understood why they were never interested in such matters. One transwoman who worked at a high-tech company remembered that her male boss worried over whether her taking estrogen would adversely affect her computer programming abilities. Another transwoman who was one of four co-owners of a professional business was forced to sell her share of the company to the three male partners because they were concerned that as a woman she could no longer be a serious business partner, thinking that now she would be overly concerned “with frivolities of appearance” (p. 606).

Both transmen and transwomen recount changing interaction styles to correspond to their new gender. Ellen, a transwoman, found that when asked for “my opinion on a subject from men, I have to remember—do not express it as firmly as I actually believe” (p. 607). She had to come to terms with the fact that muting opinion is a common occurrence among women in the workplace.

Transmen found that their female colleagues expected them to do the heavy lifting now—move office furniture, carry heavy boxes, and change water cooler bottles. They had to come to terms with gender rituals that positioned “women as frail and men as able” (p. 608). Both transmen and transwomen observed that some of their colleagues challenged their destination gender by referencing their birth gender and by criticizing them for retaining too many of their birth gender traits (transwomen who were considered assertive as men before their sex change were now considered bossy as women).

Negotiating Same-Gender Interactions

Both transmen and transwomen reported that, for the most part, their colleagues included them in same-gender spaces and interactions. This inclusion in same-sex gender spaces often came after an invitation. For example, men would ask a transman “when they were going to start using the men’s locker room . . . one set of co-workers even had a mock ceremony in which they presented him with a key to the men’s room” (p. 610). Transwomen found themselves “eating lunch with the girls” and chatting with them in the bathroom.

◀ Transmen and transwomen found that during the transition from one gender to the other they had to “gain access to same-gender sanctuaries in the workplace” such as locker rooms and bathrooms.

The transmen and transwomen described experiences where their colleagues treated them as gender apprentices: female co-workers

offered to teach transwomen how to put on makeup or how to shop, whereas male co-workers taught transmen how to tie a Windsor knot and give the kind



Chris Catdeira

of advice that is typically handed down from father to son about the “right way to be a man.” Some transmen appreciated the training, but others found it coercive. Transwomen, on the other hand, welcomed offers to show them how to be a woman. Schilt and Connell speculate that transwomen appreciated the training more than the transmen did because, when they were men, transwomen faced sanctions for imagining and trying out female roles. Their transmale counterparts had more opportunities to imagine and try out being male before their gender transition. This difference suggests that women’s cross-gender behavior is more socially accepted than men’s cross-gender behavior.

► Transwomen, in particular, found that they had more friends now and that they could openly express interest in feminine things—such as babies and children—that they often repressed as men.

Transmen, on the other hand, did not experience the same feelings of liberation because when they were women they had greater leeway to express interest in so-called masculine things. Transmen did, however, find themselves included in certain male rituals like backslapping, which was done “with more force than they probably slapped each other on the back” as a way of “affirming to me that they saw me as a male” (p. 612).



Todd Heisler/The New York Times/Redux

Analysis

Schilt and Connell found that the 28 transmen and transwomen they interviewed actually hoped to create alternate femininities and masculinities, that is, femininities and masculinities that departed from rigid two-category definitions and ideas of what males and females should be and do. However, regardless of their aspirations, their co-workers saw it as their job to “repatriate them” so that they conformed to rigid stereotypes of how men and women “just are.” Schilt and Connell wondered whether the existence of a transgender colleague “could lead to an undoing of gender inequality in the workplace, as co-workers and employers could begin to rethink their stereotypes about gender, workplace performance and natural abilities.” This undoing did not happen. Why? According to Schilt and Connell it is because there is no interactional transcript to guide people when they interact with those who are not clearly male or female. Furthermore, it is difficult for anyone to operate outside the gender expectations that are embedded in workplace structures and constantly reproduced in daily interactions.

Critical Thinking

How do you think you would react if a colleague at work transitioned to another gender? In what ways would your reaction be similar or different from those documented in Schilt and Connell’s research?

Stepping Outside Comfort Zones

Objective

You will learn how stepping outside our comfort zones helps us to realize the promise of sociology.



Chris Caldeira

Do you like to travel alone to places where the food, language, people, and transportation are different from what you know?

That is what Chris Caldeira (2009) did the summer before she started graduate school in sociology at University of California–Davis. She traveled across the United States by car, from Vermont to San Francisco, avoiding the interstate highway system whenever possible, and after that she traveled to Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos.

We began this textbook with a promise: that sociology offers a perspective that allows us to see our world in new ways. But sociology cannot deliver on that promise if students of the discipline feel no urge to know what is going on behind closed doors, lack curiosity about people, or never wonder about those who live in distant places. Sociologists need not just to open books, but to open doors, because behind each door are facets of human life to be perceived and understood.

In addition to learning the vocabulary and theories of the discipline, the best sociologists feel the urge to leave their *comfort zone*, a state of being grounded in habit such that a person does not have to think about what to do next. When

people step outside their comfort zones they must first figure out the situation in which they find themselves and then decide how to act without yet knowing how others will respond. That uncertainty creates a heightened sense of awareness, not just about the new situation, but about old habits that are not applicable to the new settings. Traveling can help us realize the promise of sociology because it allows us to see in new ways the world in which we live our day-to-day lives and to open our eyes to the possibility that things can be different. Three examples from Chris's trip illustrate how insight can come from allowing the worlds we choose to explore shape us rather than forcing those worlds to conform to our expectations (Steves 2009).

1: Language

In e-mails Chris wrote about crossing paths with two girls in Thailand, both of whom were studying English on their own:

I told the girls I knew English and that we could talk. So I sat with them and asked questions to give them some experience talking and then I talked to give them experience listening. I explained that they were not finishing their sentences. I learned that both were studying English, but in a self-paced course in which they study on their own and go into school only to take the exams. Both said how hard it is and I said, "that's because you need a teacher to help with things you don't understand! I mean how can you learn to speak a language without a teacher?" Also I noticed that the book that one was studying had sentences like "Some plants are biennials" and "Buffaloes are almost extinct." I told them that most Americans would be confused about words like biennial—it all seemed way too advanced, which is why they were having trouble.

But the transaction did not end here. The experience of this transaction pushed Chris to learn something about the Thai language. Chris learned that the Thai language ordered the world differently than English. She learned that Thai is what is known as a topic-prominent language—it demands that the topic or object of a sentence always appear at the very beginning of a sentence (e.g., *That book, I read.*). The topic (that book) is followed by the subject or actor (I) and then the action taken (read). The English language demands the reverse—that the subject or actor begins the sentence and the topic ends it (e.g., *I read that book.*). It is quite possible that in trying to learn English on her own, this girl knew not to start her sentences with the object but forgot to put it at the end, giving her sentences an unfinished quality (e.g., *I read.*). This encounter also caused Chris to reflect about the way the girls were learning language on their own and without a teacher to explain what they could not understand. She wondered whether American and other students taking web courses also felt so alone and disconnected.

2: Constructing Reality

Chris encountered many situations in which she had to figure out what was going on. That process caused her to think about the social construction of reality, the process by which people make sense of the world. At those points she realized that people approach any situation with preconceived notions or assumptions about what things are and how things should be organized. Chris wrote, "I had a lot of questions about what was real or not real on that trip." When things did not correspond to "her reality," Chris found herself doubting her interpretations and seeking an interpretation that made sense. Until she learned the culturally appropriate interpretation, she was not sure what was real.



Chris Caldeira

◀ For example, while she was in Thailand, Chris thought this rack of clothing was part of a yard sale. She walked up to the rack and began looking through the clothes and then it hit her. This was not a yard sale; these were newly washed clothes someone had hung out to dry. Chris realized that she was looking through someone’s wardrobe.

➤ As another example of questioning what is real, Chris wrote about touring “a school that was full of children in classrooms but there seemed to be no teachers. . . . The children sat at their desks poised as if they were writing on the mini chalkboards but they weren’t actually writing. And all the chalkboards had the same words written in the same way. Sadly, it felt like part of the tourist game. I saw a box for donations and I was going to give money but our guide said not to because the teachers would keep it and it wouldn’t go to the school. I tried to learn what was ‘really’ going on but never found an answer.”



Chris Caldeira



Chris Caldeira

3: The Vastness of the U.S.

Perhaps the biggest lesson Chris learned from her travels across the United States is that it is not easy to generalize about life in the United States or its people. In fact, “America is so vast that almost everything said about it is likely to be true, and the opposite is probably equally true” (Farrell 2010). As she traveled from Vermont to California, Chris did not stay at Marriotts or Holiday Inns, hotels typically located off the interstate, but chose instead to stay in campsites or local motels. She walked through largely abandoned neighborhoods near downtown

Detroit, visited cowboy bars in Wyoming, drove through trailer parks, and walked past gun shops. At night she read online to learn what sociologists had written about things she had experienced that day. She found that some sociologist at one time or another had written something on every experience she researched.



Chris Caldeira

◀ Sociologist Katarzyna Celinska’s (2007) research revealed that gun owners tend to place high value on self-reliance—a value that has deep roots in American culture but that nevertheless undermines feelings of connection to a larger community.



Chris Caldeira

◀ For most Americans the cowboy on the bucking bronco is an iconic image that evokes strong symbolic associations with the so-called taming of the Wild West. Sociologist Gene L. Theodori (2007) found that the cowboy on the bucking bronco symbolizes rodeo, the preferred sport of college students from rural America. In fact, some 3,000 student-athletes attending about 200 colleges participate in this intercollegiate sport. Rodeo draws 82 percent of its athletes from small towns across the United States.

▶ The research of sociologist William Julius Wilson offered Chris the historical context for understanding what she saw in many largely abandoned neighborhoods of Detroit. Wilson (1983) describes the structural or economic transformations that created such neighborhoods as the one pictured, including the shift from a manufacturing based economy to a service and information based economy and the transfer of millions of manufacturing jobs out of the United States. Detroit has been experiencing a structural transformation for decades, and the personal toll of the transformation was painfully evident in this and other neighborhoods.

Chris Caldeira



One of the most important things Chris learned from her travels is that sociology helped her to frame her experiences. On the other hand, her experiences gave sociology a deeper meaning and importance. Chris realized that reading and experiencing together gave her a more complete and lasting learning experience.

Chris returned home with a better sense of what it means to be an American and a global citizen. The people she met are now part of her life and she finds that she pays attention to news coming from the places she visited, news she might have heard but would not have registered in the past. As strange as this may seem, after Chris shared her adventures with me through photographs, e-mails, and discussion, I find myself more connected to the places she visited as well. In fact, when a typhoon hit Vietnam a few months after Chris returned home, I remember having a strong urge to call Chris, because I knew that she would be worried.

Critical Thinking

Describe a place to which you have traveled and feel connected. Describe the experience and the connection.

Summary: Sociology at the Forefront

The six modules in the closing chapter profile the work of six of the thousands of sociologists who open doors. Specifically, we considered the work of sociologists who have

- challenged the discipline of sociology to broaden its scope of study,
- revealed the processes by which corporations instill a desire to consume,
- connected the presentation of self to globalization,
- critically evaluated a longstanding public health policy,
- described how people respond when others take steps to change the category by which they have been known, and
- stepped outside a comfort zone to test sociology's relevance and realize its promise.

Upon reading the six modules it may appear that sociology lacks a focus—that it is all over the place. Taken together, however, these modules speak to some important themes. First, it is impossible to compile a list of the topics that sociologists study, because almost any topic involving humans is a possible area of study. Sociology is distinguished not by the topics studied, but by the perspectives and questions used to frame research and analysis—questions like “What are the intended and unintended consequences of X? Who benefits from a social arrangement and at whose expense? How are meanings assigned, accepted, sustained, and challenged?”

Second, while sociologists seek to understand human activity, they are especially drawn to those activities that are hidden from view, that are controversial, or that go largely unchallenged. The discipline of sociology offers theories, concepts, and methods needed to look beyond popular meanings and official interpretations of what is going on around us. Sociologist Peter Berger (1963) points out that sociologists are driven to debunk the social systems they study. The sociological perspective compels sociologists to explore levels of reality that are deep below the surface. (For example, sociologists feel obligated to question the official interpretation that water fluoridation is one of the great public health achievements of the 20th century.)

Third, from a sociological point of view, no topic involving human activity is insignificant. Studying those who get tattoos or those who transition from one gender to another may seem like topics chosen for talk shows. But sociology is serious in its approach. It challenges those who will listen to look below the surface and entertain the possibility that the proliferation of tattoos may be connected to global economic transformations or that rigid binary definitions and ideas of what males and females should be and do constrain human potential and experiences. Sociology also challenges us to leave our comfort zones—to open doors that appear closed, to knock on doors that are bolted shut, and to find ways to gain access to those who hide behind them.

ALPHABETIZED GLOSSARY

absolute poverty—a situation in which people lack the resources to satisfy the basic needs no person should be without. Absolute poverty is usually expressed as a living condition that falls below a certain threshold or minimum.

absorption assimilation—the process by which a subordinate ethnic, racial, and/or cultural group adapts to the ways of the dominant group, which sets the standards to which they must adjust.

achieved statuses—human created social categories and characteristics acquired through some combination of personal choice, effort, and ability.

adaptive culture—the part of the culture (nonmaterial) that adjusts to a new product or innovation, specifically to the associated changes that product or innovation promotes.

adolescent status system—a classification system in which participation in some activities results in popularity, respect, acceptance, and praise, and participation in other activities results in isolation, ridicule, exclusion, disdain, and disrespect.

advantaged—a situation in which the symbolic opportunities (positive images) and valued resources are disproportionately held by a particular group relative to another group.

agents of socialization—significant people, groups, and institutions that act to shape our sense of self and social identity, help us realize our human capacities, and teach us to negotiate the world in which we live.

aging population—a society in which the percentage of the population that is 65 and older is increasing relative to other age groups.

agrarian society—a society that emerged with the invention of the plow 6,000 years ago, triggering a revolution in agriculture. The plow made it possible to cultivate large fields and increase food production to a level that could support thousands to millions of people, many of whom lived in cities and/or were part of empires.

alienation—a state of being in which humans lose control over the social world they have created and are dominated by the forces of their inventions.

altruistic—a state in which the ties attaching the individual to the group are such a person's sense of self cannot be separated from the group.

anomic—a state in which the ties attaching the individual to the group are disrupted due to dramatic changes in circumstances.

anomie—a state of cultural chaos resulting from structural strain.

anthropocentric—a point of view that puts humans at the center of analysis and excludes animals and their realities from serious consideration.

ascribed statuses—human created social categories and characteristics that are the result of chance in that people exert no effort to obtain them. Birth order, race, sex, and age qualify as ascribed statuses.

assimilation—a process by which ethnic, racial, and/or cultural distinctions between groups disappear because one group is absorbed, sometimes by force, into another group's culture or because two cultures blend to form a new culture.

attribution theory—a set of concepts and propositions that gives attention to the process by which people explain their behavior and that of others.

audience reference groups—those who are watching, listening, or otherwise giving attention to someone or something.

authoritarian—a form of government in which no separation of powers exists; a single person (a dictator), a group (a family, the military, a single party), or a social class holds all power. No official ideology projects a vision of the "perfect" society or guides the government's political or economic policies.

authority—legitimate power, or power that people believe is just and proper. A leader has authority to the extent that people view him or her as being legitimately entitled to it.

back stage—areas out of sight of an audience, where individuals let their guard down and do things that would be inappropriate or unexpected in a front-stage setting.

beliefs—conceptions that people accept as true concerning how the world operates and the place of the individual in relationship to others.

biography—all the events and day-to-day interactions from birth to death that make up a person's life.

biological sex—the physiological, including genetic, characteristics associated with being male or female.

bourgeoisie—the owners of the means of production.

brain drain—the emigration from a country of the most educated and most talented people, including those trained to be hospital managers, nurses, accountants, teachers, engineers, political reformers, and other institution builders.

bureaucracy—a completely rational organization—one that uses the most efficient means to achieve a valued goal.

calculability—a feature of McDonaldization that emphasizes numerical indicators by which customers and the service provider can judge the amount of product and the speed of service (e.g., delivery within 30 minutes).

capitalism—an economic system in which the raw materials and the means of producing and distributing goods and services are privately owned.

