
ESSENTIALS OF

# SOCIOLOGY

A Down-To-Earth Approach

Pearson James M. Henslin

# Essentials of Sociology

## A Down-to-Earth Approach

**Thirteenth Edition**

**James M. Henslin**
*Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville*

330 Hudson Street, NY NY 10013

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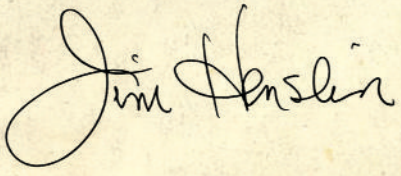
**To my fellow sociologists,**
who do such creative research on social life and who communicate the sociological imagination to generations of students. With my sincere admiration and appreciation.



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# Guide to Social Maps

# To the Student ... from the Author

**WELCOME TO SOCIOLOGY!** I've loved sociology since I was in my teens, and I hope you enjoy it, too. Sociology is fascinating because it is about human behavior, and many of us find that it holds the key to understanding social life.

If you like to watch people and try to figure out why they do what they do, you will like sociology. Sociology pries open the doors of society so you can see what goes on behind them. *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach* stresses how profoundly our society and the groups to which we belong influence us. Social class, for example, sets us on a particular path in life. For some, the path leads to more education, more interesting jobs, higher income, and better health, but for others it leads to dropping out of school, dead-end jobs, poverty, and even a higher risk of illness and disease. These paths are so significant that they affect our chances of making it to our first birthday, as well as of getting in trouble with the police. They even influence our satisfaction in marriage, the number of children we will have—and whether or not we will read this book in the first place.

When I took my first course in sociology, I was "hooked." Seeing how marvelously my life had been affected by these larger social influences opened my eyes to a new world, one that has been fascinating to explore. I hope that you will have this experience, too.

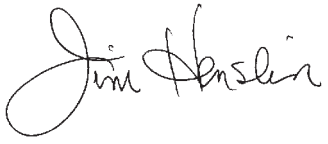
From how people become homeless to how they become presidents, from why people commit suicide to why women are discriminated against in every society around the world—all are part of sociology. This breadth, in fact, is what makes sociology so intriguing. We can place the sociological lens on broad features of society, such as social class, gender, and race–ethnicity, and then immediately turn our focus on the smaller, more intimate level. If we look at two people interacting—whether quarreling or kissing—we see how these broad features of society are being played out in their lives.

We aren't born with instincts. Nor do we come into this world with preconceived notions of what life should be like. At birth, we have no concepts of race–ethnicity, gender, age, or social class. We have no idea, for example, that people "ought" to act in certain ways because they are male or female. Yet we all learn such things as we grow up in our society. Uncovering the "hows" and the "whys" of this process is also part of what makes sociology so fascinating.

One of sociology's many pleasures is that as we study life in groups (which can be taken as a definition of sociology), whether those groups are in some far-off part of the world or in some nearby corner of our own society, we gain new insights into who we are and how we got that way. As we see how *their* customs affect *them,* the effects of our own society on us become more visible.

This book, then, can be part of an intellectual adventure, for it can lead you to a new way of looking at your social world—and in the process, help you to better understand both society and yourself.

I wish you the very best in college—and in your career afterward. It is my sincere desire that *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach* will contribute to that success.



*James M. Henslin*
*Department of Sociology*
*Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville*

P.S. I enjoy communicating with students, so feel free to comment on your experiences with this text. You can write me at henslin@aol.com

# To the Instructor ... from the Author

**REMEMBER WHEN YOU FIRST GOT "HOOKED"** on sociology, how the windows of perception opened as you began to see life-in-society through the sociological perspective? For most of us, this was an eye-opening experience. This text is designed to open those windows onto social life, so students can see clearly the vital effects of group membership on their lives. Although few students will get into what Peter Berger calls "the passion of sociology," we at least can provide them the opportunity.

To study sociology is to embark on a fascinating process of discovery. We can compare sociology to a huge jigsaw puzzle. Only gradually do we see how the smaller pieces fit together. As we begin to see the interconnections, our perspective changes as we shift our eyes from the many small, disjointed pieces to the whole that is being formed. Of all the endeavors we could have entered, we chose sociology because of the ways in which it joins the "pieces" of society together and the challenges it poses to "ordinary" thinking. It is our privilege to share with students this process of awareness and discovery called the sociological perspective.

As instructors of sociology, we have set ambitious goals for ourselves: to teach both social structure and social interaction and to introduce students to the sociological literature—both the classic theorists and contemporary research. As we accomplish this, we would also like to enliven the classroom, encourage critical thinking, and stimulate our students' sociological imagination. Although formidable, these goals *are* attainable. This book is designed to help you reach them. Based on many years of frontline (classroom) experience, its subtitle, *A Down-to-Earth Approach*, was not proposed lightly. My goal is to share the fascination of sociology with students and in doing so to make your teaching more rewarding.

Over the years, I have found the introductory course especially enjoyable. It is singularly satisfying to see students' faces light up as they begin to see how separate pieces of their world fit together. It is a pleasure to watch them gain insight into how their social experiences give shape to even their innermost desires. This is precisely what this text is designed to do—to stimulate your students' sociological imagination so they can better perceive how the "pieces" of society fit together—and what this means for their own lives.

Filled with examples from around the world as well as from our own society, this text helps to make today's multicultural, global society come alive for students. From learning how the international elite carve up global markets to studying the intimacy of friendship and marriage, students can see how sociology is the key to explaining contemporary life—and their own place in it.

In short, this text is designed to make your teaching easier. There simply is no justification for students to have to wade through cumbersome approaches to sociology. I am firmly convinced that the introduction to sociology should be enjoyable and that the introductory textbook can be an essential tool in sharing the discovery of sociology with students.

## What's New in This 13th Edition?

Because sociology is about social life and we live in a changing global society, this new edition of *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach* reflects the national and global changes that engulf us, as well as presents new sociological research. An indication of the thoroughness of the preparation that went into this 13th edition is the text's hundreds of new citations. This edition also has more than **435** instructional photos. I have either selected or taken each of the photos. By tying the photos and their captions directly into the text, they become part of the students' learning experience.

I am especially pleased with **Applying Sociology to Your Life,** a new feature introduced in this edition. Although *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach* is well-known for how it shows students the relevance of sociology to their lives, this emphasis has been amplified in this 13th edition. This new feature focuses explicitly on how sociology applies to the student's life. It is one thing to say to students that sociological research on bureaucracy is relevant because they might work in a bureaucracy, but quite another to show students how they can use impression management to get ahead in a bureaucracy. It is also one thing to review with students the average salaries according to college major, but quite another to show students how they can use sociology to increase their own salaries. We can point out what sociologists have found when they studied the glass ceiling, but sociology is much more relevant for our students if we can show them how they can use sociology to break through the glass ceiling. These three examples are part of the fourteen items that make up this new feature, *Applying Sociology to Your Life*.

And updates? As with previous editions, you can expect that they run throughout this new edition. The updates are too numerous to mention, but to give you an indication of how extensively this edition is revised, following is a list of the new topics, boxed features, tables, and figures.

## Chapter 1

**Figure 1.1** Suicide of Americans ages 18 to 24
**Figure 1.6** Western Marriage: Husband–Wife Relationship

## Chapter 2

**Sociology and Technology: The Shifting Landscape:** The End of Human Culture? Artificial Intelligence and Super-Smart Computers
**Topic:** In the 1600s, killing cats was part of festive celebrations

## Chapter 3

**Topic:** Ekman's conclusions on the universality of the expression of human emotions is challenged by research among the Trobianders of Papua New Guinea.
**Topic:** Negative effects of nurseries depend on the age at which children are placed in day care

## Chapter 4

**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** Getting Promoted: Making Impression Management Work for You
**Topic:** *Transgender* as a master status
**Topic:** Students learn more from attractive teachers

## Chapter 5

**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** The New World of Work: How to Keep a Paycheck Coming in the New Global Marketplace
**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** Do Your Social Networks Perpetuate Social Inequality?
**Sociology and Technology: The Shifting Landscape:** Virtual Reality and Diversity Training
**Topic:** Investigation of JonBenet Ramsey as an example of groupthink
**Topic:** The experience and perspective of white males are being added to diversity training

## Chapter 6

**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** How Does Social Control Theory Apply to You?
**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** How Do You Use Techniques of Neutralization to Protect Your Self Concept?
**Topic:** In murder trials, if the victim is white and the accused is black, juries are more likely to impose the death penalty than if the accused is white and the victim is black

## Chapter 7

**Topic:** Face-recognition software can turn the police's body cameras into surveillance machines, able to identify everyone an officer passes on the sidewalk

## Chapter 8

**Figure 8.7 Physical Health, by Income:** People Who Have Difficulty with Everyday Physical Activities
**Figure 8.8 Mental Health, by Income:** Feelings of Sadness, Hopelessness, or Worthlessness
**Figure 8.10** An Overview of Poverty in the United States
**Figure 8.13** Poverty and Family Structure
**Figure 8.14** Poverty and Race-Ethnicity
**Figure 8.15** Poverty and Age
**Topic:** The 20 richest Americans have more wealth than the bottom half of the U.S. population combined
**Topic:** Before they turn 65, about 60 percent of the U.S. population will experience a year of poverty
**Topic:** The Jardin in Las Vegas sells a $10,000 cocktail and a weekend Valentine package for $100,000

## Chapter 9

**Table 9.3** Race–Ethnicity and Income Extremes
**Topic:** Arizona has agreed that the police will not stop people solely to determine if they are in the country illegally.
**Topic:** Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada became the first Latina senator.
**Topic:** Native Americans operate their own embassy in Washington, D.C.
**Topic:** The *bamboo curtain*: Asian Americans claiming they are discriminated against in college admissions

## Chapter 10

**Figure 10.7** Master's degree was added to this figure
**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** How to Get a Higher Salary
**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** Breaking through the Glass Ceiling
**Topic:** The effects of testosterone differ with the situation: Women given testosterone in a competitive situation became suspicious and less trusting, but given testosterone in a situation where they were being trusted, they became more responsible and generous.
**Topic:** Many minority women feel that the feminist movement represents "white" experiences. Their attempt to change emphases has led to a clash of perspectives.
**Topic:** Among the CEOs of the largest U.S. companies, a reverse pay gap has emerged, with women outearning men by several million dollars a year.