carbon footprint—the impact a person makes on the environment by virtue of his or her lifestyle. That impact is measured in terms of fossil fuels consumed or units of carbon dioxide emitted from burning that fuel.

carceral culture—a social arrangement under which the society largely abandons physical and public punishment and replaces it with surveillance to control people's activities and thoughts.

caregiver burden—the situation in which caregivers believe that their emotional balance, physical health, social life, and financial status suffer because of their caregiver role.

caregivers—those who provide service to people who, because of physical impairment, a chronic condition, or cognitive impairment cannot do certain activities without help.

case studies—objective accounts intended to educate readers about a person, group, or situation.

caste system—a system of stratification in which people are ranked according to ascribed statuses.

censorship—an action taken to prevent information believed to be sensitive, unsuitable, or threatening from reaching some audience.

charismatic authority—legitimate power that is grounded in exceptional and exemplary personal qualities. Charismatic leaders are obeyed because their followers believe in and are attracted irresistibly to the leader's vision.

church—a group whose members hold the same beliefs regarding what is considered sacred and profane, share rituals, and gather in body or spirit at agreed-on times to share and reaffirm their commitment to those beliefs and practices.

civil religion—an institutionalized set of beliefs about a nation's past, present, and future and a corresponding set of rituals. These beliefs and rituals can take on a sacred quality and elicit intense feelings of patriotism.

claims makers—those who articulate and promote claims and who tend to gain in some way if the targeted audience accepts their claims as true.

class—a person's overall economic and social status in a system of social stratification.

class conflict—an antagonism between exploiting and exploited classes.

class system—a system of stratification in which people are ranked on the basis of their achievements related to merit, talent, ability, or past performance.

closely knit network—a social network in which all or most of the members know each other across a wide range of settings.

coercive organizations—organizations that draw in people who have no choice but to participate.

colonialism—a situation in which a foreign power uses superior military force to impose its political, economic, social, and cultural institutions on an indigenous population in order to control their resources, labor, and markets.

color line—a barrier supported by customs and laws separating nonwhites from whites, especially with regard to their roles in the division of labor; it can be traced to the European colonization of Africa.

commercialization of childhood—a process by which children are transformed into consumers beginning at birth, and by adolescence, their lives and activities revolve around commodities, including brand name products and the latest trendiest commercial music, films, and lingo.

commercialization of sexual ideals—the process of introducing products into the market using advertising campaigns that promise consumers they will achieve a sexual ideal if they buy and use the products.

commodification—a process by which economic value is assigned to things not previously thought of in economic terms such as an idea, a natural resource (water, a view of nature), or a state of being (youth, sexuality).

commodification of sexuality—a process by which companies create products for people to buy with the promise that those products will allow them to express themselves as sexual beings or elicit a sexual response from others.

communitarian utopians—members of a type of counterculture characterized by withdrawal into a separate community where members can live with minimum interference from the larger society, which they view as evil, materialistic, wasteful, or self-centered.

comparison reference groups—groups that provide people with a frame of reference for judging the fairness of a situation in which they find themselves; rationalizing or justifying their actions; and assessing their performance in relation to others.

comprehensive dyads—two people who have more than a superficial knowledge of each other's personality and life; they know each other in a variety of ways.

conflict—the major force that drives social change.

conformists—people who have not violated the rules of a group and are treated accordingly.

conformity—acceptance of cultural goals and the pursuit of those goals through legitimate means.

consumerism—an ideology that locates the meaning of life in possessions.

content analysis—a method of analysis in which researchers identify themes, sometimes counting the number of times something occurs or specifying categories in which to place observations.

control—a feature of McDonaldisation that emphasizes replacing employee labor with nonhuman technologies and/or requiring, even demanding, that employees and customers behave in a certain way.

core economies—the wealthiest, most highly diversified economies in the world with strong, stable governments.

corporate construction of childhood—a term that refers to the reach, power, and influence of a small number of corporations that sell and/or market most of the things children buy or want their parents to buy for them.

corporate crime—a crime committed by a corporation as a result of the way that it does business competing with other companies for market share and profits.

countercultures—subcultures that challenge, contradict, or outright reject the values of the mainstream culture of which they are a part.

counterrevolutionary movement—a social movement in which people join together to maintain a social order that reform and revolutionary movements are seeking to change.

credential society—a situation in which employers use educational credentials as screening devices for sorting through a pool of largely anonymous applicants.

crime—an act that breaks a law.

critical social theory—a sociological perspective that examines human constructed categories and institutional practices with the aim of shedding light on the central issues, situation, and experiences of groups differently placed within “specific political, social, and historic contexts characterized by injustice” (Collins 2006).

crude rate—the annual number of incidents (e.g., births, deaths, or in- and out-migrations) per every 1,000 people in a country. To calculate a crude rate, divide the number of incidents that occurred over a year by the population size at the start of that year; then multiply that result by 1,000. That figure reveals how many incidents have occurred per 1,000 people.

cultural capital—a person's nonmaterial resources, including educational credentials, the kinds of knowledge acquired, social skills, and aesthetic tastes.

cultural diffusion—the process by which an idea, an invention, or a way of behaving is borrowed from a foreign source and then adapted to the culture by the borrowing people.

cultural diversity—the cultural variety that exists among people who find themselves sharing some physical or virtual space.

cultural lag—a situation in which adaptive culture fails to adjust in necessary ways to a material innovation and its disruptive consequences.

cultural particulars—the *specific* practices that distinguish cultures from one another.

cultural relativism—a point of view advocating that a foreign culture not be judged by the standards of a home culture, and that a behavior or way of thinking must be examined in its cultural context—that is, in terms of that culture's values, norms, beliefs, environmental challenges, and history.

cultural universals—those things all cultures have in common.

culture—the way of life of a people, specifically the shared and human-created strategies for adapting and responding to the social and physical environment.

culture of spectacle—a social arrangement by which punishment for crimes—torture, disfigurement, dismemberment, and execution—is delivered in public settings for all to see.

culture shock—the mental and physical strain that people can experience as they adjust to the ways of a new culture. In particular, newcomers find that many of the behaviors and responses they learned in their home culture, and have come to take for granted, do not apply in the foreign setting.

curriculum—the subject content, assessment methods, and activities involved in teaching and learning for a specific course, grade, or degree.

decolonization—the process of gaining political independence from a colonizing power.

demographic gap—the difference between the birth and death rates.

demographic trap—the point at which population growth overwhelms the environment's carrying capacity.

dependent variable—the behavior to be explained or predicted.

desegregation—the process of ending legally sanctioned racial separation and discrimination including removing legal barriers to interaction and offering legal guarantees of protection and equal opportunity.

deviance—any behavior or physical appearance that is socially challenged and/or condemned because it departs from the norms and expectations of some group.

deviant subcultures—groups that are part of the larger society but whose members share norms and values favoring violation of that larger society's laws.

disability—a state of being that society has imposed on those with certain impairments because of how inventions have been designed and social activities have been organized to exclude the impaired but accommodate others.

disciplinary society—a social arrangement that institutionalizes surveillance and fuels an anxiety about being watched—an anxiety that promotes socially desired behavior.

discrimination—the intentional or unintentional unequal treatment of racial or ethnic groups without considering merit, ability, or past

performance; discrimination blocks access to valued experiences, goods, and services.

disenchantment—a great spiritual void accompanied by a crisis of meaning.

dispositional factors—things that people are believed to control, including personal qualities related to motivation, interest, mood, and effort.

division of labor—work that is broken down into specialized tasks, each performed by a different set of workers trained to do that task. The labor and resources needed to manufacture products often come from many locations around the world.

dominant ethnic group—the most advantaged ethnic group in a society; the ethnic group that possesses the greatest access to valued resources, including the power to create and maintain the system that gives it these advantages.

dramaturgical sociology—a sociological perspective that studies social interactions emphasizing the ways in which those involved work to create, maintain, dismantle, and present a shared understanding of reality.

dyad—the smallest group, consisting of two people.

economic capital—a person's material resources—wealth, land, money.

economic systems—the social institutions that coordinate human activity to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services.

education—any experiences that train, discipline, and shape the mental and physical potentials of the maturing person.

efficiency—a feature of McDonaldization that emphasizes using the methods that will achieve a desired end in the shortest amount of time.

egoistic—a state in which the social ties attaching the individual to the group are weak.

emotion work—the process by which people consciously manage their feelings by evoking an expected emotional state or suppressing an inappropriate emotional state.

emotional labor—work that requires employees to display and suppress specific emotions and/or manage customer/client emotions.

empire—a group of countries under the direct or indirect control of a foreign power or government that acts to shape the political, economic, and cultural life of the people over which it has power.

endogamy—norms requiring or encouraging people to choose a partner from the same social category as their own—for example, a partner of

the same race, sex, ethnicity, religion, or social class.

environmental injustice—unequal exposure to environmental hazards based on race or socioeconomic status.

esteem—the reputation that someone occupying a particular status has acquired based on the opinion of those who know and observe him or her.

ethnic cleansing—an extreme form of forced segregation in which a dominant group uses force and intimidation to remove people of a targeted racial or ethnic group from a geographic area, leaving it ethnically pure, or at least free of the targeted group. Ethnic cleansing also involves the destruction of cultural artifacts associated with the targeted groups, such as monuments, cemeteries, and churches.

ethnic group—people who share, believe they share, or are believed by others to share a national origin; a common ancestry; a place of birth; or distinctive social traits (such as religion, style of dress, or language) that set them apart from other ethnic groups.

ethnic renewal—a situation in which someone discovers an ethnic identity, including the process by which an individual takes it upon himself to find, learn about, and claim an ethnic heritage.

ethnocentrism—a point of view in which people use their home culture as the standard for judging the worth of another culture's ways.

ethnographic methods—a holistic means of studying people in the places/settings where they live or carry out the activities of interest.

ethnomethodology—an investigative and observational approach that focuses on how people make sense of everyday social activities and experiences.

exogamy—norms requiring or encouraging people to choose a partner from a social category other than their own—for example, to choose a partner outside their immediate family who is of the other sex or of another race.

experimental design—a highly systematic method used to study people assigned to two groups where theoretically, the only difference is that people in the experimental group are exposed to some action (the independent variable) and those in the control group are not.

externality costs—hidden costs of using, making, or disposing of a product that are not figured into the price of the product or paid for by the producer. Such costs include those associated with cleaning up the environment and with

treating injured and chronically ill workers, consumers, and others.

extreme wealth—the most excessive form of wealth, in which a very small proportion of people in the world have money, material possessions, and other assets (minus liabilities) in such abundance that a small fraction of it, if spent appropriately, could provide adequate food, safe water, sanitation, and basic health care for the 1 billion poorest people on the planet.

false consciousness—with regard to religion, point of view in which oppressed individuals or groups accept the economic, political, and social arrangements that constrain their chances in life because they are promised compensation for their suffering in the next world.

falsely accused—people who have not broken the rules but are treated as if they have.

family—a social institution that binds people together through blood, marriage, law, and/or social norms.

fatalistic—a state in which the ties attaching the individual to the group are so oppressive there is no hope of release.

female infanticide—the targeted abortion of female fetuses because of a cultural preference for males and corresponding low status assigned to females.

feminism—a perspective that seeks to understand the position of women in society relative to men and that advocates equal opportunity.

femininity—traits believed to be characteristic of females.

folkways—norms that apply to the mundane aspects or details of daily life.

formal care—caregiving provided, usually for a fee, by credentialed professionals (whether in the person's home or some other facility).

formal curriculum—the content of the various academic subjects—mathematics, science, English, reading, physical education, and so on.

formal dimension—the official, by-the-book way an organization should operate.

formal education—a deliberate, planned effort to impart specific skills or information; a systematic process (for example, military boot camp, on-the-job training, or smoking cessation classes) in which someone designs the educating experiences.

formal organizations—coordinating mechanisms that bring together people, resources, and technology and then direct human activity toward achieving a specific outcome such

as maintaining order in a community (a police department) or fundraise (Race for the Cure).

formal sanctions—reactions backed by laws, rules, or policies specifying the conditions under which people should be rewarded or punished for specific behaviors.

front stage—areas visible to an audience, where people feel compelled to present themselves in expected ways.

function—the contribution a part makes to maintain the stability of an existing social order.

fundamentalism—a belief in the timelessness of sacred writings and a belief that such writings apply to all kinds of environments.

games—structured, organized activities that involve more than one person; they are characterized by a number of constraints, such as established roles and rules and a purpose toward which all activity is directed.

gender—the socially created and learned distinctions that specify the physical, behavioral, and mental and emotional traits characteristic of males and females.

gender gap—the disparity in opportunities available to men and women relative to the other.

gender ideals—a standard for masculinity or femininity against which real cases can be compared. A gender ideal is at best a caricature, in that it exaggerates the characteristics that are believed to make someone the so-called perfect male or female.

gender identity—the awareness of being a man or woman, of being neither, or something in between (gender identity also involves the ways one chooses to hide or express that identity).

gender role—the cultural norms that guide people in enacting what is considered to be feminine and masculine behavior.

gender roles—the behavior and activities expected of someone who is male or female. These expectations channel male and female energies in different gender-appropriate directions.

gender polarization—the process by which being male or female increases the probability that a person's life will be a certain way. Gender, or ideas about what men and women should be, shapes every aspect of life, including how people dress, the time they wake up in the morning, what they do after they wake up, the social roles they take on, the things they worry about, and even ways of expressing emotion and experiencing sexual attraction.

gender stratification—the extent to which opportunities and resources are unequally distributed between men and women.

gendered—a situation in which institutions have an established pattern of segregating the sexes, empowering one sex and not the other, and/or subordinating one sex relative to the other such that gender systematically shapes the experiences, constraints, and opportunities of the participating men and women.

generalizability—the extent to which researchers' findings can be applied to the larger population of which their sample was a part.

generalized other—a system of expected behaviors and meanings that transcend the people participating. An understanding of the generalized other is achieved by simultaneously and imaginatively relating the self to many others "playing the game."

generation—a cohort composed of people who are born at a particular time in history and/or separated from other age cohorts by time. A generation is distinguished from others by its cultural disposition (dress, language, preferences for songs, activities, entertainment), posture (walk, dance, the way the body is held), access to resources, and socially expected privileges, responsibilities, and duties.

genocide—the calculated and systematic large-scale destruction of a targeted racial or ethnic group that can take the form of killing an ethnic group en masse, inflicting serious bodily or psychological harm, creating intolerable living conditions, preventing births, "diluting" racial or ethnic lines through rape and forced births, or forcibly removing children to live with another group.

gesture—any action that requires people to interpret its meaning before responding. Language is a particularly important gesture because people interpret the meaning of words before they react. In addition to words, gestures also include nonverbal cues, such as tone of voice, inflection, facial expression, posture, and other body movements or positions that convey meaning.

glass ceiling—a barrier that prevents women from rising past a certain level in an organization, especially for women who work in male-dominated workplaces and occupations. The term applies to women who have the ability and qualifications to advance but who are not well-connected to those who are in a position to advocate for or mentor them.

glass escalator—the invisible upward movement that puts men in positions of power, even

within female-dominated occupations, as when management singles out men for special attention and advancement.

global interdependence—a situation in which human interactions and relationships transcend national borders and in which social problems within any one country—such as unemployment, drug addiction, water shortages, natural disasters, or the search for national security—are shaped by events taking place outside the country, indeed in various parts of the globe.

globalization—the ever-increasing flow of goods, services, money, people, technology, information, and other cultural items across political borders. This flow has become more dense and quick-moving as constraints of space and time break down. As a result of globalization, no longer are people, goods, services, technologies, money, and images fixed to specific geographic locations.

goods—any products that are extracted from the earth, manufactured, or grown—corn, clothing, petroleum, automobiles, coal, and computers are just a few examples.

government—the organizational structure that directs and coordinates people's involvement in the political activities of a country or some other territory, such as a city, county, or state. It is also the mechanism through which people gain power and exercise authority over others.

group—two or more people interacting in largely predictable ways who share expectations about their purpose for being. Group members hold statuses and enact roles that relate to the group's purpose.

group think—a phenomenon that occurs when a group under great pressure to take action achieves the illusion of consensus by putting pressure on its members to shut down discussion, dismiss alternative courses of action, suppress expression of doubt or dissent, dehumanize those against whom the group is taking action, and/or ignoring the moral consequences of their actions.

habitus—a frame of mind that has internalized the objective reality of society. This objective reality becomes the mental filter that structures people's perceptions, experiences, responses, and actions. It is through the habitus that the social world is understood and that people acquire a sense of place and a point of view that informs how they interpret their own and others' actions.