**Topic:** The rate of sexual assault on boys and men is about one-tenth that of girls and women.
**Topic:** In Japan, more adult diapers are sold than baby diapers
**Topic:** The Social Security dependency ratio has dropped to 3.6 (current workers to one beneficiary)

## Chapter 11

**Sociology and Technology: The Shifting Landscape:** How Could the Polls Get It So Wrong?
**Topic:** From President Obama to President Trump used as an example of the transition of authority in a rational–legal structure even when a newly elected leader represents ideas extremely different from the predecessor
**Topic:** Kim Jong-un of North Korea had his vice premier for education shot for slouching during a meeting of parliament

## Chapter 12

**Figure 12.5** The Remarkable Change in Two- and Four-Children Families
**Figure 12:16** Today's Newlyweds: Their Marital History
**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** What Are *Your* Chances of Getting Divorced? The Misuse of Statistics
**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** What Kind of Parent Will You Be?
**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** Finding Quality Daycare
**Cultural Diversity around the World:** Arranged Marriage in India: Probing beneath the Surface
**Topic:** One-third of Americans who marry met online.
**Topic:** The latest research on children reared by same-sex parents
**Topic:** For the first time since 1880, the percentage of young adults who live with their parents is larger than those who live with a spouse or partner in a separate household.
**Topic:** "Adultolescence" is also known as "waithood."
**Topic:** The average age of those who are cohabiting is 39.
**Topic:** Helicoptering, parents' hovering over their children to be certain they make the right decisions and have the right experiences, increasingly common in the upper-middle class
**Topic:** Implications for human evolution of *CRISPR* (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats)

## Chapter 13

**Applying Sociology to Your Life:** You Want to Get Through College? Let's Apply Sociology
**Sociology and Technology: The Shifting Landscape:** Changing Religious Practices in the Digital Age
**Topic:** To increase graduation rates, community colleges are developing *guided pathways*.
**Topic:** A major change is occurring in Japan's higher education—a shift to job training in its lower tier universities and more research in its top tier.
**Topic:** University salaries in Russia are so low that tens of thousands of academics have left Russia.
**Topic:** Tucson, Arizona, runs a "Teenage Parent High School," where pregnant girls and those who have already given birth learn parenting skills as well as traditional subjects
**Topic:** High school teachers give *twenty times* more A's than C's.
**Topic:** Roman Catholics use Confessor Go to locate priests to hear confessions, and WhatsApp to discuss moral dilemmas with priests.

## Chapter 14

**Topic:** The United States has 40 million immigrants.
**Topic:** The world now has thirty-one megacities.
**Topic:** Japan's population is shrinking by a million people a year.
**Topic:** Update on Monsanto subverting GMO research.
**Topic:** Tomorrow's suburb: Attempts of suburbs to transform themselves into cities.

## Chapter 15

**Topic:** The United States has withdrawn from G7's Paris Accord on climate change.
**Topic:** Global warming threatens the Earth's coral reefs, which hold chemicals to cure diseases. Venom from the cone snail, fifty times more potent than morphine, is being used as a painkiller.
**Topic:** In coming distance learning classes, the simultaneous translation of speech will allow students from different cultures to talk and to understand one another.
**Topic:** In coming distance learning classes, artificial intelligence will enable students to go on virtual field trips in other cultures that immerse them in different realities.
**Topic:** The Pentagon operates a Cyber Command with nine "National Mission Teams" of sixty military personnel each
**Topic:** An Italian company sells "off-the-shelf" programs that allow someone to insert malicious code in computers and mobile devices

# The Organization of This Text

The text is laid out in five parts. Part I focuses on the sociological perspective, which is introduced in the first chapter. We then look at how culture influences us (Chapter 2), examine socialization (Chapter 3), and compare macrosociology and microsociology (Chapter 4).

Part II, which focuses on groups and social control, adds to the students' understanding of how far-reaching society's influence is—how group membership penetrates even our thinking, attitudes, and orientations to life. We first examine the different types of groups that have such profound influences on us and then look at the fascinating area of group dynamics (Chapter 5). After this, we focus on how groups "keep us in line" and sanction those who violate their norms (Chapter 6).

In Part III, we turn our focus on social inequality, examining how it pervades society and how it has an impact on our own lives. Because social stratification is so significant, I have written two chapters on this topic. The first (Chapter 7), with its global focus, presents an overview of the principles of stratification. The second (Chapter 8), with its emphasis on social class, focuses on stratification in the United States. After establishing this broader context of social stratification, we examine inequalities of race-ethnicity (Chapter 9) and then those of gender and age (Chapter 10).

Part IV helps students to become more aware of how social institutions encompass their lives. We first look at politics and the economy, our overarching social institutions (Chapter 11). After examining marriage and family (Chapter 12), we then turn our focus on education and religion (Chapter 13). One of the emphases in this part of the book is how our social institutions are changing and how their changes, in turn, have an impact on our own lives.

With its focus on broad social change, Part V provides an appropriate conclusion for the book. Here we examine why our world is changing so rapidly, as well as catch a glimpse of what is yet to come. We first analyze trends in population and urbanization, those sweeping forces that affect our lives so significantly but that ordinarily remain below our level of awareness (Chapter 14). We conclude the book with an analysis of technology, social movements, and the environment (Chapter 15), which takes us to the "cutting edge" of the vital changes that engulf us all.

# Themes and Features

Six central themes run throughout this text: down-to-earth sociology, applying sociology to your students' life, globalization, cultural diversity, critical thinking about social life, and the new technology. The theme of how sociology applies to the lives of your students is new to this edition. For each of these themes, except globalization, which is incorporated throughout the text, I have written a series of boxed features. These boxed features are one of my favorite components of the book. They are especially useful for introducing the controversial topics that make sociology such a lively activity.

Let's look at these six themes.

## Down-to-Earth Sociology

As many years of teaching have shown me, all too often textbooks are written to appeal to the adopters of texts rather than to the students who will learn from them. In writing this book, my central concern has been to present sociology in a way that not only facilitates understanding but also shares its excitement. During the course of writing other texts, I often have been told that my explanations and writing style are "down-to-earth," or accessible and inviting to students—so much so that I chose this phrase as the book's subtitle.

This *Down-to-Earth Sociology* theme explores sociological processes that underlie everyday life. The topics that we review in this feature are highly diverse. Here are some of them:

- how a sociologist became a gang leader—for a day (Chapter 1)
- the experiences of W. E. B. Du Bois in studying U.S. race relations (Chapter 1)
- how gossip and ridicule enforce adolescent norms (Chapter 3)
- how football can help us understand social structure (Chapter 4)
- beauty and success (Chapter 4)
- serial killers (Chapter 6)
- sexting (Chapter 6)
- the lifestyles of the super-rich (Chapter 8)
- the American dream and social mobility (Chapter 8)
- college dorms and contact theory (Chapter 9)
- women navigating male-dominated corporations (Chapter 10)
- the coming Star Wars (Chapter 15)

This first theme is actually a hallmark of the text, as my goal is to make sociology "down to earth." To help students grasp the fascination of sociology, I continuously stress sociology's relevance to their lives. To reinforce this theme, I avoid unnecessary jargon and use concise explanations and clear and simple (but not reductive) language. I also use student-relevant examples to illustrate key concepts, and I base several of the chapters' opening vignettes on my own experiences in exploring social life. That this goal of sharing sociology's fascination is being reached is evident from the many comments I receive from instructors and students alike that the text helps make sociology "come alive."

## Applying Sociology to Your Life

As mentioned, this second theme is being introduced in this edition. There were a lot of challenges to overcome in producing this feature, and I am eager to find out how it works in your classroom. Please share the results with me.

Here is a partial list of the topics included in *Applying Sociology to Your Life*:

- making impression management work for you: getting promoted (Chapter 4)
- keeping a paycheck coming in the new global marketplace (Chapter 5)
- how techniques of neutralization protect your self concept (Chapter 6)
- how to get a higher salary by applying sociology (Chapter 10)
- applying sociology to break through the glass ceiling (Chapter 10)
- applying sociology to parenting (Chapter 12)
- applying divorce statistics to your marriage (Chapter 12)
- finding quality daycare (Chapter 12)
- applying sociology to get through college (Chapter 13)

I hope you have as much pleasure using this new feature in your classroom as I had in developing it.

## Globalization

In the third theme, globalization, we explore the impact of global issues on our lives and on the lives of people around the world. All of us are feeling the effects of an increasingly powerful and encompassing global economy, one that intertwines the fates of nations. The globalization of capitalism influences the kinds of skills and knowledge we need, the types of work available to us—and whether work is available at all. Globalization also underlies the costs of the goods and services we consume and whether our country is at war or peace—or in some uncharted middle ground between the two, some sort of perpetual war against unseen, sinister, and ever-threatening enemies lurking throughout the world. In addition to the strong emphasis on global issues that runs throughout this text, I have written a separate chapter on global stratification (Chapter 7). I also feature global issues in the chapters on social institutions and the final chapters on social change: population, urbanization, social movements, and the environment.

What occurs in Russia, Germany, and China, as well as in much smaller nations such as Afghanistan and Iraq, has far-reaching consequences on our own lives. Consequently, in addition to the global focus that runs throughout the text, the next theme, cultural diversity, also has a strong global emphasis.

## Cultural Diversity around the World and in the United States

The fourth theme, cultural diversity, has two primary emphases. The first is cultural diversity around the world. Gaining an understanding of how social life is "done" in other parts of the world often challenges our taken-for-granted assumptions about social life. At times, when we learn about other cultures, we gain an appreciation for the life of other peoples; at other times, we may be shocked or even disgusted at some aspect of another group's way of life (such as female circumcision) and come away with a renewed appreciation of our own customs.