Hawthorne effect—a phenomenon in which research subjects alter their behavior when they learn they are being observed.

hegemony—a process by which a power maintains its dominance over foreign entities.

heteronormativity—a normative system that presents the gendered heterosexual nuclear family as the ideal and departures from that system as deviant, even threatening.

hidden curriculum—the teaching method, type of assignments, kinds of tests, tone of the teacher's voice, attitudes of classmates, the number of students absent, the frequency of teacher absences, and the criteria teachers use to assign grades. These so-called extraneous factors convey messages to students not only about the value of the subject but also about the values of society, the place of learning in their lives, and their role in society.

hidden ethnicity—for members of a dominant ethnic group, a sense of self that is based on no awareness of an ethnic identity because their culture is considered normal, normative, or mainstream.

homophobia—an irrational fear held by some heterosexuals that a same-sex person will make a sexual advance toward them. It also refers to a fear of being in close contact with someone of the same sex.

horizontal mobility—a change in one's social situation that does not involve a change in social status.

horticulture societies—societies organized around the use of hand tools such as hoes to work the soil and digging sticks to punch holes in the ground into which seeds are dropped. Horticultural peoples grow crops rather than gather food and employ slash-and-burn technology in which they clear land of forest and vegetation to make fields for growing crops and grazing animals. When the land becomes exhausted, people move on, repeating the process.

hunting and gathering societies—societies that do not possess the technology that allows them to create surplus wealth; people subsist on wild animals and vegetation. Hunters and gatherers do not reside in a fixed location; they are always on the move, securing food and other subsistence items. A typical hunting and gathering society is composed of 45 to 100 members related by blood or marriage.

hydrocarbon society—a society in which the use of fossil fuels shapes virtually every aspect of people's personal and social lives.

hypothesis—a trial prediction about the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Specifically, the hypothesis predicts how change in an independent variable brings about change in a dependent variable.

I—the active and creative aspect of the self. It is the part of the self that questions the expectations and rules.

ideal type—a deliberate simplification or caricature in that it exaggerates essential traits of something. Ideal does not mean desirable; an ideal is simply a standard against which real cases can be compared.

ideologies—seemingly commonsense views justifying the existing state of affairs, but which, upon close analysis, reflect the viewpoints of the dominant groups and disguise their advantages.

illegitimate opportunity structures—social settings and arrangements that offer people the opportunity to commit particular types of crime.

impairment—a physical or mental condition that interferes with someone's ability to perform a major life activity that the average person can perform without technical or human assistance or without changing the physical environment around them (e.g., a person confined to a wheelchair could cook if the stove had not been designed to accommodate only those who can stand).

imperialistic power—a power that exerts control and influence over foreign entities either through military force or through political policies and economic pressure. Imperialists believe that their cultural, political, or economic superiority justifies control over other entities. From the imperialist's point of view, such control is for the greater good of those conquered and for the planet as a whole.

impression management—in social situations, as on a stage, people manage the setting, their dress, their words, and their gestures so that they correspond to an impression they are trying to make.

income—the money a person earns, usually on an annual basis through salary or wages.

independent variable—the variable that explains or predicts the dependent variable.

individual discrimination—behavior that blocks another's opportunities or does harm to life or property.

individuation of social problems—a point of view whereby people tend to view the "problem individuals" as the cause and "fixing" them as the solution rather than looking at the social system in which so-called deviant behavior or appearances are embedded.

Industrial Revolution—the name given to the changes in manufacturing, agriculture, transpor-

tation, and mining that transformed virtually every aspect of society from the 1300s on.

industrial societies—societies that rely on mechanization or on externally powered machines to subsist. That power, derived from burning wood and fossil fuels, allows humans to produce food, extract resources, and manufacture goods at revolutionary speeds and on an unprecedented scale. Mechanization allowed a small percentage of the population to grow the food needed to sustain a society that could encompass hundreds of millions of people.

informal care—caregiving that family members, neighbors, and friends provide in a home setting.

informal dimension—any aspect of an organization's operations that departs from the way the organization should officially operate.

informal education—a spontaneous, unplanned, naturally occurring way of learning.

informal sanctions—spontaneous, unofficial expressions of approval not backed by the force of law or official policy.

information explosion—an unprecedented increase in the amount of stored and transmitted data and messages in all media (including electronic, print, radio, and television).

ingroup—the group to which a person belongs, identifies, admires, and/or feels loyalty.

inner-city poor—see "urban underclass."

innovation—the acceptance of cultural goals but the rejection of legitimate means to achieve them.

institutionalized discrimination—the established, customary way of doing things in society—the unchallenged laws, rules, policies, and day-to-day practices established by a dominant group that keep minority groups in disadvantaged positions.

institutions—relatively stable and predictable social arrangements created and sustained by people that have emerged over time with the purpose of coordinating human activities to meet some need, such as food, shelter, or clothing. Institutions consist of statuses, roles, and groups.

instinct—behavior that is not learned but part of one's nature and elicited by reflex.

instrumental rational action—result-oriented behavior and practices that emphasize the most efficient methods for achieving some valued goal, regardless of the consequences. In the context of an industrial and capitalist society, *efficient* means the most cost-effective and time-saving way to achieve a goal.

integration—a situation in which two or more racial groups interact in a previously segregated

setting; it may be court-ordered, legally mandated, or the natural outcome of people crossing the “color line” once legal barriers have been removed.

internalization—a process by which people accept as binding learned ways of thinking, appearing, and behaving.

intersectionality—the interconnections among race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age (generation), nationality, and disability status that taken together profoundly shape life chances.

intersexed—people with some mixture of male and female primary sex characteristics.

involuntary ethnicity—a umbrella ethnic category created by the government or another dominant group to which people from many different cultures and countries are assigned. That category becomes the label by which these diverse peoples are known and with which they are forced to identify.

involuntary minorities—those who did not choose to be a part of a country (nor did their ancestors); rather, they were forced to become part of it through enslavement, conquest, or colonization. Those of Native American, African, Mexican, and Hawaiian descent are examples.

iron cage of irrationality—the process by which supposedly rational systems produce irrationalities.

issue—a societal matter that affects many people and that can only be explained by larger social forces that transcend the individuals affected.

language—a symbol system that assigns meaning to particular sounds, gestures, pictures, or specific combinations of letters to convey meaning.

latent dysfunctions—unanticipated disruptions to the existing social order.

latent functions—a part’s unanticipated, unintended, and unrecognized effects on an existing social order.

law—a rule governing conduct created by those in positions of power and enforced by entities given the authority to do so, such as police. A law specifies the prohibited behavior, the categories of people to whom the law applies, and the punishment to be applied to violators.

legal-rational authority—legitimate form of power that derives from a system of impersonal and formal rules that specify the qualifications for occupying an administrative or judicial position; the individual holding that position has the power to command others to act in specific ways.

life chances—a critical set of potential opportunities and advantages, including the chance to survive the first year of life, to grow to a certain height, to receive medical and dental care, to avoid a prison sentence, to graduate from high school, to live a long life, and so on.

life expectancy—the average number of years after birth a person can expect to live.

linguistic relativity hypothesis—the idea that “No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached” (Sapir 1949, p. 162).

lobbyists—people whose job it is to solicit and persuade state and federal legislators to create legislation and vote for bills that favor the interests of the group they represent. Lobbyists can work for corporations, a private individual, or the public interest.

looking-glass self—the way in which a sense of self develops: specifically, people act as mirrors for one another. We see ourselves reflected in others’ real or imagined reactions to our appearance and behaviors. We acquire a sense of self by being sensitive to the appraisals that we perceive others to have of us.

loosely knit network—a social network in which all or most of the people in it do not know one another very well and, if some do know others, it is in a limited way.

macrosociology—the branch of sociology that focuses on large-scale enduring conditions and processes such as industrialization, globalization, and urbanization.

manifest dysfunctions—a part’s anticipated disruptions to an existing social order.

manifest functions—a part’s anticipated, recognized, or intended effects on maintaining order.

masculinity—traits believed to be characteristic of males.

mass media—forms of communication designed to reach large audiences without direct face-to-face contact between those creating/conveying and receiving messages.

master status—a status that takes on such great importance that it overshadows all other statuses a person occupies. That is, it shapes every aspect of life and dominates social interactions.

master status of deviant—an identification that overrides most other statuses a person

holds, such that he or she is identified first and foremost as a deviant.

material culture—all the physical objects that people have invented or borrowed from other cultures.

McDonaldization—a process whereby the principles governing the fast-food industry come to dominate other sectors of the American economy and society and the world. These principles are (1) efficiency, (2) quantification and calculation, (3) predictability, and (4) control.

me—the social self or the part of the self that is the product of interaction with others and that knows the rules and expectations; the me is the sense of self that emerges out of role-taking experiences.

means of production—the resources such as land, tools, equipment, factories, transportation, and labor that are essential to the production and distribution of goods and services.

mechanical solidarity—a system of social ties based on uniform thinking and behavior.

mechanism of social control—strategies people use to encourage, often force, others to comply with social norms.

mechanization—the process of replacing human and animal muscle as a source of power with external sources of power derived from burning wood, coal, oil, and natural gas.

medicalization—the process of defining a behavior as an illness or medical disorder and then treating it with a medical intervention.

melting pot assimilation—a process by which previously separate groups accept many new behaviors and values from one another, intermarry, procreate, and identify with a blended culture.

methods of data collection—the procedures used to gather relevant data.

microsociology—a branch of sociology that focuses on small-scale interpersonal processes, including social relationships and individual interactions.

migration—the movement of people from one country to another or from one geographical area to another.

militaristic power—a political entity such as a country that believes military strength, and the willingness to use it, is the source of national and even global security. Usually a peace-through-strength doctrine—peace depends on military strength and force—is cited to justify military buildups and interventions on foreign soil.

military-industrial complex—a relationship between those who declare, fund, and manage wars (the Department of Defense, the office of the president, and Congress) and corporations that make the equipment and supplies needed to wage war.

minority groups—subpopulations within a society that are regarded and treated as inherently different from those in the mainstream. They are systematically excluded (whether consciously or unconsciously) from full participation in society and denied equal access to power, prestige, and wealth.

misandry—sexism directed at men that is so extreme that it involves a hatred of those in that category.

misogyny—sexism directed at women that is so extreme it involves a hatred of those in that category.

modernization—a process of economic, social, and cultural transformation in which a country “evolves” from an underdeveloped to a modern society.

monarchy—a form of government in which the power is in the hands of a leader (known as a monarch) who reigns over a state or territory, usually for life and by hereditary right. Typically, the monarch expects to pass the throne on to someone who is designated as the heir, usually a firstborn son.

moral superiority—the belief that an ingroup’s standards represent the only way such that there is no room for negotiation and no tolerance for other ways.

mores—norms that people define as essential to the well-being of a group. People who violate mores are usually punished severely: they may be ostracized, institutionalized, or condemned to die.

mortality crisis—violent fluctuation in the death rate caused by war, famine, or epidemics.

mortification—the process by which the self is stripped of all its supports and “shaped and coded.”

multinational corporation—an enterprise that owns, controls, or licenses facilities in countries other than the one in which it is headquartered.

mystic—a type of counterculture in which members search for “truth and for themselves” and in the process turn inward.

nature—human genetic makeup or biological inheritance.

negative sanctions—expressions of disapproval for violating norms.

negatively privileged property class—people completely lacking in skills, property, or employment, or who depend on seasonal or sporadic employment; they constitute the very bottom of the class system.

negotiated order—the sum of existing and newly negotiated expectations that are part of any social situation.

neocolonialism—a new form of colonialism where more powerful foreign governments and foreign-owned businesses continue to exploit the resources and labor of the postcolonial peoples.

nonmaterial culture—intangible human creations that include beliefs, values, norms, and symbols.

nonparticipant observation—detached watching and listening such that the researcher only observes and does not become part of group life.

nonprejudiced discriminators—fair-weather liberals or people who accept the creed of equal opportunity but discriminate because they simply fail to consider discriminatory consequences or because discriminating gives them some advantage.

nonprejudiced nondiscriminators—all-weather liberals or people who accept the creed of equal opportunity, and their conduct conforms to that creed.

nonrandom sample—a subset of the targeted population that is accessible for study.

normative reference groups—groups that provide people with norms that they draw upon or consider when evaluating a behavior or a course of action.

norms—rules and expectations for the way people are supposed to behave, feel, and appear in a particular social situation.

nurture—the interaction experiences that make up every person's life, or more generally, the social environment.

observation—watching, listening to, and recording behavior and conversations in context as they happen.

objective deprivation—a state of being characteristic of those who are the worst off or most disadvantaged—the people with the lowest incomes, the least education, the lowest social status, the fewest job opportunities, and so on.

oligarchy—rule by the few, or the concentration of decision-making power in the hands of a few persons who hold the top positions in a hierarchy.

operationalized—for a variable to be operationalized, the researcher must give clear, precise instructions about how to observe or measure it.

organic solidarity—a system of social ties founded on interdependence, specialization, and cooperation.

outgroup—any group to which a person does not belong. Obviously, one person's ingroup is another person's outgroup.

over-urbanization—a situation in which urban misery—poverty, unemployment, housing shortages, and insufficient infrastructure—is exacerbated by an influx of unskilled, illiterate, and poverty-stricken rural migrants who have come to the cities out of desperation.

panethnicity—a broad catchall ethnic category in which people with distinct histories, cultures, languages, and identities are lumped together and viewed as belonging to that category (e.g., Hispanic/Latino).

panopticon—philosopher Jeremy Bentham's design for the most efficient and rational prison—the perfect prison. (*Pan* means a complete view and *optic* means seeing.)

participant observation—a method of research in which the researchers join a group, interact directly with those they are studying, assume a role critical to the group's purpose, and/or live in a community under study.

pastoral societies—societies that rely on domesticated herd animals to subsist. Pastoralism was adopted by people living in deserts and other regions in which vegetation was limited. Domesticating animals allowed people to produce surplus wealth or more milk and meat than they needed to subsist.

patriarchy—an arrangement in which men have systematic power over women in public and private (family) life.

peer group—people who are approximately the same age, participate in the same day-to-day activities, and share a similar overall social status in society.

peer pressure—instances in which people feel directly or indirectly pressured to engage in behavior that meets the approval and expectations of peers and/or to fit in with what peers are doing. That pressure may be to smoke (or not smoke) cigarettes, to drink (or not drink) alcohol, and to engage (or not engage) in sexual activities.

penalties—constraints on a person's opportunities and choices, as well as the price paid for engaging in certain activities, appearances, or choices deemed inappropriate of someone in a particular category.

peripheral economies—economies built around a few commodities or even a single commodity,

such as coffee, peanuts, or tobacco, or on a natural resource, such as oil, tin, copper, or zinc.

phenomenology—an analytical approach that focuses on the everyday world and how people actively produce and sustain meaning.

planned obsolescence—a strategy of producing goods such that they are disposable after a single use (paper cups), have a shorter life cycle than the industry is capable of producing (appliances), or can quickly be replaced by new upgraded models.

play—voluntary, spontaneous activity with few or no formal rules.

pluralism—a situation in which different racial and ethnic groups coexist in harmony; have equal social standing; maintain their unique cultural ties, communities, and identities; and participate in the economic and political life of the larger society. These groups also possess an allegiance to the country in which they live and its way of life.

political action committees (PACs)—special-interest groups that raise money to be donated to the political candidates who seem most likely to support their economic, social, and/or political needs and interests. There are more than 4,500 registered PACs.

political parties—organizations that try to acquire power to influence social action. Parties are organized to represent people of a certain class or social status or with certain interests.

political system—the institution that regulates the access to and use of power that is essential to articulating and realizing individual, local, regional, national, international, or global interests and agendas.

positive sanctions—expressions of approval for complying with norms.

positive checks—events that increase deaths, including natural disasters, epidemics of infectious and parasitic diseases, war, and famine.

positively privileged property class—those who monopolize the purchase of the highest-priced consumer goods, have access to the most socially advantageous kinds of education, control the highest executive positions, own the means of production, and live on income from property and other investments.

positivism—the belief that valid knowledge about the world can be derived only from using the scientific method.

post-industrial societies—societies that rely on intellectual technologies of telecommunications and computers, which encompass four interdependent revolutionary innovations:

(1) electronics that allow for incredible speed of data transmission and calculations, which can be made in nanoseconds; (2) miniaturization or the drastic size reduction of electronic devices, resulting in computers, cell phones, and iPods becoming thinner, sleeker, and smaller; (3) digitalization, which allows voice, text, image, and data to be integrated and transmitted with equal efficiency; and (4) software, the programs that enable computers to operate, perform a variety of tasks, and generate a variety of simulated experiences.

post-structuralism—a theoretical position within sociology that contends that the behavior-constraining powers of social structures are exaggerated. While post-structuralists do not dismiss the constraining powers of social structures, they emphasize that people reshape and change these structures.

power—the probability that an individual can achieve his or her will, even against opposition.

power elite—those few people who occupy such lofty positions in the social structure of leading institutions that their decisions affect millions, even billions, of people worldwide.

predictability—a feature of McDonaldization that emphasizes the expectation that a service or product will be the same no matter where in the world or when (time of year, time of day) it is purchased.

predestination—the belief that God has fore-ordained all things, including the salvation or damnation of individual souls.

prejudice—a rigid and, more often than not, unfavorable judgment about a category of people that is applied to anyone who belongs to that category.

prejudiced discriminators—active bigots or people who reject the notion of equal opportunity and profess a moral right, even a duty, to discriminate. They derive significant social and psychological gains from the conviction that anyone from their racial or ethnic group is superior to other such groups.

prejudiced nondiscriminators—timid bigots or people who reject the creed of equal opportunity but refrain from discrimination, primarily because they fear possible sanctions or being labeled as racists. Timid bigots rarely express their true opinions about racial and ethnic groups, and often use code words such as *inner city* or *those people* to camouflage their true feelings.

primary deviants—those people whose rule breaking is viewed as understandable, incidental,

or insignificant in light of some socially approved status they hold.

primary group—group characterized by face-to-face contact and by strong emotional ties among members who feel an allegiance to one another. Examples of primary groups include the family, military units, cliques, and peer groups.

primary sector—economic activities that generate or extract raw materials from the natural environment. Mining, fishing, growing crops, raising livestock, drilling for oil, and planting and harvesting forest products are examples.

primary sex characteristics—the anatomical traits essential to reproduction.

prison-industrial complex—the corporations and agencies with an economic stake in building and supplying correctional facilities and in providing services.

privileges—special taken-for-granted advantages and immunities or benefits enjoyed by a dominant group relative to minority groups.

profane—everything that is not considered sacred, including things opposed to the sacred (such as the unholy, the irreverent, and the blasphemous) and things that stand apart from the sacred (such as the ordinary, the commonplace, the unconsecrated, and the bodily).

proletariat—those individuals who must sell their labor to the bourgeoisie.

pure deviants—people who have broken the rules and are caught, punished, and labeled as outsiders.

race—human-constructed categories to which people are assigned. People in each category are connected by shared and selected ancestors, history, and physical features and are widely regarded as a distinct racial group.

racial common sense—ideas and assumptions people hold in common about race or a racial group believed to be so obvious or natural they need not be questioned.

racial formation—a theoretical viewpoint in which race is presented, not as a concrete biological category, but as a product of the system of racial classification.

racism—a set of beliefs that uses biological or innate factors to explain and justify inequalities between racial and ethnic groups.

radical activist—a type of counterculture in which members preach, create, or demand a new order with new obligations to others.

random sample—a subset of the targeted population in which every case has an equal chance of being selected.

rationalization—a process in which thought and action rooted in emotion, superstition, respect for mysterious forces, or tradition is replaced by instrumental rational action or means-to-ends thinking.

rebellion—the rejection of both the valued goals and the legitimate means of attaining them.

redlining—systematic and institutionalized practices that deny, limit, or increase the cost of services to neighborhoods because residents are low-income and/or minority. Redlining can involve financial services (loans, checking accounts, credit cards, mortgages), insurance, health care, and grocery stores.

reentry shock—culture shock in reverse that can be experienced upon returning home after living in another culture.

reference group—any group whose standards people take into account when evaluating something about themselves or others, whether it be personal achievements, aspirations in life, or individual circumstances.

relative deprivation—a social condition that is measured not by objective standards but rather by comparing one group's situation with the situations of groups who are more advantaged. Someone earning an annual income of \$100,000 is not deprived in any objective sense. He or she may, however, feel deprived relative to someone making \$300,000 or more per year.

relative poverty—a situation that is measured not by some essential minimum but rather by comparing a particular situation against an average or advantaged situation. Thus one thinks not just about survival needs but about a lack of access to goods and services that have become defined as essential in the society in which they live.

reliable—for a measure to be reliable, it must yield consistent results.

religion—a system of shared rituals and beliefs about the sacred and the profane that bind together a community of worshipers.

representative democracy—a form of government in which power is vested in citizens who vote into office those candidates they believe can best represent their interests.

research design—a plan for gathering data on a chosen topic.

research methods—various techniques that sociologists and other investigators use to formulate and answer meaningful questions and to collect, analyze, and interpret data.

resocialization—a process that involves breaking with behaviors and ways of thinking that are unsuited to existing or changing circumstances, and replacing them with new, more appropriate ways of behaving and thinking.

retreatism—the rejection of both culturally valued goals and the legitimate means of achieving them.

reverse ethnocentrism—a viewpoint that regards a home culture as inferior to an idealized foreign culture.

rituals—rules that govern how people behave in the presence of the sacred. These rules may take the form of instructions detailing the appropriate day(s) and occasions for worship, acceptable dress, and wording of chants, songs, and prayers.

ritualism—the rejection of the cultural goals but a rigid adherence to legitimate means of achieving them.

role—the behavior expected of a status in relation to another status—for example, the role of brother in relationship to sister; the role of physician in relationship to patient.

role conflict—a predicament in which the roles associated with two or more distinct statuses that a person holds conflict in some way.

role expectations—norms about how a role should be enacted relative to other statuses.

role performance—the actual behavior of the person occupying a role.

role-set—the various role relationships with which someone occupying a status is involved.

role strain—a predicament in which there are contradictory or conflicting role expectations associated with a single status.

role-taking—imaginatively stepping into another person's shoes to view and evaluate the self.

routine—the usual ways of thinking and doing things.

sacred—everything that is regarded as extraordinary and that inspires in believers deep and absorbing sentiments of awe, respect, mystery, and reverence. Sacred things may include objects, living creatures, elements of nature, places, states of consciousness, holy days, ceremonies, and other activities.

sample—a portion of the cases from the population of interest.

sampling frame—a complete list of every case in the population.

sanctions—reactions of approval or disapproval to behavior that departs from or conforms to group norms.

schooling—a program of formal, systematic instruction that takes place primarily in classrooms but also includes extracurricular activities and out-of-classroom assignments.

scientific method—a carefully planned research process with the goal of generating observations and data that can be verified by others.

scientific racism—the use of faulty science to support systems of racial rankings and theories of social and cultural progress that placed whites in the most advanced ranks and stage of human evolution.

secondary deviants—those whose rule breaking is treated as something so significant that it cannot be overlooked or explained away. The secondary deviant is a person who comes to be defined by his or her deviance.

secondary groups—groups that consist of two or more people who interact for a specific purpose. Secondary group relationships are confined to a particular setting and specific tasks. Members relate to each other in terms of specific roles.

secondary sources or archival data—third-party data that have been collected for a purpose not related to the research study.

secondary sector—economic activities that transform raw materials from the primary sector into manufactured goods such as computers and cars.

secondary sex characteristics—physical traits not essential to reproduction such as breast development, quality of voice, distribution of facial and body hair, and skeletal form, that supposedly result from the action of so-called male (androgen) and female (estrogen) hormones.

secret deviants—people who have broken the rules but whose violation goes unnoticed or, if it is noticed, no sanctions are applied.

secularization—a process by which religious influences on thought and behavior are gradually removed or reduced. More specifically, it is a process by which some element of society, once part of a religious sphere, separates from its religious or spiritual connection or influences.

segmentalized dyad—a two-person group in which the parties know little about each other's personality and personal life; and what they do know is confined to a specific situation, such as the classroom, a hair salon, or other specialized setting.

segregation—the physical and/or social separation of people by race or ethnicity. It may be legally enforced (*de jure*) or socially enforced without the support of laws (*de facto*).

selective forgetting—a process by which people forget, dismiss, or fail to pass on to their children an ancestral connection to one or more ethnicities.

selective perception—a situation where prejudiced persons notice only the behaviors that support their stereotypes and then use those observations to support the stereotypes they hold.

self-administered survey—a set of questions that respondents read and answer.

self-awareness—a state in which a person is able to observe and evaluate the self from another's viewpoint.

self-fulfilling prophecy—a point of view that begins with a false definition of a situation that is assumed to be accurate. People behave as if that definition were true so that the misguided behavior produces responses that confirm the false definition.

self-referent terms—terms to distinguish the self (including I, me, mine, first name and last name) and to specify the statuses one holds in society (athlete, doctor, child, and so on).

semiperipheral economies—economies characterized by moderate wealth (but extreme inequality) and moderately diverse system of production and consumption. Semiperipheral economies exploit peripheral economies and are in turn exploited by core economies.

sense of self—self-knowledge derived from stepping outside the self and seeing it from another's point of view and also imagining the effects one's words and actions have on others.

services—activities performed for others that result in no tangible product, such as theater productions, transportation, financial advice, medical care, spiritual counseling, and education.

sex—a distinction based on primary sex characteristics.

sexism—the belief that one sex—and by extension, one gender—is innately superior to another, justifying unequal treatment of the sexes.

sexuality—all the ways people experience and express themselves as sexual beings. The study of sexuality considers the range of social activities, behaviors, and thoughts that generate sexual sensations and experiences and that allow for sexual expression.

sexual orientation—“an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to

men, women, or both sexes. Sexual orientation also refers to a person's sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions” (American Psychiatric Association, 2009).

sexual scripts—responses and behaviors that people learn, in much the same way that actors learn lines for a play, to guide them in sexual activities and encounters. These scripts are gendered in that males and females learn different scripts about the sex-appropriate responses and behavioral choices open to them in specific situations.

sexual stratification—the system societies use to rank males, females, and those who do not fit into the binary category scheme on a scale of social worth such that the ranking affects life chances in unequal ways.

significant others—people or characters (such as cartoon characters, a parent, or the family pet) who are important in a child's life, in that they greatly influence the child's self-evaluation and way of behaving.

significant symbols—gestures that convey the same meaning to the persons transmitting them and receiving them; gestures or sounds that must be interpreted before a response is made.

situational factors—things believed to be outside a person's control—such as the weather, bad luck, and another's incompetence.

social action—actions people take in response to others.

social change—any significant alteration, modification, or transformation in the way social activities and human relationships are organized.

social dynamics—the forces that cause societies to change.

social emotions—feelings that we experience as we relate to other people, such as empathy, grief, love, guilt, jealousy, and embarrassment.

social facts—collectively imposed ways of thinking, feeling, or behaving that transcend the consciousness of individuals and that influence, pressure, or force people to behave and think in specified ways.

social forces—anything human created that influence, pressure, or push people to behave and think in specified ways.

social inequality—the unequal access to and distribution of income, wealth, and other valued resources.

social interaction—everyday encounters in which people communicate, interpret, and respond to each other’s words and actions.

social media—the Internet and other digital technologies that allow people to interact or share information, personal creations, stories, and experiences with friends, family, acquaintances, even strangers.

social mobility—movement from one social class to another.

social movement—a phenomenon in which a substantial number of people organize to make a change, resist a change, or undo a change to some area of society.

social network—a web of closely to loosely knit social relationships linking people to one another.

social prestige—a level of respect or admiration for a status apart from any person who happens to occupy it.

social reproduction—the perpetuation of unequal relations such that almost everyone, including the disadvantaged, comes to view this inequality as normal and legitimate and tends to shrug off or resist calls for change.

social statics—the forces that hold societies together and give them endurance over time.

social status—a human-created and defined position in society such as female, teenager, patient, retired, sister, homosexual, and heterosexual.

social stratification—the systematic process of categorizing and ranking people on a scale of social worth such that one’s ranking affects life chances in unequal ways.

social structure—a largely invisible system that coordinates human activities in broadly predictable ways. It shapes relationships and opportunities to connect to others; gives people an identity; puts up barriers to accessing resources and people; and determines the relative ease or difficulty with which those barriers can be broken.

socialism—an economic system in which raw materials and the means of producing and distributing goods and services are collectively owned. That is, public ownership—rather than private ownership—is an essential characteristic of this system.

socialization—the lifelong process by which people learn the ways of the society in which they live. More specifically, it is the process by which humans acquire a sense of self or a social identity, develop their human capacities, learn the

culture(s) of the society in which they live, and learn expectations for behavior.

society—consists of at least two people who possess some sense of shared interest, purpose, and identity and who are connected through visible and invisible social networks. Sociologists study societies that include millions, even billions, of people (e.g., American society, global society) as well as smaller societies, such as a basketball team, a college class, or two people meeting for the first time.

sociological ambivalence—simultaneous positive and negative feelings toward a person or situation arising out of socially sanctioned inequalities that generate tensions and conflicts in relationships.

sociological imagination—a perspective that allows us to consider how outside forces, especially our time in history and the place we live, shape our life stories or biographies.

sociological theory—a framework for thinking about and explaining how societies are organized and/or how people in them relate to one another and respond to their surroundings.

sociology—the scientific study of human activity in society.

solidarity—the system of social ties that acts as a cement connecting people to one another and to the wider society.

special-interest groups—groups consisting of people who share an interest in a particular economic, political, or other social issue and who form an organization or join an existing organization to influence public opinion and government policy.

status set—all the statuses any one person assumes.

status group—an amorphous group of persons held together by virtue of a lifestyle that has come to be “expected of all those who wish to belong to the circle” and by the level of social esteem and honor others accord them (Weber 1948, p. 187).

status symbols—visible markers of economic and social position and rank.

status value—a situation in which people who possess one characteristic are regarded and treated as more valuable or worthy than people who possess other characteristics.

stereotypes—generalizations about people who belong to a particular category that do not change even in the face of contradictory evidence. Stereotypes give holders an illusion that they know

the other group and that they possess the right to control images of the other group.

strong ties—those people we most interact with, feel emotion for, confide in, and reciprocate favors.

structural constraints—the established and customary rules, policies, and day-to-day practices that affect a person's life chances.

structural strain—a situation in which there is an imbalance between culturally valued goals and the legitimate means to obtain them. An imbalance exists when (1) the sole focus is on achieving valued goals by any means necessary, (2) people are unsure whether following the legitimate means will lead to success, or (3) there are not enough legitimate opportunities to satisfy demand.

structuralism—a framework that portrays social structures as transcending those who constructed them. As such these structures have a coercive/constraining power over thought and behavior.

subcultures—groups that share in certain parts of the mainstream culture but have distinctive values, norms, beliefs, symbols, language, and/or material culture that set them apart in some way.

subsist—to meet basic needs for human survival.

surplus wealth—a situation in which the amount of available food items and other products exceed that which is required to subsist.

surveillance—a mechanism of social control that involves monitoring the movements, conversations, and associations of those believed to be or about to be engaged in some wrongdoing and then intervening at appropriate moments.

symbols—anything (a word, an object, a sound, a feeling, an odor, a gesture, an idea) to which people assign a name and a meaning.

sympathetic knowledge—firsthand knowledge gained by living and working among those being studied.

system of oppression—a system that empowers and privileges some categories of people while disempowering other categories. The act of disempowering includes marginalizing, silencing, or subordinating another.

system of racial classification—the systematic process by which people are divided into racial categories that are implicitly or explicitly ranked on a scale of social worth.

team—in dramaturgical sociology a group of people linked together in interaction for a common social purpose.

technology—knowledge, tools, applications, and other inventions used in ways that allow

people to adapt to and exercise control over their surroundings. Technology can be material and/or conceptual.

tertiary sector—economic activities related to delivering services, such as health care or entertainment, and to creating and distributing information, such as books or data.

theory of the demographic transition—a theoretical perspective that postulates that a country's birth and death rates are linked to its level of industrial or economic development and that the so-called developing countries will eventually achieve birth and death rates like those of Western Europe and North America; in fact, to get there they would follow the same pattern as industrialized countries.

theocracy—a form of government in which political authority rests in the hands of religious leaders or a theologically trained elite group. The primary purpose of a theocracy is to uphold divine laws in its policies and practices. Thus, there is no legal separation of church and state. Government policies and laws correspond to religious principles and laws.

this-worldly asceticism—a belief that people are instruments of divine will and that God determines and directs their activities. Calvinists glorified God when they accepted a task assigned to them, carried it out in an exemplary and disciplined fashion, and did not indulge in the fruits of their labor.