To highlight this first subtheme, I have written a series called *Cultural Diversity around the World*. Among the topics with this subtheme are

- food customs that shock people from different cultures (Chapter 2)
- why the dead need money (Chapter 2)
- where virgins become men (Chapter 3)
- human sexuality in Mexico and Kenya (Chapter 6)
- female circumcision (Chapter 10)
- probing beneath the surface to understand arranged marriage in India (Chapter 12)
- female infanticide in China and India (Chapter 14)
- the destruction of the rain forests and indigenous peoples of Brazil (Chapter 15)

In the second subtheme, *Cultural Diversity in the United States,* we examine groups that make up the fascinating array of people who form the U.S. population. In this subtheme, we review such topics as

- the controversy over the use of Spanish or English (Chapter 2)
- how the Amish resist social change (Chapter 4)
- how our social networks produce social inequality (Chapter 5)
- the upward social mobility of African Americans (Chapter 8)
- the author's travels with a Mexican who transports undocumented workers to the U.S. border (Chapter 9)
- human heads, animal sacrifices, and religious freedom (Chapter 13)
- our shifting racial–ethnic mix (Chapter 14)

Seeing that there are so many ways of "doing" social life can remove some of our cultural smugness, making us more aware of how arbitrary our own customs are—and how our taken-for-granted ways of thinking are rooted in culture. The stimulating contexts of these contrasts can help students develop their sociological imagination. They encourage

students to see connections among key sociological concepts such as culture, socialization, norms, race–ethnicity, gender, and social class. As your students' sociological imagination grows, they can attain a new perspective on their experiences in their own corners of life—and a better understanding of the social structure of U.S. society.

## Critical Thinking

In our fifth theme, critical thinking, we focus on controversial social issues, inviting students to examine various sides of those issues. In these sections, titled *Thinking Critically about Social Life*, I present objective, fair portrayals of positions and do not take a side—although occasionally I do play the "devil's advocate" in the questions that close each of the topics. Like the boxed features, these sections can enliven your classroom with a vibrant exchange of ideas. Among the social issues we tackle are

- our tendency to conform to evil authority, as uncovered by the Milgram experiments (Chapter 5)
- how labeling keeps some people down and helps others move up (Chapter 6)
- how vigilantes fill in when the state breaks down (Chapter 6)
- the three-strikes-and-you're-out laws (Chapter 6)
- bounties paid to kill homeless children in Brazil (Chapter 7)
- children in poverty (Chapter 8)
- emerging masculinities and femininities (Chapter 10)
- cyberwar and cyber defense (Chapter 15)

These *Thinking Critically about Social Life* sections are based on controversial social issues that either affect the student's own life or focus on topics that have intrinsic interest for students. Because of their controversial nature, these sections stimulate both critical thinking and lively class discussions. These sections also provide provocative topics for in-class debates and small discussion groups, effective ways to enliven a class and present sociological ideas. In the *Instructor's Manual*, I describe the nuts and bolts of using small groups in the classroom, a highly effective way of engaging students in sociological topics.

## Sociology and Technology: The Shifting Landscape

In the sixth theme, *sociology and technology*, we explore an aspect of social life that has come to be central in our lives. We welcome our technological tools, for they help us to be more efficient at performing our daily tasks, from making a living to communicating with others—whether those people are nearby or on the other side of the globe. The significance of technology extends far beyond the tools and the ease and efficiency they bring to our lives. We can more accurately envision our new technology as a social revolution that will leave few aspects of our lives untouched. Its effects are so profound that it even changes the ways we view life.

Sociology and technology is introduced in Chapter 2, where technology is defined and presented as a major aspect of culture. The impact of technology is then discussed throughout the text. Examples include how technology is related to cultural change (Chapter 2), diversity training (Chapter 5), the maintenance of global stratification (Chapter 7), and social class (Chapter 8). We also look at the impact of technology on dating (Chapter 12), family life (Chapter 12), religion (Chapter 13), and war (Chapter 15). The final chapter (Chapter 15) on social change and the environment concludes the book with a focus on the effects of technology.

To highlight this theme, I have written a series called *Sociology and Technology: The Shifting Landscape.* In this feature, we explore how technology affects our lives as it changes society. Among the topics we examine are how technology

- artificial intelligence and super-smart computers may bring the end of human culture (Chapter 2)
- affects our body images (Chapter 4)
- through virtual reality can be applied to diversity training (Chapter 5)
- is allowing the creation of an overwhelming security state (Chapter 5)
- could allow us to get the presidential polls so wrong (Chapter 11)
- is changing the way people find mates (Chapter 12)
- is leading to a future where we order babies with specific characteristics (Chapter 12)
- is having an impact on religion (Chapter 13)

## Visual Presentations of Sociology

**SHOWING CHANGES OVER TIME** In presenting social data, many of the figures and tables show how data change over time. This feature allows students to see trends in social life and to make predictions on how these trends might continue—and even affect their own lives. Examples include

- Figure 1.5 *U.S. Marriage, U.S. Divorce*
- Figure 3.2 *Transitional Adulthood: A New Stage in the Life Course*
- Figure 6.2 *How Much Is Enough? The Explosion in the Number of Prisoners*

- Figure 8.3 *The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same: Dividing the Nation's Income*
- Figure 12.2 *In Two-Paycheck Marriages, How Do Husbands and Wives Divide Their Responsibilities?*
- Figure 12.4 *The Number of Children Americans Think Are Ideal*
- Figure 12.5 *The Remarkable Change in Two- and Four-Children Families*
- Figure 12.9 *The Decline of Two-Parent Families*
- Figure 12.11 *Cohabitation in the United States*
- Figure 13.1 *Educational Achievement in the United States*
- Figure 14.11 *How the World Is Urbanizing*

**THROUGH THE AUTHOR'S LENS** Using this format, students are able to look over my shoulder as I experience other cultures or explore aspects of this one. These eight photo essays should expand your students' sociological imagination and open their minds to other ways of doing social life, as well as stimulate thought-provoking class discussion.

**VIENNA: SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION IN A VIBRANT CITY** appears in Chapter 4. The photos I took in this city illustrate how social structure surrounds us, setting the scene for our interactions, limiting and directing them.

**WHEN A TORNADO STRIKES: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION FOLLOWING A NATURAL DISASTER** When a tornado hit a small town just hours from where I lived, I photographed the aftermath of the disaster. The police let me in to view the neighborhood where the tornado had struck, destroying homes and killing several people. I was impressed by how quickly people were putting their lives back together, the topic of this photo essay (Chapter 4).

**COMMUNITY IN THE CITY** in Chapter 5, is also from Vienna. This sequence of four photos focuses on strangers who are helping a man who has just fallen on the sidewalk. This event casts doubt on the results of Darley and Latané's laboratory experiments. This short sequence was serendipitous in my research. One of my favorite photos is the last in the series, which portrays the cop coming toward me to question why I was taking photos of the accident. It fits the sequence perfectly.

**THE DUMP PEOPLE OF PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA** Among the culture shocks I experienced in Cambodia was not to discover that people scavenge at Phnom Penh's huge city dump—this I knew about—but that they also live there. With the aid of an interpreter, I was able to interview these people, as well as photograph them as they went about their everyday lives. An entire community lives in the city dump, complete with restaurants amidst the smoke and piles of garbage. This photo essay reveals not just these people's activities but also their social organization (Chapter 7).

**WORK AND GENDER: WOMEN AT WORK IN INDIA** As I traveled in India, I took photos of women at work in public places. The more I traveled in this country and the more photos I took, the more insight I gained into gender relations. Despite the general dominance of men in India, women's worlds are far from limited to family and home. Women are found at work throughout the society. What is even more remarkable is how vastly different "women's work" is in India than it is in the United States. This, too, is an intellectually provocative photo essay (Chapter 10).

**SMALL TOWN USA: STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE** To take the photos for this essay, on a road trip from California to Florida I went off the beaten path. Instead of following the interstates, I followed those "little black lines" on the map. They took me to out-of-the-way places that the national transportation system has bypassed. Many of these little towns are putting on a valiant face as they struggle to survive, but, as the photos show, the struggle is apparent, and, in some cases, so are the scars (Chapter 11).

**HOLY WEEK IN SPAIN** in Chapter 13, features processions in two cities in Spain, Malaga, a provincial capital, and Almuñecar, a smaller city in Granada. The Roman Catholic heritage of Spain runs so deeply that the *La Asunción de María* (The Assumption of Mary) is a national holiday, with the banks and post offices closing. City streets carry such names as (translated) Conception, Piety, Humility, Calvary, Crucifixion, The Blessed Virgin. In large and small towns throughout Spain, elaborate processions during Holy Week feature *tronos* that depict the biblical account of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. I was allowed to photograph the preparations for one of the processions, so this essay also includes "behind-the-scenes" photos.

During the processions, the participants walk slowly for one or two minutes; then because of the weight of the *tronos*, they rest for one or two minutes. This process repeats for about six hours. As you will see, some of the most interesting activities occur during the rest periods.

**A WALK THROUGH EL TIRO IN MEDELLIN, COLOMBIA** One of the most significant social changes in the world is taking place in the Least Industrialized Nations. In the search for a better life, people are abandoning rural areas. Fleeing poverty, they are flocking to the cities, only to be greeted with more poverty. Some of

these settlements of the new urban poor are dangerous. I was fortunate to be escorted by an insider through a section of Medellin, Colombia, that is controlled by gangs (Chapter 14).

**OTHER PHOTO ESSAYS** To help students better understand subcultures, I have retained the photo essay *Standards of Beauty* in Chapter 2. I have also kept the photo essay in Chapter 9 on ethnic work, as it helps students see that ethnicity doesn't "just happen." Because these photo essays consist of photos taken by others, they are not a part of the series, *Through the Author's Lens.* I think you will appreciate the understanding these two photo essays can give your students.