Thomas theorem—a theory stating that before people take action or respond to a situation, they quickly decide on and attach a subjective meaning to the situation, which then affects their response; in other words, "if men define situations as real they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 1928, p. 572).

total fertility—the average number of children that a woman bears in her lifetime.

total institutions—settings in which people surrender control of their lives, voluntarily or involuntarily, thereby submitting to the authority of an administrative staff and undergoing a program of resocialization cut off from the rest of society.

totalitarianism—a form of government characterized by (1) a single ruling party led by a dictator, (2) an unchallenged official ideology that defines a vision of the "perfect" society and the means to achieve that vision, (3) a system of social control that suppresses dissent, and (4) centralized control over the media and the economy.

tracking—also known as ability grouping; a sifting and sorting mechanism by which students are assigned to separate instructional groups within a single classroom, programs such as college preparatory versus general studies, or advanced placement, honors, or remedial classes.

traditional authority—a form of power grounded in the sanctity of time-honored norms that govern how someone comes to hold a powerful position, such as chief, king, queen, or emperor. Usually the person inherits that position by virtue of being born into a family that has held power for some time.

transgender—the label applied to those who feel that their inner sense of being a man or woman does not match their anatomical sex, so they behave and/or dress to actualize their gender identity.

treadmill of production—a term used to describe the ceaseless increases in production and, by extension, consumption that are needed to sustain the global economy's success, which is measured by increased profits.

triad—a three-person group that is sociologically significant because a third person added to a two-person group (a dyad) significantly alters the pattern of interaction between them.

troubles—individual problems or difficulties that are caused by personal shortcomings related to motivation, attitude, ability, character, or judgment. The resolution of a trouble lies in changing the person in some way.

trust—the taken-for-granted assumption that in a given social encounter others share the same expectations and definitions of the situation and that they will act to meet those expectations.

typificatory schemes—systematic mental frameworks that allow people to place what they observe into pre-existing social categories with essential characteristics.

tyranny of the normal—a point of view that measures differences against what is thought to be normal and that assumes those with impairments fall short in other ways.

urban underclass—diverse groups of families and individuals residing in the inner city who are on the fringes of the American occupa-

tional system and as a result are in the most disadvantaged position of the economic hierarchy.

urbanization—a transformative process in which people migrate from rural to urban areas and change the ways they use land, interact, and earn a living.

utilitarian organizations—organizations that draw in those who in exchange for money offer their labor, seek to change status, look to acquire a skill, seek a treatment, request a service, or need a product.

validity—a measure that accurately represents what it is intended to measure.

values—general, shared conceptions of what is good, right, desirable, or important.

variable—any behavior or characteristic that consists of more than one category.

vertical mobility—a change in a person's social situation that involves a gain or loss in social status.

virtual integration—a perception that racial integration exists derived from simply seeing other racial groups on television and in advertisements; it gives “the sensation of having meaningful, repeated contact with other racial groups without actually having it” (Lynch 2007).

voluntary organizations—organizations that draw in people who give time, talent, or money to address a human and community need or to achieve some other not-for-profit goal.

weak ties—those people we know something about but to whom we are not especially close.

wealth—the combined value of a person's income and other material assets such as stocks, real estate, and savings minus debt.

welfare state—a term that applies to an economic system that is a hybrid of capitalism and socialism.

white-collar crime—crimes committed by people whose position of respectability and high social status allows them the opportunity to do so in the course of doing their jobs.

witch hunt—campaign to identify, investigate, and correct behavior that has been defined as undermining a group. The targeted behavior is rarely the real cause but is addressed to make a problem appear as if it is being managed.

GLOSSARY BY MODULE

CHAPTER 1

Module 1.1

social forces—anything human created that influence, pressure, or push people to behave and think in specified ways.

sociology—the scientific study of human activity in society.

Module 1.2

altruistic—a state in which the ties attaching the individual to the group are such that a person's sense of self cannot be separated from the group.

anomic—a state in which the ties attaching the individual to the group are disrupted due to dramatic changes in circumstances.

egoistic—a state in which the social ties attaching the individual to the group are weak.

fatalistic—a state in which the ties attaching the individual to the group are so oppressive there is no hope of release.

social facts—collectively imposed ways of thinking, feeling, or behaving that transcend the consciousness of individuals and that influence, pressure, or force people to behave and think in specified ways.

Module 1.3

biography—all the events and day-to-day interactions from birth to death that make up a person's life.

issue—a societal matter that affects many people and that can only be explained by larger social forces that transcend the individuals affected.

sociological imagination—a perspective that allows us to consider how outside forces, especially our time in history and the place we live, shape our life stories or biographies.

troubles—individual problems or difficulties that are caused by personal shortcomings related to motivation, attitude, ability, character, or judgment. The resolution of a trouble lies in changing the person in some way.

Module 1.4

Industrial Revolution—the name given to the changes in manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, and mining that transformed virtually every aspect of society from the 1300s on.

mechanization—the process of replacing human and animal muscle as a source of power with external sources of power derived from burning wood, coal, oil, and natural gas.

Module 1.5

bourgeoisie—the owners of the means of production.

class conflict—an antagonism between exploiting and exploited classes.

color line—a barrier supported by customs and laws separating nonwhites from whites, especially with regard to their roles in the division of labor; it can be traced to the European colonization of Africa.

conflict—the major force that drives social change.

disenchantment—a great spiritual void accompanied by a crisis of meaning.

means of production—the resources such as land, tools, equipment, factories, transportation, and labor that are essential to the production and distribution of goods and services.

mechanical solidarity—a system of social ties based on uniform thinking and behavior.

organic solidarity—a system of social ties founded on interdependence, specialization, and cooperation.

positivism—the belief that valid knowledge about the world can be derived only from using the scientific method.

proletariat—those individuals who must sell their labor to the bourgeoisie.

social action—actions people take in response to others.

social dynamics—the forces that cause societies to change.

social statics—the forces that hold societies together and give them endurance over time.

solidarity—the system of social ties that acts as a cement connecting people to one another and to the wider society.

sympathetic knowledge—firsthand knowledge gained by living and working among those being studied.

Module 1.6

function—the contribution a part makes to maintain the stability of an existing social order.

ideologies—seemingly commonsense views justifying the existing state of affairs but which, upon close analysis, reflect the viewpoints of the dominant groups and disguise their advantages.

latent dysfunctions—unanticipated disruptions to the existing social order.

latent functions—a part's unanticipated, unintended, and unrecognized effects on an existing social order.

macrosociology—the branch of sociology that focuses on large-scale enduring conditions and processes such as industrialization, globalization, and urbanization.

manifest dysfunctions—a part's anticipated disruptions to an existing social order.

manifest functions—a part's anticipated, recognized, or intended effects on maintaining order.

microsociology—a branch of sociology that focuses on small-scale interpersonal processes, including social relationships and individual interactions.

negotiated order—the sum of existing and newly negotiated expectations that are part of any social situation.

self-awareness—a state in which a person is able to observe and evaluate the self from another's viewpoint.

social interaction—everyday encounters in which people communicate, interpret, and respond to each other's words and actions.

sociological theory—a framework for thinking about and explaining how societies are organized and/or how people in them relate to one another and respond to their surroundings.

symbol—any kind of physical, social, or abstract object to which people assign a name, meaning, or value.

Module 1.7

case studies—objective accounts intended to educate readers about a person, group, or situation.

content analysis—a method of analysis in which researchers identify themes, sometimes counting the number of times something occurs

or specifying categories in which to place observations.

experimental design—a highly systematic method used to study people assigned to two groups where theoretically, the only difference is that people in the experimental group are exposed to some action (the independent variable) and those in the control group are not.

generalizability—the extent to which researchers' findings can be applied to the larger population of which their sample was a part.

Hawthorne effect—a phenomenon in which research subjects alter their behavior when they learn they are being observed.

methods of data collection—the procedures used to gather relevant data.

nonparticipant observation—detached watching and listening such that the researcher only observes and does not become part of group life.

nonrandom sample—a subset of the targeted population that is accessible for study.

observation—watching, listening to, and recording behavior and conversations in context as they happen.

participant observation—a method of research in which the researchers join a group, interact directly with those they are studying, assume a role critical to the group's purpose, and/or live in a community under study.

random sample—a subset of the targeted population in which every case has an equal chance of being selected.

research design—a plan for gathering data on a chosen topic.

sample—a portion of the cases from the population of interest.

sampling frame—a complete list of every case in the population.

secondary sources or archival data—third-party data that have been collected for a purpose not related to the research study.

self-administered survey—a set of questions that respondents read and answer.

Module 1.8

dependent variable—the behavior to be explained or predicted.

hypothesis—a trial prediction about the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Specifically, the hypothesis predicts how change in an independent variable brings about change in a dependent variable.

independent variable—the variable that explains or predicts the dependent variable.

operationalized—for a variable to be operationalized, the researcher must give clear, precise instructions about how to observe or measure it.

reliable—for a measure to be reliable, it must yield consistent results.

research methods—various techniques that sociologists and other investigators use to formulate and answer meaningful questions and to collect, analyze, and interpret data.

scientific method—a carefully planned research process with the goal of generating observations and data that can be verified by others.

validity—a measure that accurately represents what it is intended to measure.

variable—any behavior or characteristic that consists of more than one category.

CHAPTER 2

Module 2.1

cultural particulars—the *specific* practices that distinguish cultures from one another.

cultural universals—those things all cultures have in common.

culture—the way of life of a people, specifically the shared and human-created strategies for adapting and responding to the social and physical environment.

social emotions—feelings that we experience as we relate to other people, such as empathy, grief, love, guilt, jealousy, and embarrassment.

society—a group of interacting people who share, pass on, and create culture.

Module 2.2

beliefs—conceptions that people accept as true concerning how the world operates and the place of the individual in relationship to others.

folkways—norms that apply to the mundane aspects or details of daily life.

language—a symbol system that assigns meaning to particular sounds, gestures, pictures, or specific combinations of letters to convey meaning.

linguistic relativity hypothesis—the idea that “No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached” (Sapir 1949, p. 162).

material culture—all the physical objects that people have invented or borrowed from other cultures.

mores—norms that people define as essential to the well-being of a group. People who violate mores are usually punished severely: they may be ostracized, institutionalized, or condemned to die.

nonmaterial culture—intangible human creations that include beliefs, values, norms, and symbols.

norms—written and unwritten rules that specify behaviors appropriate and inappropriate to a particular social situation.

symbols—anything (a word, an object, a sound, a feeling, an odor, a gesture, an idea) to which people assign a name and a meaning.

values—general, shared conceptions of what is good, right, desirable, or important.

Module 2.3

communitarian utopians—a type of counterculture characterized by withdrawal into a separate community where members can live with minimum interference from the larger society, which they view as evil, materialistic, wasteful, or self-centered.

countercultures—subcultures that challenge, contradict, or outright reject the values of the mainstream culture of which they are a part.

cultural diversity—the cultural variety that exists among people who find themselves sharing some physical or virtual space.

mystic—a type of counterculture in which members search for “truth and for themselves” and in the process turn inward.

radical activist—a type of counterculture in which members preach, create, or demand a new order with new obligations to others.

subcultures—groups that share in certain parts of the mainstream culture but have distinctive values, norms, beliefs, symbols, language, and/or material culture that set them apart in some way.

Module 2.4

cultural relativism—a point of view advocating that a foreign culture not be judged by the standards of a home culture, and that a behavior or way of thinking must be examined in its cultural context—that is, in terms of that culture’s values, norms, beliefs, environmental challenges, and history.

culture shock—the mental and physical strain that people can experience as they adjust to the ways of a new culture. In particular, newcomers

find that many of the behaviors and responses they learned in their home culture, and have come to take for granted, do not apply in the foreign setting.

ethnocentrism—a point of view in which people use their home culture as the standard for judging the worth of another culture's ways.

reentry shock—culture shock in reverse that can be experienced upon returning home after living in another culture.

reverse ethnocentrism—a viewpoint that regards a home culture as inferior to an idealized foreign culture.

Module 2.5

adaptive culture—the part of the culture (nonmaterial) that adjusts to a new product or innovation, specifically to the associated changes in society that product or innovation promotes.

cultural diffusion—the process by which an idea, an invention, or a way of behaving is borrowed from a foreign source and then adapted to the culture by the borrowing people.

cultural lag—a situation in which adaptive culture fails to adjust in necessary ways to a material innovation and its disruptive consequences.

Module 2.6

consumerism—an ideology that locates the meaning of life in possessions.

global interdependence—a situation in which human relationships and activities transcend national borders and in which social problems within any one country—such as unemployment, drug addiction, water shortages, natural disasters, or the search for national security—are experienced locally but are shaped by events taking place outside the country.

globalization—the ever-increasing flow of goods, services, money, people, technology, information, and other cultural items across political borders. This flow has become more dense and quick-moving as constraints of space and time break down. As a result of globalization, no longer are people, goods, services, technologies, money, and images fixed to specific geographic locations.

CHAPTER 3

Module 3.1

internalization—a process by which people accept as binding learned ways of thinking, appearing, and behaving.

sense of self—self-knowledge derived from stepping outside the self and seeing it from another's point of view and also imagining the effects one's words and actions have on others.

socialization—the lifelong process by which people learn the ways of the society in which they live. More specifically, it is the process by which humans acquire a sense of self or a social identity, develop their human capacities, learn the culture(s) of the society in which they live, and learn expectations for behavior.

Module 3.2

nature—human genetic makeup or biological inheritance.

nurture—the interaction experiences that make up every person's life, or more generally, the social environment.

Module 3.3

games—structured, organized activities that involve more than one person; they are characterized by a number of constraints, such as established roles and rules and a purpose toward which all activity is directed.

generalized other—a system of expected behaviors and meanings that transcend the people participating. An understanding of the generalized other is achieved by simultaneously and imaginatively relating the self to many others “playing the game.”

gesture—any action that requires people to interpret its meaning before responding. Language is a particularly important gesture because people interpret the meaning of words before they react. In addition to words, gestures also include nonverbal cues, such as tone of voice, inflection, facial expression, posture, and other body movements or positions that convey meaning.

I—the active and creative aspect of the self. It is the part of the self that questions the expectations and rules.

looking-glass self—the way in which a sense of self develops: specifically, people act as mirrors for one another. We see ourselves reflected in others' real or imagined reactions to our appearance and behaviors. We acquire a sense of self by being sensitive to the appraisals that we perceive others to have of us.

me—the social self or the part of the self that is the product of interaction with others and that knows the rules and expectations; the me is the sense of self that emerges out of role-taking experiences.

play—voluntary, spontaneous activity with few or no formal rules.

role-taking—imaginatively stepping into another person's shoes to view and evaluate the self.

self-referent terms—terms to distinguish the self (including I, me, mine, first name and last name) and to specify the statuses one holds in society (athlete, doctor, child, and so on).

significant others—people or characters (such as cartoon characters, a parent, or the family pet) who are important in a child's life, in that they greatly influence the child's self-evaluation and way of behaving.

significant symbols—gestures that convey the same meaning to the persons transmitting them and receiving them; gestures or sounds that must be interpreted before a response is made.

Module 3.4

mortification—the process by which the self is stripped of all its supports and “shaped and coded.”

resocialization—a process that involves breaking with behaviors and ways of thinking that are unsuited to existing or changing circumstances, and replacing them with new, more appropriate ways of behaving and thinking.

total institutions—settings in which people surrender control of their lives, voluntarily or involuntarily, thereby submitting to the authority of an administrative staff and undergoing a program of resocialization cut off from the rest of society.

Module 3.5

agents of socialization—significant people, groups, and institutions that act to shape our sense of self and social identity, help us realize our human capacities, and teach us to negotiate the world in which we live.

mass media—forms of communication designed to reach large audiences without direct face-to-face contact between those creating/conveying and receiving messages.

peer group—people who are approximately the same age, participate in the same day-to-day activities, and share a similar overall social status in society.

peer pressure—instances in which people feel directly or indirectly pressured to engage in behavior that meets the approval and expectations of peers and/or to fit in with what peers are doing. That pressure may be to smoke (or not smoke) cigarettes, to drink (or not drink) alcohol, and to engage (or not engage) in sexual activities.

primary group—a social group whose members share an identity, have face-to-face contact, and feel strong emotions for each other.

social media—the Internet and other digital technologies that allow people to interact or share information, personal creations, stories, and experiences with friends, family, acquaintances, even strangers.

CHAPTER 4

Module 4.1

achieved statuses—human created social categories and characteristics acquired through some combination of personal choice, effort, and ability.

ascribed statuses—human created social categories and characteristics that are the result of chance in that people exert no effort to obtain them. Birth order, race, sex, and age qualify as ascribed statuses.

group—two or more people interacting in largely predictable ways who share expectations about their purpose for being. Group members hold statuses and enact roles that relate to the group's purpose.

institutions—relatively stable and predictable social arrangements created and sustained by people that have emerged over time with the purpose of coordinating human activities to meet some need, such as food, shelter, or clothing. Institutions consist of statuses, roles, and groups.

master status—a status that takes on such great importance that it overshadows all other statuses a person occupies. That is, it shapes every aspect of life and dominates social interactions.

primary groups—groups characterized by face-to-face contact and by strong emotional ties among members who feel an allegiance to one another. Examples of primary groups include the family, military units, cliques, and peer groups.

role—the behavior expected of a status in relation to another status—for example, the role of brother in relationship to sister; the role of physician in relationship to patient.

role conflict—a predicament in which the roles associated with two or more distinct statuses that a person holds conflict in some way.

role expectations—norms about how a role should be enacted relative to other statuses.

role performance—the actual behavior of the person occupying a role.

role-set—the various role relationships with which someone occupying a status is involved.

role strain—a predicament in which there are contradictory or conflicting role expectations associated with a single status.

secondary groups—groups that consist of two or more people who interact for a specific purpose. Secondary group relationships are confined to a particular setting and specific tasks. Members relate to each other in terms of specific roles.

social status—a human-created and defined position in society such as female, teenager, patient, retired, sister, homosexual, and heterosexual.

social structure—a largely invisible system that coordinates human activities in broadly predictable ways. It shapes relationships and opportunities to connect to others; gives people an identity; puts up barriers to accessing resources and people; and determines the relative ease or difficulty with which those barriers can be broken.

status set—all the statuses any one person assumes.

Module 4.2

closely knit network—a social network in which all or most of the members know each other across a wide range of settings.

division of labor—work that is broken down into specialized tasks, each performed by a different set of workers trained to do that task. The labor and resources needed to manufacture products often come from many locations around the world.

loosely knit network—a social network in which all or most of the people in it do not know one another very well and, if some do know others, it is in a limited way.

social network—a web of closely to loosely knit social relationships linking people to one another.

strong ties—those people we most interact with, feel emotion for, confide in, and reciprocate favors.

weak ties—those people we know something about but to whom we are not especially close.

Module 4.3

bureaucracy—a completely rational organization—one that uses the most efficient means to achieve a valued goal.

coercive organizations—organizations that draw in people who have no choice but to participate.

formal dimension—the official, by-the-book way an organization should operate.

formal organizations—coordinating mechanisms that bring together people, resources, and technology and then direct human activity toward achieving a specific outcome such as maintaining order in a community (a police department) or fundraise (Race for the Cure).

ideal type—a deliberate simplification or caricature in that it exaggerates essential traits of something. Ideal does not mean desirable; an ideal is simply a standard against which real cases can be compared.

informal dimension—any aspect of an organization's operations that departs from the way the organization should officially operate.

utilitarian organizations—organizations that draw in those who in exchange for money offer their labor, seek to change status, look to acquire a skill, seek a treatment, request a service, or need a product.

voluntary organizations—organizations that draw in people who give time, talent, or money to address a human and community need or to achieve some other not-for-profit goal.

Module 4.4

comprehensive dyads—two people who have more than a superficial knowledge of each other's personality and life; they know each other in a variety of ways.

dyad—the smallest group, consisting of two people.

group—two or more people who interact and are subjected to expectations, obligations, and other pressures to identify with the group.

oligarchy—rule by the few, or the concentration of decision-making power in the hands of a few persons who hold the top positions in a hierarchy.

segmentalized dyad—a two-person group in which the parties know little about each other's personality and personal life; and what they do know is confined to a specific situation, such as the classroom, a hair salon, or other specialized setting.

triad—a three-person group that is sociologically significant because a third person added to a two-person group (a dyad) significantly alters the pattern of interaction between them.

Module 4.5

calculability—a feature of McDonaldisation that emphasizes numerical indicators by which customers and the service provider can judge the

amount of product and the speed of service (e.g., delivery within 30 minutes).

control—a feature of McDonaldization that emphasizes replacing employee labor with nonhuman technologies and/or requiring, even demanding, that employees and customers behave in a certain way.

efficiency—a feature of McDonaldization that emphasizes using the methods that will achieve a desired end in the shortest amount of time.

instrumental rational action—result-oriented behavior and practices that emphasize the most efficient methods for achieving some valued goal, regardless of the consequences. In the context of an industrial and capitalist society, *efficient* means the most cost-effective and time-saving way to achieve a goal.

iron cage of irrationality—the process by which supposedly rational systems produce irrationalities.

McDonaldization of society—the process by which the principles of the fast-food industry are coming to dominate other sectors of American society and the world.

predictability—a feature of McDonaldization that emphasizes the expectation that a service or product will be the same no matter where in the world or when (time of year, time of day) it is purchased.

rationalization—a process in which thought and action rooted in emotion, superstition, respect for mysterious forces, or tradition is replaced by instrumental rational action or means-to-ends thinking.

Module 4.6

alienation—a state of being in which humans lose control over the social world they have created and are dominated by the forces of their inventions.

Module 4.7

emotion work—the process by which people consciously manage their feelings by evoking an expected emotional state or suppressing an inappropriate emotional state.

emotional labor—work that requires employees to display and suppress specific emotions and/or manage customer/client emotions.

impression management—in social situations, as on a stage, people manage the setting, their dress, their words, and their gestures so

that they correspond to an impression they are trying to make.

CHAPTER 5

Module 5.1

self-fulfilling prophecy—a false definition of a situation that is assumed to be accurate. People behave, however, as if that false definition is true. In the end, the misguided behavior produces responses that confirm the false definition.

Thomas theorem—a theory stating that before people take action or respond to a situation, they quickly decide on and attach a subjective meaning to the situation, which then affects their response; in other words, “if men define situations as real they are real in their consequences” (Thomas and Thomas 1928, p. 572).

Module 5.2

attribution theory—a set of concepts and propositions that gives attention to the process by which people explain their behavior and that of others.

dispositional factors—things that people are believed to control, including personal qualities related to motivation, interest, mood, and effort.

situational factors—things believed to be outside a person’s control—such as the weather, bad luck, and another’s incompetence.

Module 5.3

back stage—areas out of sight of an audience, where individuals let their guard down and do things that would be inappropriate or unexpected in a front-stage setting.

dramaturgical sociology—a sociological perspective that studies social interactions emphasizing the ways in which those involved work to create, maintain, dismantle, and present a shared understanding of reality.

front stage—areas visible to an audience, where people feel compelled to present themselves in expected ways.

team—in dramaturgical sociology a group of people linked together in interaction for a common social purpose.

Module 5.4

ethnomethodology—an investigative and observational approach that focuses on how

people make sense of everyday social activities and experiences.

trust—the taken-for-granted assumption that in a given social encounter others share the same expectations and definitions of the situation and that they will act to meet those expectations.

Module 5.5

audience reference groups—those who are watching, listening, or otherwise giving attention to someone or something.

comparison reference groups—groups that provide people with a frame of reference for judging the fairness of a situation; rationalizing or justifying their actions; and assessing their performance in relation to others.

normative reference groups—groups that provide people with norms that they draw upon or consider when evaluating a behavior or a course of action.

reference group—any group whose standards people take into account when evaluating something about themselves or others, whether it be personal achievements, aspirations in life, or individual circumstances.

Module 5.6

ingroup—the group to which a person belongs, identifies, admires, and/or feels loyalty.

moral superiority—the belief that an ingroup's standards represent the only way such that there is no room for negotiation and no tolerance for other ways.

outgroup—any group to which a person does not belong. Obviously, one person's ingroup is another person's outgroup.

Module 5.7

phenomenology—an analytical approach that focuses on the everyday world and how people actively produce and sustain meaning.

routine—the usual ways of thinking and doing things.

typificatory schemes—systematic mental frameworks that allow people to place what they observe into pre-existing social categories with essential characteristics.

CHAPTER 6

Module 6.1

claims makers—those who articulate and promote claims and who tend to gain in some way

if the targeted audience accepts their claims as true.

deviance—any behavior or physical appearance that is socially challenged and/or condemned because it departs from the norms and expectations of some group.

norms—rules and expectations for the way people are supposed to behave, feel, and appear in a particular social situation.

Module 6.2

censorship—an action taken to prevent information believed to be sensitive, unsuitable, or threatening from reaching some audience.

formal sanctions—reactions backed by laws, rules, or policies specifying the conditions under which people should be rewarded or punished for specific behaviors.

group think—a phenomenon that occurs when a group under great pressure to take action achieves the illusion of consensus by putting pressure on its members to shut down discussion, dismiss alternative courses of action, suppress expression of doubt or dissent, dehumanize those against whom the group is taking action, and/or ignoring the moral consequences of their actions.

informal sanctions—spontaneous, unofficial expressions of approval not backed by the force of law or official policy.

mechanism of social control—strategies people use to encourage, often force, others to comply with social norms.

negative sanctions—expressions of disapproval for violating norms.

positive sanctions—expressions of approval for complying with norms.

sanctions—reactions of approval or disapproval to behavior that departs from or conforms to group norms.

surveillance—a mechanism of social control that involves monitoring the movements, conversations, and associations of those believed to be or about to be engaged in some wrongdoing and then intervening at appropriate moments.

Module 6.3

conformists—people who have not violated the rules of a group and are treated accordingly.

falsely accused—people who have not broken the rules but are treated as if they have.

master status of deviant—an identification that overrides most other statuses a person holds, such that he or she is identified first and foremost as a deviant.

primary deviants—those people whose rule breaking is viewed as understandable, incidental, or insignificant in light of some socially approved status they hold.

pure deviants—people who have broken the rules and are caught, punished, and labeled as outsiders.

secondary deviants—those whose rule breaking is treated as something so significant that it cannot be overlooked or explained away. The secondary deviant is a person who comes to be defined by his or her deviance.

secret deviants—people who have broken the rules but whose violation goes unnoticed or, if it is noticed, no sanctions are applied.

witch hunt—campaign to identify, investigate, and correct behavior that has been defined as undermining a group. The targeted behavior is rarely the real cause but is addressed to make a problem appear as if it is being managed.

Module 6.4

corporate crime—a crime committed by a corporation as a result of the way that it does business competing with other companies for market share and profits.

deviant subcultures—groups that are part of the larger society but whose members share norms and values favoring violation of that larger society's laws.

illegitimate opportunity structures—social settings and arrangements that offer people the opportunity to commit particular types of crime.

white-collar crime—crimes committed by people whose position of respectability and high social status allows them the opportunity to do so in the course of doing their jobs.

Module 6.5

anomie—a state of cultural chaos resulting from structural strain.

conformity—acceptance of cultural goals and the pursuit of those goals through legitimate means.

innovation—the acceptance of cultural goals but the rejection of legitimate means to achieve them.

rebellion—the rejection of both the valued goals and the legitimate means of attaining them.

retreatism—the rejection of both culturally valued goals and the legitimate means of achieving them.

ritualism—the rejection of the cultural goals but a rigid adherence to legitimate means of achieving them.

structural strain—a situation in which there is an imbalance between culturally valued goals and the legitimate means to obtain them. An imbalance exists when (1) the sole focus is on achieving valued goals by any means necessary, (2) people are unsure whether following the legitimate means will lead to success, or (3) there are not enough legitimate opportunities to satisfy demand.

Module 6.6

individuation of social problems—a point of view whereby people tend to view the “problem individuals” as the cause and “fixing” them as the solution rather than looking at the social system in which so-called deviant behavior or appearances are embedded.

medicalization—the process of defining a behavior as an illness or medical disorder and then treating it with a medical intervention.

Module 6.7

crime—an act that breaks a law.

law—a rule governing conduct created by those in positions of power and enforced by entities given the authority to do so, such as police. A law specifies the prohibited behavior, the categories of people to whom the law applies, and the punishment to be applied to violators.

prison-industrial complex—the corporations and agencies with an economic stake in building and supplying correctional facilities and in providing services.

Module 6.8

carceral culture—a social arrangement under which the society largely abandons physical and public punishment and replaces it with surveillance to control people's activities and thoughts.

culture of spectacle—a social arrangement by which punishment for crimes—torture, disfigurement, dismemberment, and execution—is delivered in public settings for all to see.

disciplinary society—a social arrangement that institutionalizes surveillance and fuels an anxiety about being watched—an anxiety that promotes socially desired behavior.

panopticon—philosopher Jeremy Bentham's design for the most efficient and rational prison—the perfect prison. (*Pan* means a complete view and *optic* means seeing.)

post-structuralism—a theoretical position within sociology that contends that the behavior-constraining powers of social structures are exaggerated. While post-structuralists do not dismiss

the constraining powers of social structures, they emphasize that people reshape and change these structures.

structuralism—a framework that portrays social structures as transcending those who constructed them. As such these structures have a coercive/constraining power over thought and behavior.

CHAPTER 7

Module 7.1

achieved statuses—social positions attained through some combination of choice, effort, and ability. Achieved statuses include earned wealth, income, occupation, and educational attainment.

ascribed statuses—social positions assigned on the basis of attributes people possess through no fault of their own—those attributes are acquired at birth, develop over time, or are otherwise possessed through no personal effort.

caste system—a system of stratification in which people are ranked according to ascribed statuses.

class system—a system of stratification in which people are ranked on the basis of their achievements related to merit, talent, ability, or past performance.

esteem—the reputation that someone occupying a particular status has acquired based on the opinion of those who know and observe him or her.

horizontal mobility—a change in one's social situation that does not involve a change in social status.

life chances—the probability that a person's life will follow a certain path and turn out a certain way. Life chances apply to virtually every aspect of life—the chances that someone will survive the first year after birth, complete high school, see a dentist twice a year, work while going to school, travel abroad, major in elementary education, own fifty or more pairs of shoes, or live a long life.

social inequality—a situation in which valued resources such as income and desired outcomes such as a college education are distributed unequally.

social mobility—movement from one social class to another.

social prestige—a level of respect or admiration for a status apart from any person who happens to occupy it.

social stratification—the systematic process of categorizing and ranking people on a scale of

social worth such that one's ranking affects life chances in unequal ways.

status value—a situation in which people who possess one characteristic are regarded and treated as more valuable or worthy than people who possess other characteristics.

vertical mobility—a change in a person's social situation that involves a gain or loss in social status.