**PHOTO COLLAGES** Because sociology lends itself so well to photographic illustrations, this text also includes photo collages. In Chapter 1, the photo collage, in the shape of a wheel, features some of the many women who became sociologists in earlier generations, women who have largely gone unacknowledged as sociologists. In Chapter 2, students can catch a glimpse of the fascinating variety that goes into the cultural relativity of beauty. The collage in Chapter 5 illustrates categories, aggregates, and primary and secondary groups, concepts that students sometimes wrestle to distinguish. The photo collage in Chapter 10 lets students see how differently gender is portrayed in different cultures.

**OTHER PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR** Sprinkled throughout the text are photos that I took in Austria, Cambodia, India, Latvia, Spain, Vietnam, and the United States. These photos illustrate sociological principles and topics better than photos available from commercial sources. As an example, while in the United States, I received a report about a feral child who had been discovered living with monkeys. The possibility of photographing and interviewing that child who had been taken to an orphanage was one of the reasons that I went to Cambodia. That particular photo is at the beginning of Chapter 3.

**OTHER SPECIAL PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES** In addition to chapter summaries and reviews, key terms, and a comprehensive glossary, I have included several special features to help students learn sociology. **In Sum** sections help students review important points within the chapter before going on to new materials. I have also developed a series of **Social Maps,** which illustrate how social conditions vary by geography. All the maps in this text are original.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES** I have written learning objectives for the main points of each chapter. These learning objectives, which provide a guiding "road map" for your students, are presented three times: in a list at the beginning of the chapter, at the point where that specific material is presented, and again at the chapter's Summary and Review.

**CHAPTER-OPENING VIGNETTES** These accounts feature down-to-earth illustrations of a major aspect of each chapter's content. Some of these vignettes are based on my research with the homeless, the time I spent with them on the streets and slept in their shelters (Chapters 1 and 8). Others recount sociological experiences in Africa (Chapters 2 and 10) and Mexico (Chapters 12 and 14). I also share my experiences when I spent a night with street people at DuPont Circle in Washington, D.C. (Chapter 4). For other vignettes, I use current and historical events (Chapters 7, 9, 13, and 15), classical studies in the social sciences (Chapters 3 and 6), and even scenes from novels (Chapters 5 and 11). Many students have told their instructors that they find these vignettes compelling, that they stimulate interest in the chapter.

**THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT THE CHAPTERS** I close each chapter with critical thinking questions. Each question focuses on a major feature of the chapter, asking students to reflect on and consider some issue. Many of the questions ask the students to apply sociological findings and principles to their own lives.

**ON SOURCES** Sociological data are found in a wide variety of sources, and this text reflects that variety. Cited throughout this text are standard journals such as the *American Journal of Sociology, Social Problems, American Sociological Review,* and *Journal of Marriage and Family,* as well as more esoteric journals such as the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine, Chronobiology International,* and *Western Journal of Black Studies.* I have also drawn heavily from standard news sources, especially the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal,* as well as more unusual sources such as *El País.* In addition, I cite unpublished research and theoretical papers by sociologists.

# Acknowledgments

The response from both instructors and students to this text's earlier editions indicates that my efforts at making sociology down to earth have succeeded. The years that have gone into writing this text are a culmination of the many years that preceded its writing—from graduate school to that equally demanding endeavor known as classroom teaching. No text, of course, comes solely from its author. Although I am responsible for the final words on the printed page, I have received excellent feedback from instructors who have taught from the first thirteen editions. I am especially grateful to

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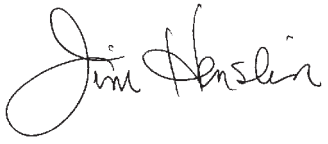
I have had the pleasure of working with an outstanding team at Pearson. I want to thank Billy Grieco and Jeff Marshall for coordinating the many tasks that were necessary to produce this new edition; Jenn Auvil and Mary Donovan who coordinated so many integrating tasks; and Kate Cebik for her photo research—and for her willingness to "keep on looking."

I do appreciate this team. It is difficult to heap too much praise on such fine, capable, and creative people. Often going "beyond the call of duty" as we faced nonstop deadlines, their untiring efforts coalesced with mine to produce this text. Students, whom we constantly kept in mind as we prepared this edition, are the beneficiaries of this intricate teamwork.

Since this text is based on the contributions of many, I would count it a privilege if you would share with me your teaching experiences with this book, including suggestions for improving the text. Both positive and negative comments are welcome. This is one way that I continue to learn.

I wish you the very best in your teaching. It is my sincere desire that *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach* contributes to your classroom success.



*James M. Henslin*
*Professor Emeritus*
*Department of Sociology*
*Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville*

I welcome your correspondence. You can reach me at henslin@aol.com

P.S. With changing technology, I am now able to discuss various aspects of sociology with your students. This new feature, called Hearing from the Author, is described in the publisher's overview of Revel, which follows this note.

# Revel™ for *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*

Revel is an interactive learning environment that deeply engages students and prepares them for class. Media and assessment integrated directly within the author's narrative lets students read, explore interactive sociology content, and practice in one continuous learning path. Thanks to the dynamic reading experience in Revel, students come to class prepared to discuss, apply, and learn from instructors and from each other.

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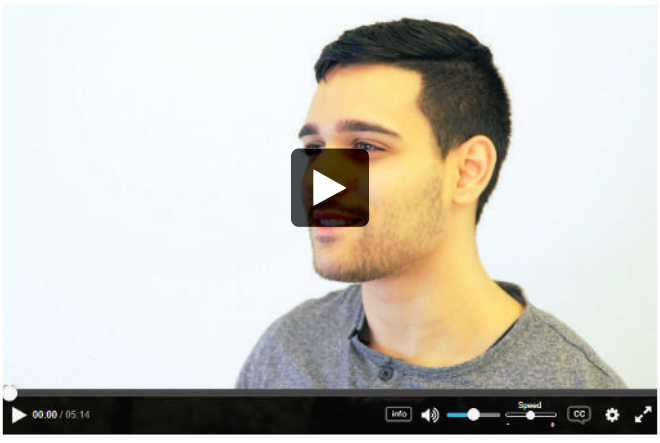
- **Hearing from the Author Audio Clips** are a new Revel feature in which Jim further personalizes the content of this edition by opening each chapter and commenting on sociological concepts, photo essays, individual photos of particular significance, tables, figures, and topics. This feature gives students additional context for understanding more difficult topics, while the author's interweaving of observations and personal experiences reinforces how sociology is part of the student's everyday life.

  This is a hallmark of the instructional design, as Jim's goal is to make sociology "down to earth." To help students grasp the fascination of sociology, he continuously stresses sociology's relevance to their lives. As both instructors and students have commented, this helps make sociology "come alive." And after all, as Jim emphasizes throughout *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*, sociology is a fascinating endeavor.

- **Videos** support the down-to-earth approach with news footage and stories that reflect real-life examples of sociology. Students can revisit major historical events including critical points in the Civil Rights movement and view videos through a sociological lens.

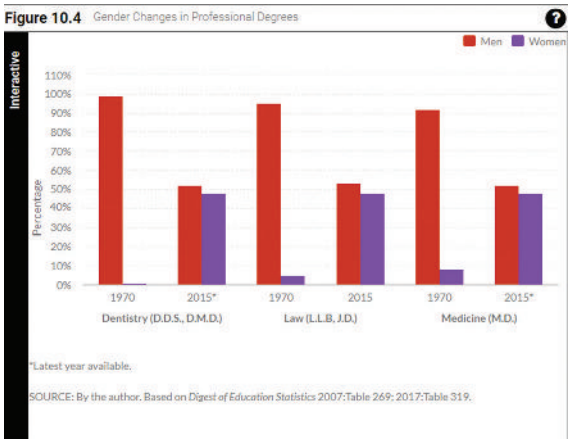
An original set of videos, including the **Hearing from Students** video series, is unique to *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*. These exclusive video interviews feature students discussing the highlights of each chapter. These videos give students the opportunity to hear from their peers who are sharing their thoughts on chapter topics and reflecting on how they can apply the sociological perspective of the chapter to their own lives.

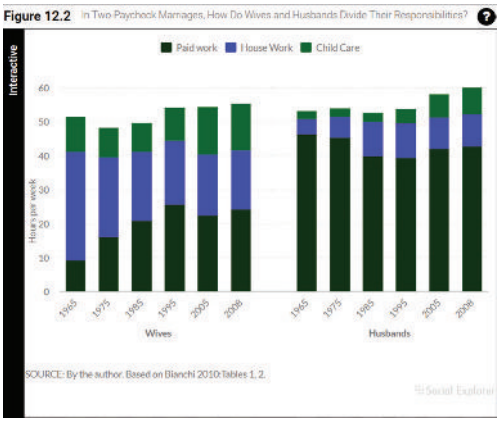


- **Pearson Originals** The Pearson Originals docuseries videos highlight stories that exemplify and humanize the concepts covered in Sociology courses. These videos illustrate a variety of social issues and current events, bringing key topics to life for students while creating opportunities to further develop their understanding of sociology. Therefore, students not only connect with the people and stories on a personal level, but also view these stories and individuals with greater empathy while contextualizing core course concepts.
  - Interpreting the First Amendment: Regulating Protest in Minnesota
  - Gender Identity: Meant to Be Maddie
  - Domestic Violence in Rural America: Survivors' Stories
  - The American Working Class: Voices from Harrisburg, IL
  - Taking a Stand Against Environmental Injustice

Videos can be easily accessed from the instructor Resources folder within the Revel product.