Module 7.2

class—a person's overall economic and social status in a system of social stratification.

income—the money a person earns, usually on an annual basis through salary or wages.

negatively privileged property class—people completely lacking in skills, property, or employment, or who depend on seasonal or sporadic employment; they constitute the very bottom of the class system.

political parties—organizations that try to acquire power to influence social action. Parties are organized to represent people of a certain class or social status or with certain interests.

positively privileged property class—those who monopolize the purchase of the highest-priced consumer goods, have access to the most socially advantageous kinds of education, control the highest executive positions, own the means of production, and live on income from property and other investments.

power—the probability that one can exercise his or her will in the face of resistance.

status group—an amorphous group of persons held together by virtue of a lifestyle that has come to be “expected of all those who wish to belong to the circle” and by the level of social esteem and honor others accord them (Weber 1948, p. 187).

status symbols—visible markers of economic and social position and rank.

wealth—the combined value of a person's income and other material assets such as stocks, real estate, and savings minus debt.

Module 7.3

absolute poverty—a situation in which people lack the resources to satisfy the basic needs no person should be without. Absolute poverty is usually expressed as a living condition that falls below a certain threshold or minimum.

colonialism—a form of domination in which a foreign power uses superior military force to impose its political, economic, social, and cultural

institutions on an indigenous population so it can control their resources, labor, and markets.

decolonization—the process of gaining political independence from a colonizing power.

extreme wealth—the most excessive form of wealth, in which a very small proportion of people in the world have money, material possessions, and other assets (minus liabilities) in such abundance that a small fraction of it, if spent appropriately, could provide adequate food, safe water, sanitation, and basic health care for the 1 billion poorest people on the planet.

modernization—a process of economic, social, and cultural transformation in which a country “evolves” from an underdeveloped to a modern society.

neocolonialism—a new form of colonialism where more powerful foreign governments and foreign-owned businesses continue to exploit the resources and labor of the postcolonial peoples.

relative poverty—a situation that is measured not by some essential minimum but rather by comparing a particular situation against an average or advantaged situation. Thus one thinks not just about survival needs but about a lack of access to goods and services that have become defined as essential in the society in which they live.

Module 7.4

brain drain—the emigration from a country of the most educated and most talented people, including those trained to be managers, nurses, accountants, teachers, engineers, political reformers, and other institution builders.

Module 7.5

social inequality—the unequal access to and distribution of income, wealth, and other valued resources.

Module 7.7

inner-city poor—see “urban underclass.”

urban underclass—diverse groups of families and individuals residing in the inner city who are on the fringes of the American occupational system and as a result are in the most disadvantaged position of the economic hierarchy.

Module 7.8

critical social theory—a sociological perspective that examines human constructed categories and institutional practices with the aim of shedding light on the central issues, situation, and

experiences of groups differently placed within “specific political, social, and historic contexts characterized by injustice” (Collins 2006).

intersectionality—the interconnections among race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age (generation), nationality, and disability status that taken together profoundly shape life chances.

penalties—constraints on a person’s opportunities and choices, as well as the price paid for engaging in certain activities, appearances, or choices deemed inappropriate of someone in a particular category.

privilege—a special, often unearned, advantage or opportunity.

system of oppression—a system that empowers and privileges some categories of people while disempowering other categories. The act of disempowering includes marginalizing, silencing, or subordinating another.

CHAPTER 8

Module 8.1

race—human-constructed categories to which people are assigned. People in each category are connected by shared and *selected* ancestors, history, and physical features and are widely regarded as a distinct racial group.

racial common sense—ideas and assumptions people hold in common about race or a racial group believed to be so obvious or natural they need not be questioned.

racial formation—a theoretical viewpoint in which race is presented, not as a concrete biological category, but as a product of the system of racial classification.

Module 8.2

dominant ethnic group—the most advantaged ethnic group in a society; the ethnic group that possesses the greatest access to valued resources, including the power to create and maintain the system that gives it these advantages.

ethnic group—people who share, believe they share, or are believed by others to share a national origin; a common ancestry; a place of birth; or distinctive social traits (such as religion, style of dress, or language) that set them apart from other ethnic groups.

ethnic renewal—a situation in which someone discovers an ethnic identity, including the process by which an individual takes it upon himself to find, learn about, and claim an ethnic heritage.

hidden ethnicity—for members of a dominant ethnic group, a sense of self that is based on no awareness of an ethnic identity because their culture is considered normal, normative, or mainstream.

involuntary ethnicity—a umbrella ethnic category created by the government or another dominant group to which people from many different cultures and countries are assigned. That category becomes the label by which these diverse peoples are known and with which they are forced to identify.

selective forgetting—a process by which people forget, dismiss, or fail to pass on to their children an ancestral connection to one or more ethnicities.

Module 8.3

panethnicity—a broad catchall ethnic category in which people with distinct histories, cultures, languages, and identities are lumped together and viewed as belonging to that category (e.g., Hispanic/Latino).

system of racial classification—the systematic process by which people are divided into racial categories that are implicitly or explicitly ranked on a scale of social worth.

Module 8.4

advantaged—a situation in which the symbolic opportunities (positive images) and valued resources are disproportionately held by a particular group relative to another group.

involuntary minorities—those who did not choose to be a part of a country (nor did their ancestors); rather, they were forced to become part of it through enslavement, conquest, or colonization. Those of Native American, African, Mexican, and Hawaiian descent are examples.

life chances—a critical set of potential opportunities and advantages, including the chance to survive the first year of life, to grow to a certain height, to receive medical and dental care, to avoid a prison sentence, to graduate from high school, to live a long life, and so on.

minority groups—subpopulations within a society that are regarded and treated as inherently different from those in the mainstream. They are systematically excluded (whether consciously or unconsciously) from full participation in society and denied equal access to power, prestige, and wealth.

privileges—special taken-for-granted advantages and immunities or benefits enjoyed by a dominant group relative to minority groups.

Module 8.5

colonialism—a situation in which a foreign power uses superior military force to impose its political, economic, social, and cultural institutions on an indigenous population in order to control their resources, labor, and markets.

racism—a set of beliefs that uses biological or innate factors to explain and justify inequalities between racial and ethnic groups.

scientific racism—the use of faulty science to support systems of racial rankings and theories of social and cultural progress that placed whites in the most advanced ranks and stage of human evolution.

Module 8.6

discrimination—the intentional or unintentional unequal treatment of racial or ethnic groups without considering merit, ability, or past performance; discrimination blocks access to valued experiences, goods, and services.

ethnic cleansing—an extreme form of forced segregation in which a dominant group uses force and intimidation to remove people of a targeted racial or ethnic group from a geographic area, leaving it ethnically pure, or at least free of the targeted group. Ethnic cleansing also involves the destruction of cultural artifacts associated with the targeted groups, such as monuments, cemeteries, and churches.

genocide—the calculated and systematic large-scale destruction of a targeted racial or ethnic group that can take the form of killing an ethnic group en masse, inflicting serious bodily or psychological harm, creating intolerable living conditions, preventing births, “diluting” racial or ethnic lines through rape and forced births, or forcibly removing children to live with another group.

individual discrimination—behavior that blocks another’s opportunities or does harm to life or property.

institutionalized discrimination—the established, customary way of doing things in society—the unchallenged laws, rules, policies, and day-to-day practices established by a dominant group that keep minority groups in disadvantaged positions.

nonprejudiced discriminators—fair-weather liberals or people who accept the creed of equal opportunity but discriminate because they simply fail to consider discriminatory consequences or because discriminating gives them some advantage.

nonprejudiced nondiscriminators—all-weather liberals or people who accept the creed of

equal opportunity, and their conduct conforms to that creed.

prejudice—a rigid and, more often than not, unfavorable judgment about a category of people that is applied to *anyone* who belongs to that category.

prejudiced discriminators—active bigots or people who reject the notion of equal opportunity and profess a moral right, even a duty, to discriminate. They derive significant social and psychological gains from the conviction that anyone from their racial or ethnic group is superior to other such groups.

prejudiced nondiscriminators—timid bigots or people who reject the creed of equal opportunity but refrain from discrimination, primarily because they fear possible sanctions or being labeled as racists. Timid bigots rarely express their true opinions about racial and ethnic groups, and often use code words such as *inner city* or *those people* to camouflage their true feelings.

redlining—systematic and institutionalized practices that deny, limit, or increase the cost of services to neighborhoods because residents are low-income and/or minority. Redlining can involve financial services (loans, checking accounts, credit cards, mortgages), insurance, health care, and grocery stores.

segregation—the physical and/or social separation of people by race or ethnicity. It may be legally enforced (*de jure*) or socially enforced without the support of laws (*de facto*).

selective perception—a situation where prejudiced persons notice only the behaviors that support their stereotypes and then use those observations to support the stereotypes they hold.

self-fulfilling prophecy—a point of view that begins with a false definition of a situation that is assumed to be accurate. People behave as if that definition were true so that the misguided behavior produces responses that confirm the false definition.

stereotypes—generalizations about people who belong to a particular category that do not change even in the face of contradictory evidence. Stereotypes give holders an illusion that they know the other group and that they possess the right to control images of the other group.

Module 8.7

absorption assimilation—the process by which a subordinate ethnic, racial, and/or cultural group adapts to the ways of the dominant group, which sets the standards to which they must adjust.

assimilation—a process by which ethnic, racial, and/or cultural distinctions between groups disappear because one group is absorbed, sometimes by force, into another group's culture or because two cultures blend to form a new culture.

desegregation—the process of ending legally sanctioned racial separation and discrimination, including removing legal barriers to interaction and offering legal guarantees of protection and equal opportunity.

integration—a situation in which two or more racial groups interact in a previously segregated setting; it may be court-ordered, legally mandated, or the natural outcome of people crossing the “color line” once legal barriers have been removed.

melting pot assimilation—a process by which previously separate groups accept many new behaviors and values from one another, intermarry, procreate, and identify with a blended culture.

pluralism—a situation in which different racial and ethnic groups coexist in harmony; have equal social standing; maintain their unique cultural ties, communities, and identities; and participate in the economic and political life of the larger society. These groups also possess an allegiance to the country in which they live and its way of life.

virtual integration—a perception that racial integration exists derived from simply seeing other racial groups on television and in advertisements; it gives “the sensation of having meaningful, repeated contact with other racial groups without actually having it” (Lynch 2007).

CHAPTER 9

Module 9.1

femininity—traits believed to be characteristic of females.

gender—the socially created and learned distinctions that specify the physical, behavioral, and mental and emotional traits characteristic of males and females.

gender ideals—a standard for masculinity or femininity against which real cases can be compared. A gender ideal is at best a caricature, in that it exaggerates the characteristics that are believed to make someone the so-called perfect male or female.

intersexed—people with some mixture of male and female primary sex characteristics.

masculinity—traits believed to be characteristic of males.

primary sex characteristics—the anatomical traits essential to reproduction.

secondary sex characteristics—physical traits not essential to reproduction such as breast development, quality of voice, distribution of facial and body hair, and skeletal form, that supposedly result from the action of so-called male (androgen) and female (estrogen) hormones.

sex—a distinction based on primary sex characteristics.

transgender—people whose primary sex characteristics do not match the gender they perceive themselves to be.

Module 9.2

gender polarization—the process by which being male or female increases the probability that a person's life will be a certain way. Gender, or ideas about what men and women should be, shapes every aspect of life, including how people dress, the time they wake up in the morning, what they do after they wake up, the social roles they take on, the things they worry about, and even ways of expressing emotion and experiencing sexual attraction.

gendered—a situation in which institutions have established pattern of segregating the sexes, empowering one sex and not the other, and/or subordinating one sex relative to the other such that gender systematically shapes the experiences, constraints, and opportunities of the participating men and women.

life chances—the probability that an individual's life will turn out a certain way. Life chances apply to virtually every aspect of life—the chances that a person will be an airline pilot, play T-ball, major in elementary education, spend an hour or more getting ready for work or school, or live a long life.

structural constraints—the established and customary rules, policies, and day-to-day practices that affect a person's life chances.

Module 9.3

gender gap—the disparity in opportunities available to men and women relative to the other.

gender stratification—the extent to which opportunities and resources are unequally distributed between men and women.

glass ceiling—a barrier that prevents women from rising past a certain level in an organization, especially for women who work in male-dominated workplaces and occupations. The term applies to women who have the ability and qualifications to advance but who are not

well-connected to those who are in a position to advocate for or mentor them.

glass escalator—the invisible upward movement that puts men in positions of power, even within female-dominated occupations, as when management singles out men for special attention and advancement.

patriarchy—an arrangement in which men have systematic power over women in public and private (family) life.

Module 9.4

agents of socialization—the significant people, groups, and institutions that act to shape our gender identity—whether we identify as male, female, or something in between. Agents of socialization include family, classmates, peers, teachers, religious leaders, popular culture, and mass media.

gender roles—the behavior and activities expected of someone who is male or female. These expectations channel male and female energies in different gender-appropriate directions.

Module 9.5

biological sex—the physiological, including genetic, characteristics associated with being male or female.

commercialization of sexual ideals—the process of introducing products into the market using advertising campaigns that promise consumers they will achieve a sexual ideal if they buy and use the products.

commodification—a process by which economic value is assigned to things not previously thought of in economic terms such as an idea, a natural resource (water, a view of nature), or a state of being (youth, sexuality).

commodification of sexuality—a process by which companies create products for people to buy with the promise that those products will allow them to express themselves as sexual beings or elicit a sexual response from others.

gender identity—the awareness of being a man or woman, of being neither, or something in between (gender identity also involves the ways one chooses to hide or express that identity).

gender role—the cultural norms that guide people in enacting what is considered to be feminine and masculine behavior.

heteronormativity—a normative system that presents the gendered heterosexual nuclear family as the ideal and departures from that system as deviant, even threatening.

sexuality—all the ways people experience and express themselves as sexual beings. The study of

sexuality considers the range of social activities, behaviors, and thoughts that generate sexual sensations and experiences and that allow for sexual expression.

sexual orientation—“an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes. Sexual orientation also refers to a person’s sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions” (American Psychiatric Association, 2009).

sexual scripts—responses and behaviors that people learn, in much the same way that actors learn lines for a play, to guide them in sexual activities and encounters. These scripts are gendered in that males and females learn different scripts about the sex-appropriate responses and behavioral choices open to them in specific situations.

transgender—the label applied to those who feel that their inner sense of being a man or woman does not match their anatomical sex, so they behave and/or dress to actualize their gender identity.

Module 9.6

feminism—a perspective that seeks to understand the position of women in society relative to men and that advocates equal opportunity.

homophobia—an irrational fear held by some heterosexuals that a same-sex person will make a sexual advance toward them. It also refers to a fear of being in close contact with someone of the same sex.

misandry—sexism directed at men that is so extreme that it involves a hatred of those in that category.

misogyny—sexism directed at women that is so extreme it involves a hatred of those in that category.

sexism—the belief that one sex—and by extension, one gender—is innately superior to another, justifying unequal treatment of the sexes.

Module 9.7

female infanticide—the targeted abortion of female fetuses because of a cultural preference for males and corresponding low status assigned to females.

CHAPTER 10

Module 10.1

capitalism—an economic system in which the raw materials and the means of producing and

distributing goods and services are privately owned.

economic systems—the social institutions that coordinate human activity to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services.

goods—any products that are extracted from the earth, manufactured, or grown—corn, clothing, petroleum, automobiles, coal, and computers are just a few examples.

services—activities performed for others that result in no tangible product, such as theater productions, transportation, financial advice, medical care, spiritual counseling, and education.

socialism—an economic system in which raw materials and the means of producing and distributing goods and services are collectively owned. That is, public ownership—rather than private ownership—is an essential characteristic of this system.

welfare state—a term that applies to an economic system that is a hybrid of capitalism and socialism.

Module 10.2

primary sector—economic activities that generate or extract raw materials from the natural environment. Mining, fishing, growing crops, raising livestock, drilling for oil, and planting and harvesting forest products are examples.

secondary sector—economic activities that transform raw materials from the primary sector into manufactured goods such as computers and cars.

tertiary sector—economic activities related to delivering services, such as health care or entertainment, and to creating and distributing information, such as books or data.

Module 10.3

externality costs—hidden costs of using, making, or disposing of a product that are not figured into the price of the product or paid for by the producer. Such costs include those associated with cleaning up the environment and with treating injured and chronically ill workers, consumers, and others.

multinational corporation—an enterprise that owns, controls, or licenses facilities in countries other than the one in which it is headquartered.