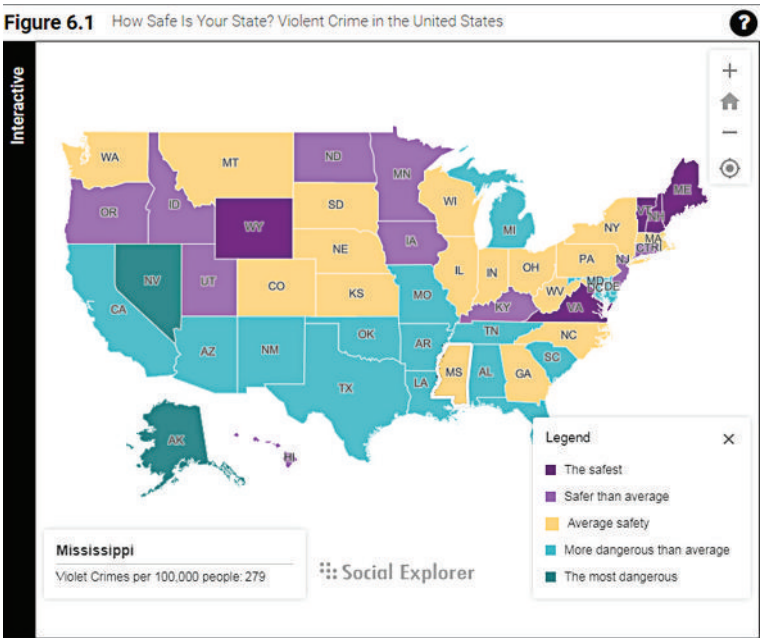

- **Interactive figures and tables** feature the technology of Social Explorer, which shows data in interactive graphs with rollover information. Examples include Figure 10.4 Gender Changes in College Degrees, Table 11.1 Who Votes for

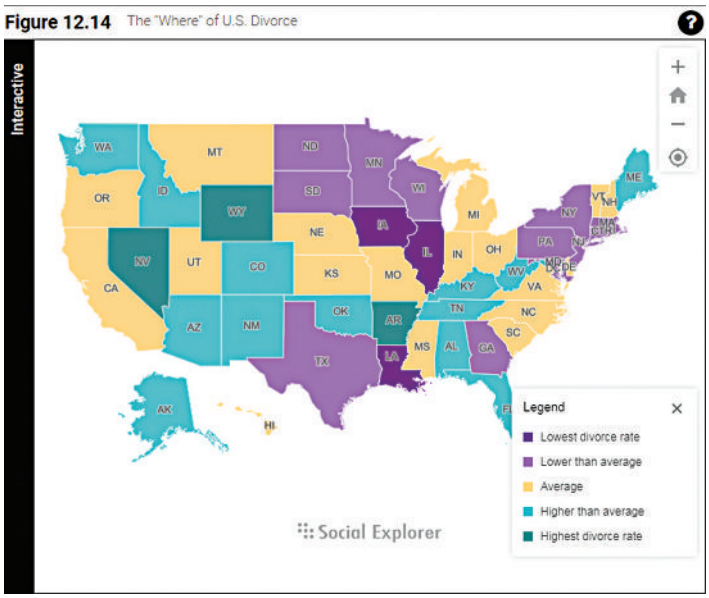


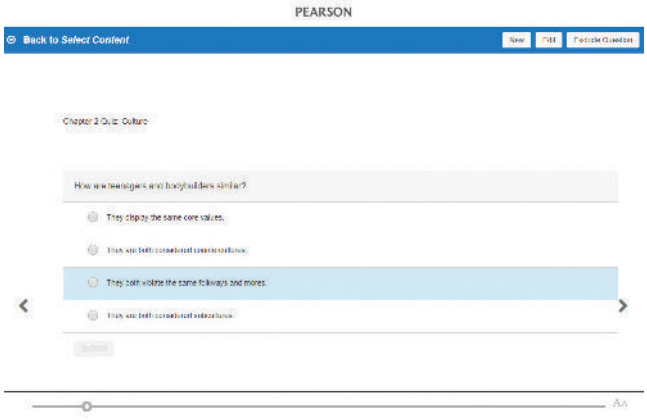

President?, Figure 12.2 In Two-Paycheck Marriages, How Do Husbands and Wives Divide their Responsibilities?

- **Interactive Social Explorer Maps** are based on the Social Maps Jim has created for *Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*. Using Social Explorer, these maps illustrate how social conditions vary among the states and by regions of the country. Students can click through these maps, and can hover over their own state and consider how it compares with the rest of the country. Examples include Figure 6.1 How Safe Is Your State? Violent Crime in the United States and Figure 12.14 The "Where" of U.S. Divorce. Jim has also prepared global maps that give students a visual representation of how the United States compares with countries around the world. These Social Maps are original with *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach.* Visit the instructor Resources folder within Revel to access LiveSlide Powerpoint presentations that contain every Social Explorer visualization, making it easy to use these in class.



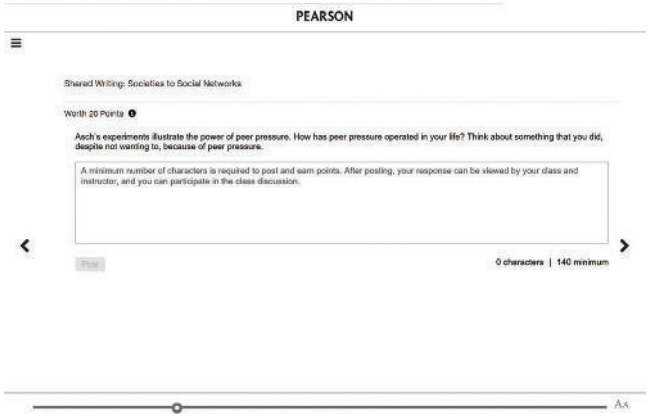



- **Make a Guess** interactive graphs invite students to interact with social data. Many of the figures and tables show how data change over time. This feature utilizes Social Explorer's predictive graphing which allows students to see trends in social life and to make predictions on how these trends might continue—and how they might even affect their own lives.
- Interactive **Review the Chapter**, which uses flashcards that feature key terms and definitions, help students review and reinforce the chapter's content.
- **Assessments,** which are tied to each chapter's major sections, allow instructors and students to track progress and get immediate feedback. It is the same with the full chapter tests.




- **Integrated Writing Opportunities** help students reason and write more clearly. Each chapter offers the following writing prompts:
  - **Journal prompts** invite students to reflect on a chapter's content and to consider how the sociological perspective applies in a variety of scenarios. There are two types of journal prompts: *Apply It to Your Life* and *Apply the Sociological Perspective.*
  - **Shared writing prompts** invite students to reflect on and consider issues related to major features of each chapter. Many of the questions ask the students to apply sociological findings and principles to their own lives. The students' responses are

automatically shared with others, which helps them better understand the perspectives of others and sharpens their critical thinking skills.




- **Additional Interactive Assets** engage students and invite them to interact with text, figures, and photos. **Enhanced Images** of historic photos and documents allow students to zoom in to gain different perspectives of the image. **Simulations** guide students through charts and graphs, helping them to see how the many parts of a topic are related.
- **Writing Space** allows you to develop and assess your students' concept mastery and critical thinking through writing. Writing Space provides a single place within Revel to create, track, and grade writing assignments; access writing resources; and exchange meaningful, personalized feedback quickly and easily. For students, Writing Space provides everything they need to keep up with writing assignments, access assignment guides and checklists, write or upload completed assignments, and receive grades and feedback—all in one convenient place. For educators, Writing Space makes assigning, receiving, and evaluating writing assignments easier.

  It's simple to create new assignments and upload relevant materials, see student progress, and receive alerts when students submit work. Writing Space makes students' work more focused and effective, with customized grading rubrics they can see and personalized feedback.

  And here's another feature of Writing Space that you might find very helpful: Writing Space allows you to check your students' work for improper citation or plagiarism by comparing it against the world's most accurate text comparison database available from Turnitin.

# A Note from the Publisher on the Supplements

## Instructor's Supplements

Unless otherwise noted, the instructor's supplements are available at no charge to adopters—in electronic formats through the Instructor's Resource Center (www.pearsonhighered.com/irc). Instructors can also access these teaching tools from the Instructor Resources folder within the Revel product.

### Instructor's Resource Manual

For each chapter in the text, the *Instructor's Resource Manual* provides chapter summaries, chapter outlines, lecture suggestions, and suggested assignments. Also, this edition of the *Instructor's Resource Manual* features many Revel-only components including the Journal Prompts and Shared Writing Prompts and a list of all Revel-specific interactive assets, such as the Pearson Originals docuseries videos.

### Test Bank

The *Test Bank* contains approximately 55 questions for each chapter in multiple-choice and essay formats. The questions are correlated to each chapter's in-text learning objectives.

### MyTest Test Bank

The printed *Test Bank* is also available online through Pearson's computerized testing system, MyTest. The user-friendly interface allows you to view, edit, and add questions, transfer questions to tests, and print tests in a variety of fonts. Search and sort features allow you to locate questions quickly and to arrange them in whatever order you prefer. The *Test Bank* can be accessed anywhere with a free MyTest user account. There is no need to download a program or file to your computer.

### PowerPoint® Presentation Slides

In order to support varied teaching styles while making it easy to incorporate dynamic Revel features in class, four sets of PowerPoint presentations are available for this edition: (1) A set of ADA-compliant lecture PowerPoint slides outline each chapter of the text. (2) A set of "art-only" PowerPoint slides feature all static images, figures, graphs, and maps from each chapter of the text. (3) An additional set of the lecture PowerPoint slides include LiveSlides, which link to each Social Explorer data visualization and interactive map within the Revel product. (4) Finally, a LiveSlides-only PowerPoint deck includes every Social Explorer data visualization and interactive map within the Revel product.

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# About the Author

Jim Henslin was born in Minnesota, graduated from high school and junior college in California and from college in Indiana. Awarded scholarships, he earned his master's and doctorate degrees in sociology at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. After this, he won a postdoctoral fellowship from the National Institute of Mental Health and spent a year studying how people adjust to the suicide of a family member. His primary interests in sociology are the sociology of everyday life, deviance, and international relations. Among his many books are *Down-to-Earth Sociology: Introductory Readings*, and *Social Problems*, now in its 12th edition. He has also published widely in sociology journals, including *Social Problems* and *American Journal of Sociology*.

While a graduate student, Jim taught at the University of Missouri at St. Louis. After completing his doctorate, he joined the faculty at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, where he is Professor Emeritus of Sociology. He says, "I've always found the introductory course enjoyable to teach. I love to see students' faces light up when they first glimpse the sociological perspective and begin to see how society has become an essential part of how they view the world."

Jim enjoys reading and fishing, and he also does a bit of kayaking and weight lifting. His two favorite activities are writing and traveling. He especially enjoys visiting and living in other cultures, for this brings him face to face with behaviors and ways of thinking that challenge his perspectives and "make sociological principles come alive." A special pleasure has been the preparation of *Through the Author's Lens*, the series of photo essays that appear in this text, and *Applying Sociology to Your Life*, original with this author and first appearing in this edition.

Jim moved to Latvia, an Eastern European country formerly dominated by the Soviet Union, where he had the experience of becoming an immigrant. There he observed firsthand how people struggle to adjust to capitalism. While there, he interviewed aged political prisoners who had survived the Soviet gulag. He then moved to Spain, where he was able to observe how people adjust to a declining economy and the immigration of people from contrasting cultures. (Of course, for this he didn't need to leave the United States.) To better round out his cultural experiences, Jim recently visited South Korea, Vietnam, and again India. He hopes to travel extensively in South America, where he expects to do more photo essays to reflect their fascinating cultures. Jim is grateful to be able to live in such exciting social, technological, and geopolitical times—and to have access to portable broadband Internet while he pursues his sociological imagination.

*untitled*, 2007, Marie Bertrand, (arcylics on paper)

# Chapter 1
# The Sociological Perspective

## Learning Objectives

*After you have read this chapter, you should be able to:*

**1.1** Explain why both history and biography are essential for the sociological perspective.

**1.2** Trace the origins of society, from tradition to Max Weber.

**1.3** Trace the development of sociology in North America, and explain the tension between objective analysis and social reform.

**1.4** Explain the basic ideas of symbolic interactionism, functional analysis, and conflict theory.

**1.5** Explain why common sense can't replace sociological research.

**1.6** Know the eight steps of the research model.

**1.7** Know the main elements of the seven research methods.

**1.8** Explain how gender is significant in sociological research.

**1.9** Explain why it is vital for sociologists to protect the people they study and discuss the two cases that are presented.

**1.10** Explain how research versus social reform and globalization are likely to influence sociology.

***I quickly scanned the room filled with 100 or so bunks. I was relieved to see that an upper bunk was still open. I grabbed it, figuring that attacks are more difficult in an upper bunk. Even from the glow of the faded red-and-white exit sign, its faint light barely illuminating this bunk, I could see that the sheet was filthy. Resigned to another night of fitful sleep, I reluctantly crawled into bed.***

***I kept my clothes on.***

***The next morning, I joined the long line of disheveled men leaning against the chain-link fence. Their faces were as downcast as their clothes were dirty. Not a glimmer of hope among them.***

***No one spoke as the line slowly inched forward.***

***When my turn came, I was handed a cup of coffee, a white plastic spoon, and a bowl of semiliquid that I couldn't identify. It didn't look like any food I had seen before. Nor did it taste like anything I had ever eaten.***

***My stomach fought the foul taste, every spoonful a battle. But I was determined. "I will experience what they experience," I kept telling myself. My stomach reluctantly gave in and accepted its morning nourishment.***

The room was strangely silent. Hundreds of men were eating, each immersed in his own private hell, …

*The room was strangely silent. Hundreds of men were eating, each one immersed in his own private hell, his mind awash with disappointment, remorse, bitterness.*

*As I stared at the Styrofoam cup that held my coffee, grateful for at least this small pleasure, I noticed what looked like teeth marks. I shrugged off the thought, telling myself that my long weeks as a sociological observer of the homeless were finally getting to me. "It must be some sort of crease from handling," I concluded.*

*I joined the silent ranks of men turning in their bowls and cups. When I saw the man behind the counter swishing out Styrofoam cups in a washtub of murky water, I began to feel sick to my stomach. I knew then that the jagged marks on my cup really had come from another person's mouth.*

*How much longer did this research have to last? I felt a deep longing to return to my family—to a welcome world of clean sheets, healthy food, and "normal" conversations.*

# The Sociological Perspective

**1.1 Explain why both history and biography are essential for the sociological perspective.**

You are in for an exciting and eye-opening experience. The sociological perspective (or imagination) opens a window onto unfamiliar worlds—and offers a fresh look at familiar ones. In this text, you will find yourself in the midst of homeless people in U.S. cities as well as Nazis in Germany and warriors in South America. Sociology is broad, and your journey will also take you to a group that lives in a garbage dump in Cambodia. As you view other worlds, you will also find yourself looking at your own world in a different light. In fact, this is what many find appealing about sociology. Ever since I took an introductory course in sociology as a freshman in college, I have been enchanted by the perspective that sociology offers. I have enjoyed both observing other groups and questioning my own assumptions about life. I hope the same happens to you.

## Seeing the Broader Social Context

The **sociological perspective** stresses the social contexts in which people live. It examines how these contexts influence people's lives. At the center of the sociological perspective is the question of how groups influence people, especially how people are influenced by their **society**—a group of people who share a culture and a territory.

To find out why people do what they do, sociologists look at **social location**, the corners in life that people occupy because of their place in a society. Sociologists look at how jobs, income, education, gender, race–ethnicity, and age affect people's ideas and behavior. Consider, for example, how being identified with a group called *females* or with a group called *males* when you were growing up has shaped *your* ideas of who you are. Growing up as a female or a male or as a transgender individual has influenced not only how you feel about yourself but also your ideas of what you should attain in life and how you should relate to others. Even your gestures and the way you laugh come from your identifying with one of these groups.

Sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) put it this way: "The sociological imagination [perspective] enables us to grasp the connection between history and biography." By *history*, Mills meant that each society is located in a broad stream of events. This gives each society specific characteristics—such as its ideas about what roles are proper for men and women. By *biography*, Mills referred to your experiences within a specific historical setting, which give you your orientations to life. In short, you don't do what you do because you inherited some

**sociological perspective**
understanding human behavior by placing it within its broader social context

**society**
people who share a culture and a territory

**social location**
the group memberships that people have because of their location in history and society

Silence is common in homeless shelters. An optimistic view of life and exciting things to talk about are not part of the world of the homeless.

We all learn our basic views of the world from the group in which we grow up. Just as this principle applies to this girl of the Txukahamai tribe of Brazil, so it applies to you. You and she are likely to have little in common in how you perceive the world.

internal mechanism, such as instincts. Rather, *external* influences—your experiences—become part of your thinking and motivation. Or we can put it this way: At the center of what you do and how you think is the society in which you grow up and your particular location in that society.

Consider a newborn baby. As you know, if we were to take the baby away from its U.S. parents and place it with the Yanomamö Indians in the jungles of South America, his or her first words would not be in English. You also know that the child would not think like an American. The child would not grow up wanting credit cards, for example, or designer clothes, a car, a smartphone, an iPad, video games, and a virtual reality headset. He or she would take his or her place in Yanomamö society—perhaps as a food gatherer, a hunter, or a warrior—and would not even know about the world left behind at birth. And whether male or female, the child would grow up assuming that it is natural to want many children, not debating whether to have one, two, or three children.

If you have been thinking along with me—and I hope you have—you should be thinking about how *your* social groups have shaped *your* ideas and desires. Over and over in this text, you will see that the way you look at the world is the result of your exposure to specific human groups. I think you will enjoy the process of self-discovery that sociology offers.

## The Global Context—and the Local

How life has changed! Our predecessors lived on isolated farms and in small towns. They grew their own food and made their own clothing, buying only sugar, coffee, and a few other items that they couldn't produce. Beyond the borders of their communities lay a world they perceived only dimly.

To see why sociologists use the term *global village* to describe life today, look at the labels on your clothing. You are likely to see China, Mexico, Brazil, Hong Kong, Brunei, or Macau. It is the same with the many other imported products that have become part of your daily life.

And communications? It is difficult to believe how slow they used to be. I am still amazed at what happened in the War of 1812, a war between the United States and Great Britain. Although the two countries signed a peace treaty in December 1814, *two weeks later* their armies fought a major battle at New Orleans. Neither the American nor the British forces there had heard that the war was over (Volti 1995).

Today, news flashes from around the world are part of our everyday life. We can grab our cell phone and use the Internet to communicate instantly with people anywhere on the planet. Although we are engulfed in instantaneous global communications, we also continue to occupy our own little corners of life. Like those of our predecessors, our worlds, too, are marked by differences in family background, religion, job, age, gender, race–ethnicity, and social class. In these smaller corners of life, we continue to learn distinctive ways of viewing the world.

One of the beautiful—and fascinating—aspects of sociology is that it enables us to look at *both* parts of our current reality: being part of a global network *and* having unique experiences in our smaller corners of life. This text reflects both of these worlds, each vital in understanding who we are.

# Origins of Sociology

**1.2 Trace the origins of sociology, from tradition to Max Weber.**

So when did sociology begin? Even ancient peoples tried to figure out how social life works. They, too, asked questions about why war exists, why some people become more

powerful than others, and why some are rich but others are poor. This was not science, however, because they often based their answers on superstition, myth, or even the positions of the stars. They did not *test* their assumptions.

**Science**, *in contrast, requires theories that can be tested by research.* Measured by this standard, sociology emerged about the middle of the 1800s, when social observers began to use scientific methods to test their ideas. Let's look at three events that set the stage for the challenge to tradition and the emergence of sociology.

Upsetting the entire social order, the French Revolution removed the past as a sure guide to the present. This stimulated Auguste Comte to analyze how societies change. Shown here are women marching to Versailles in 1791 to confront the king and queen of France.

## Tradition versus Science

The first event that set the stage for sociology was the social upheaval of the Industrial Revolution. As agriculture gave way to factory production, masses of people moved to cities in search of work. The city's greeting was harsh: miserable pay, long hours, and dangerous work. To help their family survive, even children worked in these miserable conditions, some of them chained to machines to keep them from running away. With their ties to the land broken and their world turned upside down, no longer could people count on tradition to provide the answers to the difficult questions of life.