Module 10.4

authority—legitimate power, or power that people believe is just and proper. A leader has authority to the extent that people view him or her as being legitimately entitled to it.

charismatic authority—legitimate power that is grounded in exceptional and exemplary personal qualities. Charismatic leaders are obeyed because their followers believe in and are attracted irresistibly to the leader’s vision.

legal-rational authority—legitimate form of power that derives from a system of impersonal and formal rules that specify the qualifications for occupying an administrative or judicial position; the individual holding that position has the power to command others to act in specific ways.

lobbyists—people whose job it is to solicit and persuade state and federal legislators to create legislation and vote for bills that favor the interests of the group they represent. Lobbyists can work for corporations, a private individual, or the public interest.

political action committees (PACs)—special-interest groups that raise money to be donated to the political candidates who seem most likely to support their economic, social, and/or political needs and interests. There are more than 4,500 registered PACs.

political system—the institution that regulates the access to and use of power that is essential to articulating and realizing individual, local, regional, national, international, or global interests and agendas.

power—the probability that an individual can achieve his or her will, even against opposition.

power elite—those few people who occupy such lofty positions in the social structure of leading institutions that their decisions affect millions, even billions, of people worldwide.

special-interest groups—groups consisting of people who share an interest in a particular economic, political, or other social issue and who form an organization or join an existing organization to influence public opinion and government policy.

traditional authority—a form of power grounded in the sanctity of time-honored norms that govern how someone comes to hold a powerful position, such as chief, king, queen, or emperor. Usually the person inherits that position by virtue of being born into a family that has held power for some time.

Module 10.5

authoritarian—a form of government in which no separation of powers exists; a single person (a dictator), a group (a family, the military, a single party), or a social class holds all power. No official ideology projects a vision of the “perfect” society or guides the government’s political or economic policies.

government—the organizational structure that directs and coordinates people’s involvement in the political activities of a country or some other territory, such as a city, county, or state. It is also the mechanism through which people gain power and exercise authority over others.

monarchy—a form of government in which the power is in the hands of a leader (known as a monarch) who reigns over a state or territory, usually for life and by hereditary right. Typically, the monarch expects to pass the throne on to someone who is designated as the heir, usually a firstborn son.

representative democracy—a form of government in which power is vested in citizens who vote into office those candidates they believe can best represent their interests.

theocracy—a form of government in which political authority rests in the hands of religious leaders or a theologically trained elite group. The primary purpose of a theocracy is to uphold divine laws in its policies and practices. Thus, there is no legal separation of church and state. Government policies and laws correspond to religious principles and laws.

totalitarianism—a form of government characterized by (1) a single ruling party led by a dictator, (2) an unchallenged official ideology that defines a vision of the “perfect” society and the means to achieve that vision, (3) a system of social control that suppresses dissent, and (4) centralized control over the media and the economy.

Module 10.6

empire—a group of countries under the direct or indirect control of a foreign power or government that acts to shape the political, economic, and cultural life of the people over which it has power.

hegemony—a process by which a power maintains its dominance over foreign entities.

imperialistic power—a power that exerts control and influence over foreign entities either through military force or through political policies and economic pressure. Imperialists believe that their cultural, political, or economic superiority justifies control over other entities. From the imperialist’s point of view, such control is for the greater good of those conquered and for the planet as a whole.

militaristic power—a political entity, such as a country, that believes military strength, and the willingness to use it, is the source of national and even global security. Usually a peace-through-strength doctrine—peace depends on military

strength and force—is cited to justify military buildups and interventions on foreign soil.

military-industrial complex—a relationship between those who declare, fund, and manage wars (the Department of Defense, the office of the president, and Congress) and corporations that make the equipment and supplies needed to wage war.

Module 10.7

core economies—the wealthiest, most highly diversified economies in the world with strong, stable governments.

global interdependence—a situation in which human interactions and relationships transcend national borders and in which social problems within any one country—such as unemployment, drug addiction, water shortages, natural disasters, or the search for national security—are shaped by events taking place outside the country, indeed in various parts of the globe.

globalization—the ever-increasing flow of goods, services, money, people, technology, information, and other cultural items across political borders.

peripheral economies—economies built around a few commodities or even a single commodity, such as coffee, peanuts, or tobacco, or on a natural resource, such as oil, tin, copper, or zinc.

semiperipheral economies—economies characterized by moderate wealth (but extreme inequality) and moderately diverse system of production and consumption. Semiperipheral economies exploit peripheral economies and are in turn exploited by core economies.

CHAPTER 11

Module 11.1

endogamy—norms requiring or encouraging people to choose a partner from the same social category as their own—for example, a partner of the same race, sex, ethnicity, religion, or social class.

exogamy—norms requiring or encouraging people to choose a partner from a social category other than their own—for example, to choose a partner outside their immediate family who is of the other sex or of another race.

family—a social institution that binds people together through blood, marriage, law, and/or social norms.

Module 11.2

aging population—a society in which the percentage of the population that is 65 and older is increasing relative to other age groups.

life expectancy—the average number of years after birth a person can expect to live.

total fertility—the average number of children that a woman bears in her lifetime.

Module 11.4

sexual stratification—the system societies use to rank males, females, and those who do not fit into the binary age cohorts scheme on a scale of social worth such that the ranking affects life chances in unequal ways.

Module 11.5

generation—a cohort composed of people who are born at a particular time in history and/or separated from other categories by time. A generation is distinguished from others by its cultural disposition (dress, language, preferences for songs, activities, entertainment), posture (walk, dance, the way the body is held), access to resources, and socially expected privileges, responsibilities, and duties.

Module 11.6

caregiver burden—the situation in which caregivers believe that their emotional balance, physical health, social life, and financial status suffer because of their caregiver role.

caregivers—those who provide service to people who, because of physical impairment, a chronic condition, or cognitive impairment cannot do certain activities without help.

disability—a state of being that society has imposed on those with certain impairments because of how inventions have been designed and social activities have been organized to exclude the impaired but accommodate others.

formal care—caregiving provided, usually for a fee, by credentialed professionals (whether in the person's home or some other facility).

impairment—a physical or mental condition that interferes with someone's ability to perform a major life activity that the average person can perform without technical or human assistance or without changing the physical environment around them (e.g., a person confined to a wheelchair could cook if the stove had not been designed to accommodate only those who can stand).

informal care—caregiving that family members, neighbors, and friends provide in a home setting.

tyranny of the normal—a point of view that measures differences against what is thought to

be normal and that assumes those with impairments fall short in other ways.

Module 11.7

sociological ambivalence—simultaneous positive and negative feelings toward a person or situation arising out of socially sanctioned inequalities that generate tensions and conflicts in relationships.

CHAPTER 12

Module 12.1

credential society—a situation in which employers use educational credentials as screening devices for sorting through a pool of largely anonymous applicants.

education—any experiences that train, discipline, and shape the mental and physical potentials of the maturing person.

formal education—a deliberate, planned effort to impart specific skills or information; a systematic process (for example, military boot camp, on-the-job training, or smoking cessation classes) in which someone designs the educating experiences.

informal education—a spontaneous, unplanned, naturally occurring way of learning.

schooling—a program of formal, systematic instruction that takes place primarily in classrooms but also includes extracurricular activities and out-of-classroom assignments.

Module 12.2

curriculum—the subject content, assessment methods, and activities involved in teaching and learning for a specific course, grade, or degree.

formal curriculum—the content of the various academic subjects—mathematics, science, English, reading, physical education, and so on.

hidden curriculum—the teaching method, type of assignments, kinds of tests, tone of the teacher's voice, attitudes of classmates, the number of students absent, the frequency of teacher absences, and the criteria teachers use to assign grades. These so-called extraneous factors convey messages to students not only about the value of the subject but also about the values of society, the place of learning in their lives, and their role in society.

tracking—also known as ability grouping; a sifting and sorting mechanism by which students are assigned to separate instructional groups within a single classroom, programs such as college

preparatory versus general studies, or advanced placement, honors, or remedial classes.

Module 12.3

adolescent status system—a classification system in which participation in some activities results in popularity, respect, acceptance, and praise, and participation in other activities results in isolation, ridicule, exclusion, disdain, and disrespect.

Module 12.5

church—a group whose members hold the same beliefs regarding what is considered sacred and profane, share rituals, and gather in body or spirit at agreed-on times to share and reaffirm their commitment to those beliefs and practices.

false consciousness—with regard to religion, a point of view in which oppressed individuals or groups accept the economic, political, and social arrangements that constrain their chances in life because they are promised compensation for their suffering in the next world.

predestination—the belief that God has foreordained all things, including the salvation or damnation of individual souls.

profane—everything that is not considered sacred, including things opposed to the sacred (such as the unholy, the irreverent, and the blasphemous) and things that stand apart from the sacred (such as the ordinary, the commonplace, the unconsecrated, and the bodily).

religion—a system of shared rituals and beliefs about the sacred and the profane that bind together a community of worshipers.

rituals—rules that govern how people behave in the presence of the sacred. These rules may take the form of instructions detailing the appropriate day(s) and occasions for worship, acceptable dress, and wording of chants, songs, and prayers.

sacred—everything that is regarded as extraordinary and that inspires in believers deep and absorbing sentiments of awe, respect, mystery, and reverence. Sacred things may include objects, living creatures, elements of nature, places, states of consciousness, holy days, ceremonies, and other activities.

this-worldly asceticism—a belief that people are instruments of divine will and that God determines and directs their activities. Calvinists glorified God when they accepted a task assigned to them, carried it out in an exemplary and disciplined fashion, and did not indulge in the fruits of their labor.

Module 12.6

civil religion—an institutionalized set of beliefs about a nation’s past, present, and future and a corresponding set of rituals. These beliefs and rituals can take on a sacred quality and elicit intense feelings of patriotism.

fundamentalism—a belief in the timelessness of sacred writings and a belief that such writings apply to all kinds of environments.

secularization—a process by which religious influences on thought and behavior are gradually removed or reduced. More specifically, it is a process by which some element of society, once part of a religious sphere, separates from its religious or spiritual connection or influences.

Module 12.7

cultural capital—a person’s nonmaterial resources, including educational credentials, the kinds of knowledge acquired, social skills, and aesthetic tastes.

economic capital—a person’s material resources—wealth, land, money.

habitus—a frame of mind that has internalized the objective reality of society. This objective reality becomes the mental filter that structures people’s perceptions, experiences, responses, and actions. It is through the habitus that the social world is understood and that people acquire a sense of place and a point of view that informs how they interpret their own and others’ actions.

social reproduction—the perpetuation of unequal relations such that almost everyone, including the disadvantaged, comes to view this inequality as normal and legitimate and tends to shrug off or resist calls for change.

CHAPTER 13

Module 13.1

hydrocarbon society—a society in which the use of fossil fuels shapes virtually every aspect of people’s personal and social lives.

information explosion—an unprecedented increase in the amount of stored and transmitted data and messages in all media (including electronic, print, radio, and television).

planned obsolescence—a strategy of producing goods such that they are disposable after a single use (paper cups), have a shorter life cycle than the industry is capable of producing (appliances), or can quickly be replaced by new upgraded models.

social change—any significant alteration, modification, or transformation in the way social activities and human relationships are organized.

technology—knowledge, tools, applications, and other inventions used in ways that allow people to adapt to and exercise control over their surroundings. Technology can be material and/or conceptual.

Module 13.2

agrarian society—a society that emerged with the invention of the plow 6,000 years ago, triggering a revolution in agriculture. The plow made it possible to cultivate large fields and increase food production to a level that could support thousands to millions of people, many of whom lived in cities and/or were part of empires.

carbon footprint—the impact a person makes on the environment by virtue of his or her lifestyle. That impact is measured in terms of fossil fuels consumed or units of carbon dioxide emitted from burning that fuel.

horticulture societies—societies organized around the use of hand tools such as hoes to work the soil and digging sticks to punch holes in the ground into which seeds are dropped. Horticultural peoples grow crops rather than gather food and employ slash-and-burn technology in which they clear land of forest and vegetation to make fields for growing crops and grazing animals. When the land becomes exhausted, people move on, repeating the process.

hunting and gathering societies—societies that do not possess the technology that allows them to create surplus wealth; people subsist on wild animals and vegetation. Hunters and gatherers do not reside in a fixed location; they are always on the move, securing food and other subsistence items. A typical hunting and gathering society is composed of 45 to 100 members related by blood or marriage.

industrial societies—societies that rely on mechanization or on externally powered machines to subsist. That power, derived from burning wood and fossil fuels, allows humans to produce food, extract resources, and manufacture goods at revolutionary speeds and on an unprecedented scale. Mechanization allowed a small percentage of the population to grow the food needed to sustain a society that could encompass hundreds of millions of people.

pastoral societies—societies that rely on domesticated herd animals to subsist. Pastoralism was adopted by people living in deserts and other regions in which vegetation was limited. Domesticating animals allowed people to produce

surplus wealth or more milk and meat than they needed to subsist.

post-industrial societies—societies that rely on intellectual technologies of telecommunications and computers, which encompass four interdependent revolutionary innovations:

(1) electronics that allow for incredible speed of data transmission and calculations, which can be made in nanoseconds; (2) miniaturization or the drastic size reduction of electronic devices, resulting in computers, cell phones, and iPods becoming thinner, sleeker, and smaller; (3) digitalization, which allows voice, text, image, and data to be integrated and transmitted with equal efficiency; and (4) software, the programs that enable computers to operate, perform a variety of tasks, and generate a variety of simulated experiences.

subsist—to meet basic needs for human survival.

surplus wealth—a situation in which the amount of available food items and other products exceed that which is required to subsist.

Module 13.3

crude rate—the annual number of incidents (e.g., births, deaths, or in- and out-migrations) per every 1,000 people in a country. To calculate a crude rate, divide the number of incidents that occurred over a year by the population size at the start of that year; then multiply that result by 1,000. That figure reveals how many incidents have occurred per 1,000 people.

demographic gap—the difference between the birth and death rates.

demographic trap—the point at which population growth overwhelms the environment's carrying capacity.

migration—the movement of people from one country to another or from one geographical area to another.

mortality crisis—violent fluctuation in the death rate caused by war, famine, or epidemics.

over-urbanization—a situation in which urban misery—poverty, unemployment, housing shortages, and insufficient infrastructure—is exacerbated by an influx of unskilled, illiterate, and poverty-stricken rural migrants who have come to the cities out of desperation.

positive checks—events that increase deaths, including natural disasters, epidemics of infectious and parasitic diseases, war, and famine.

theory of the demographic transition—a theoretical perspective that postulates that a country's birth and death rates are linked to its level of industrial or economic development and that the so-called developing countries will eventually achieve birth and death rates like those of Western Europe and North America; in fact, to get there they would follow the same pattern as industrialized countries.

Module 13.4

objective deprivation—a state of being characteristic of those who are the worst off or most disadvantaged—the people with the lowest incomes, the least education, the lowest social status, the fewest job opportunities, and so on.

relative deprivation—a social condition that is measured not by objective standards but rather by comparing one group's situation with the situations of groups who are more advantaged. Someone earning an annual income of \$100,000 is not deprived in any objective sense. He or she may, however, feel deprived relative to someone making \$300,000 or more per year.

social movement—a phenomenon in which a substantial number of people organize to make a change, resist a change, or undo a change to some area of society.

Module 13.5

treadmill of production—a term used to describe the ceaseless increases in production and, by extension, consumption that are needed to sustain the global economy's success, which is measured by increased profits.

environmental injustice—unequal exposure to environmental hazards based on race or socioeconomic status.

CHAPTER 14

Module 14.1

anthropocentric—a point of view that puts humans at the center of analysis and excludes animals and their realities from serious consideration.

instinct—behavior that is not learned but part of one's nature and elicited by reflex.

significant symbols—gestures or sounds that must be interpreted before a response is made.

Module 14.2

ethnographic methods—a holistic means of studying people in the places/settings where they live or carry out the activities of interest.

corporate construction of childhood—a term that refers to the reach, power, and influence of

a small number of corporations that sell and/or market most of the things children buy or want their parents to buy for them.

commercialization of childhood—a process by which children are transformed into consumers beginning at birth, and by adolescence, their lives and activities revolve around commodities, including brand name products and the latest trendiest commercial music, films, and lingo.

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