The second was the social upheaval of political revolution. The American and French revolutions swept away the existing social orders—and with them the answers they had provided. Before this period, tradition had ruled. The reply to questions of "why" was "We do this because it has always been done this way." A new social order challenges traditional answers and ushers in new ideas. The ideas that emerged during this period challenged tradition even further. Especially powerful was the new idea that each person possesses inalienable rights. This idea caught fire to such an extent that people were willing to die for it, forcing many traditional Western monarchies to give way to more democratic forms of government.

The third was the imperialism (empire building) of the time. The Europeans had conquered so many countries that their new colonies stretched across the world, from Asia and Africa to North and South America. This exposed them to radically different ways of life, and they began to ask why cultures differ.

At this same time, **the scientific method**—using objective, systematic observations to test theories—was being tried in chemistry and physics. This revealed many secrets that had been concealed in nature. With traditional answers failing, the next step was to apply the scientific method to questions about social life. The result was the birth of sociology.

Let's take a quick overview of some of the main people in this development.

**science**
the application of systematic methods to obtain knowledge and the knowledge obtained by those methods

**scientific method**
the use of objective, systematic observations to test theories

**positivism**
the application of the scientific approach to the social world

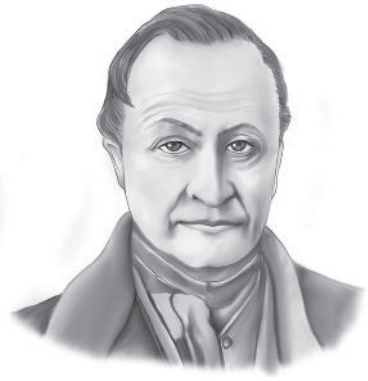
**sociology**
the scientific study of society and human behavior

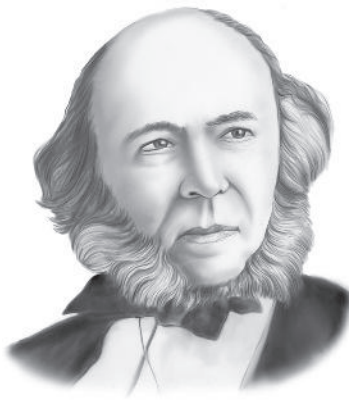
## Auguste Comte and Positivism

France was still recovering from the bloody upheavals of its revolution when Auguste Comte was born. Comte (1798–1857) knew that the crowds had cheered at the public execution of the king and queen of France, and he began to wonder what holds society together. Why do we have social order now, instead of the anarchy and chaos of the French Revolution?, he wondered. When society is set on a particular course, what causes it to change?

These were pressing questions, and Comte suggested that we apply the scientific method to understand the social world, a process known as **positivism**. Just as the scientific method had revealed the law of gravity, so, too, it would uncover the laws that underlie society. Comte called this new science **sociology**—"the study of society" (from the Greek *logos*, "study of," and the Latin *socius*, "companion," or "being with others"). The purpose of this new science, he said, would be not only to discover social principles but also to apply them to social reform. Comte developed a grandiose view: Sociologists would reform society, making it a better place to live.

Auguste Comte (1798–1857), who is credited as the founder of sociology, began to analyze the bases of the social order. Although he stressed that the scientific method should be applied to the study of society, he did not apply it himself.





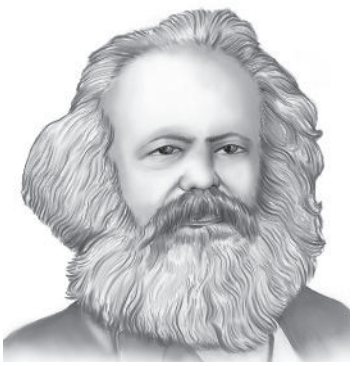
Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), sometimes called the second founder of sociology, coined the term "survival of the fittest." Spencer thought that helping the poor was wrong, that this merely helped the "less fit" survive.

**class conflict**
Marx's term for the struggle between capitalists and workers

**bourgeoisie**
Marx's term for capitalists, those who own the means of production

**proletariat**
Marx's term for the exploited class, the mass of workers who do not own the means of production

Karl Marx (1818–1883) believed that the roots of human misery lay in class conflict, the exploitation of workers by those who own the means of production. Social change, in the form of the workers overthrowing the capitalists was inevitable from Marx's perspective. Although Marx did not consider himself a sociologist, his ideas have influenced many sociologists, particularly conflict theorists.



Applying the scientific method to social life meant something quite different to Comte than it does to sociologists today. To Comte, it meant a kind of "armchair philosophy"—drawing conclusions from informal observations of social life. Comte did not do what we today call research, and his conclusions have been abandoned. But because he proposed that we observe and classify human activities to uncover society's fundamental laws and coined the term *sociology* to describe this process, Comte often is credited with being the founder of sociology.

## Herbert Spencer and Social Darwinism

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), who grew up in England, is sometimes called the second founder of sociology. Spencer disagreed sharply with Comte. He said that sociologists should *not* guide social reform. If they did, he said, it would interfere with a natural process that improves societies. Societies are evolving from a lower form ("barbarian") to higher ("civilized") forms. As generations pass, a society's most capable and intelligent members ("the fittest") survive, while the less capable die out. These fittest members produce a more advanced society—unless misguided do-gooders get in the way and help the less fit (the lower classes) survive.

Spencer called this principle *the survival of the fittest*. Although Spencer coined this phrase, it usually is credited to his contemporary, Charles Darwin. Where Spencer proposed that societies evolve over time as the fittest people adapt to their environment, Darwin applied this idea to organisms. Because Darwin is better known, Spencer's idea is called *social Darwinism*. History is fickle, and if fame had gone the other way, we might be speaking of "biological Spencerism."

Like Comte, Spencer did armchair philosophy instead of conducting scientific research.

## Karl Marx and Class Conflict

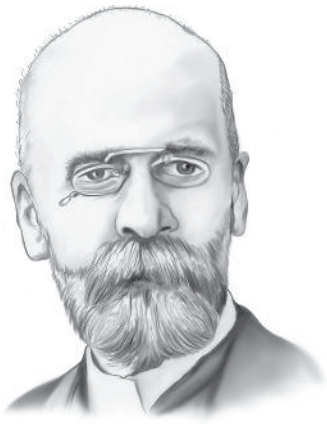
Karl Marx (1818–1883) not only influenced sociology, but he also left his mark on world history. Marx's influence has been so great that even the *Wall Street Journal*, that staunch advocate of capitalism, has called him one of the three greatest modern thinkers (the other two being Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein).

Like Comte, Marx thought that people should try to change society. His proposal for change was radical: revolution. This got him thrown out of Germany, and he settled in England. Marx believed that the engine of human history is **class conflict**. He said that society is made up of two social classes, and they are natural enemies of one another: the **bourgeoisie** (boo-shwa-ZEE) (the *capitalists*, those who own the means of production—the money, land, factories, and machines) and the **proletariat** (the exploited workers, who do not own the means of production). Eventually, the workers will unite and break their chains of bondage. The workers' revolution will be bloody, but it will usher in a classless society, one free of exploitation. People will work according to their abilities and receive goods and services according to their needs (Marx and Engels 1848/1967).

Marxism is not the same as communism. Although Marx proposed revolution as the way for workers to gain control of society, he did not develop the political system called *communism*. This is a later application of his ideas. Marx himself felt disgusted when he heard debates about his insights into social life. After listening to some of the positions attributed to him, he shook his head and said, "I am not a Marxist" (Dobriner 1969:222; Gitlin 1997:89).

Unlike Comte and Spencer, Marx did not think of himself as a sociologist—and with his reputation for communism and revolution, many sociologists wish that no one else did either. Marx spent years studying in the library of the British Museum in London, where he wrote widely on history, philosophy, economics, and political science. Because of his insights into the relationship between the social classes, Marx is generally recognized as a significant early sociologist. He introduced conflict theory, one of today's major perspectives in sociology. Later, we will examine this perspective in detail.

## Emile Durkheim and Social Integration



The French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) contributed many important concepts to sociology. His comparison of the suicide rates of several countries revealed an underlying social factor: People are more likely to commit suicide if their ties to others in their communities are weak. Durkheim's identification of the key role of social integration in social life remains central to sociology today.

Until the time of Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), sociology was a part of history and economics. Durkheim, who grew up in France, wanted to change this, and his major professional goal was to get sociology recognized as a separate academic discipline (Coser 1977). He achieved this goal in 1887 when the University of Bordeaux awarded him the world's first academic appointment in sociology.

Durkheim's second goal was to show how social forces affect people's behavior. To accomplish this, he conducted rigorous research. Comparing the suicide rates of several European countries, Durkheim (1897/1966) found that each country has a different suicide rate—and that these rates remain about the same year after year. He also found that different groups within a country have different suicide rates and that these, too, remain stable from year to year. Males are more likely than females to kill themselves, Protestants more likely than Catholics or Jews, and the unmarried more likely than the married. From these observations, Durkheim concluded that suicide is not what it appears—simply a matter of individuals here and there deciding to take their lives for personal reasons. Instead, *social factors* underlie suicide, which is why a group's rate remains fairly constant year after year.

In his search for the key social factors in suicide, Durkheim identified **social integration**, the degree to which people are tied to their social groups: He found that people who have weaker social ties are more likely to commit suicide. This, he said, explains why Protestants, males, and the unmarried have higher suicide rates. This is how it works: Protestantism encourages greater freedom of thought and action; males are more independent than females; and the unmarried lack the ties and responsibilities that come with marriage. In other words, members of these groups have fewer of the social bonds that keep people from committing suicide. In Durkheim's term, they have less social integration.

**social integration**
the degree to which members of a group or a society feel united by shared values and other social bonds; also known as social cohesion

Despite the many years that have passed since Durkheim did his research, the principle he uncovered still applies: People who are less socially integrated have higher rates of suicide. Even today, more than a century later, those same groups that Durkheim identified—Protestants, males, and the unmarried—are more likely to kill themselves.

It is important for you to understand the principle that was central in Durkheim's research: *Human behavior cannot be understood only in terms of the individual; we must always examine the social forces that affect people's lives.* Suicide, for example, appears to be such an intensely individual act that psychologists should study it, not sociologists. As Durkheim stressed, however, if we look at human behavior only in reference to the individual, we miss its *social* basis.

**APPLYING DURKHEIM**

> ***Did you know that next year more women than men will attempt suicide? And did you know that despite this, more men will kill themselves? And did you know that this will happen the following year, too?*** **More women** ***will attempt suicide, but*** **more men** ***will die by suicide.***

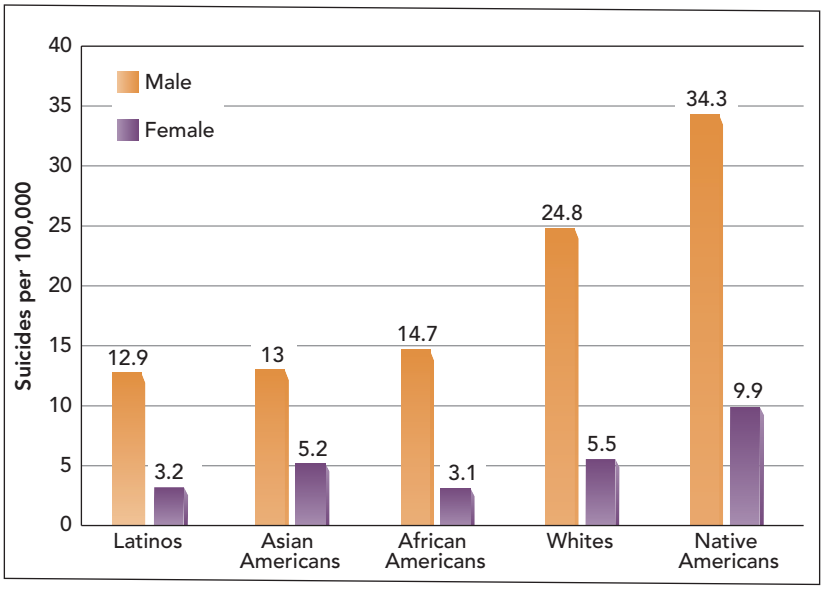
You probably didn't know this, but these things will happen. Sociologists can make these predictions—and be accurate about them—because of what are called **patterns of behavior**, recurring characteristics or events.

**patterns of behavior**
recurring behaviors or events

Just as Durkheim found patterns of suicide in the groups he studied in Europe, so the groups that make up the United States have their own patterns of suicide. Look at Figure 1.1. A couple of things should strike you immediately. You can see that regardless of their racial–ethnic group, men are much more likely to kill themselves. You can also see that the racial–ethnic groups have different rates of suicide. Because similar patterns show up year after year, they give us a picture of the future.

You might be wondering why men are more "successful" than women when they attempt suicide. We don't know all the answers, but apparently men are more determined. Men also are more likely than women to use guns, while women are more likely to use pills. Obviously, guns don't allow the time for intervention that pills do.

**Figure 1.1** Suicide of Americans Ages 18–24




**SOURCE:** By the author. Based on CDC 2015a:Figure 1.

As Durkheim stressed, when patterns of suicide recur year after year, it indicates something beyond the individuals who kill themselves. The patterns reflect conditions in society and how people react to those conditions. There is much about this that we don't understand, and I am hoping that one day this textbook will pique a student's interest enough to investigate these patterns.

## Max Weber and the Protestant Ethic

Max Weber (1864–1920) was another early sociologist who left a profound impression on sociology. He used cross-cultural and historical materials to trace the causes of social change and to determine how social groups affect people's orientations to life.

Max Weber (Mahx VAY-ber) (1864–1920), a German sociologist and a contemporary of Durkheim, also held professorships in the new academic discipline of sociology. Like Durkheim and Marx, Weber is one of the most influential of all sociologists, and you will come across his writings and theories in later chapters. For now, let's consider an issue Weber raised that remains controversial today.

**RELIGION AND THE ORIGIN OF CAPITALISM** Weber disagreed with Marx's claim that economics is the central force in social change. That role, he said, belongs to religion. Weber (1904/1958) theorized that the Roman Catholic belief system encouraged followers to hold on to their traditional ways of life, while the Protestant belief system encouraged its members to embrace change. Roman Catholics were taught that because they were Church members, they were on the road to heaven, but Protestants, those of the Calvinist tradition, were told that they wouldn't know if they were saved until Judgment Day. You can see why this made them uncomfortable. Calvinists began to look for a "sign" that they were in God's will. They found this "sign" in financial success, which they took as a blessing that indicated that God was on their side. To bring about this "sign" and receive spiritual comfort, they began to live frugal lives, saving their money and investing it in order to make even more. This accumulation and investment of capital, said Weber, brought about the birth of capitalism.

Weber called this self-denying approach to life the *Protestant ethic*. He termed the desire to invest capital in order to make more money the *spirit of capitalism*. To test his theory, Weber compared the extent of capitalism in Roman Catholic and Protestant countries. In line with his theory, he found that capitalism was more likely to flourish in Protestant countries. Weber's conclusion that religion was the key factor in the rise of capitalism was controversial when he made it, and it continues to be debated today (Kotz 2015).

# Sociology in North America

**1.3 Trace the development of sociology in North America, and explain the tension between objective analysis and social reform.**

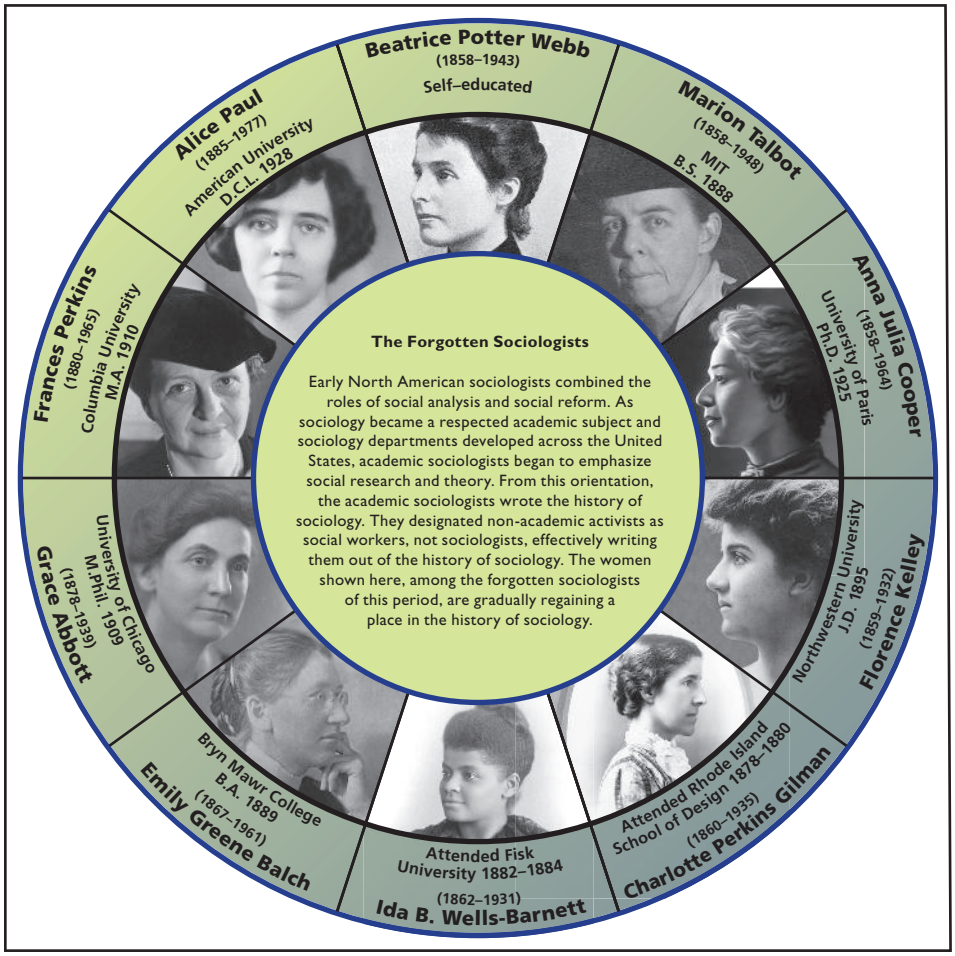
Now let's turn to the development of sociology on this side of the Atlantic Ocean.

## Sexism at the Time: Women in Early Sociology

As you may have noticed, all the sociologists we have discussed are men. In the 1800s, sex roles were rigid, with women assigned the roles of wife and mother. In the classic German phrase, women were expected to devote themselves to the four K's: *Kirche, Küche, Kinder, und Kleider* (the four C's in English: church, cooking, children, and clothes). Trying to break out of this mold meant risking severe disapproval.

At this time, few people, male or female, attained any education beyond basic reading and writing and a little math. Higher education, for the rare few who received it, was reserved primarily for men. Of the handful of women who did pursue higher education, some became prominent in early sociology. Marion Talbot, for example, was an associate editor of the *American Journal of Sociology* for thirty years, from its founding in 1895 to 1925. The influence of some early female sociologists went far beyond sociology. Grace Abbott became chief of the U.S. government's Children's Bureau, and Frances Perkins was the first woman to hold a cabinet position, serving twelve years as Secretary of Labor under President Franklin Roosevelt. The photo wheel portrays some of these early sociologists.

**Figure 1.2** The Forgotten Sociologists




**SOURCE:** Photo wheel copyright 2018 © James M. Henslin.

Most early female sociologists viewed sociology as a path to social reform. They focused on ways to improve society, such as how to stop lynching, integrate immigrants into society, and improve the conditions of workers. As sociology developed in North America, a debate arose about the purpose of sociology. Should it be to reform society or to do objective research on society? Those who held the university positions won the debate. They feared that advocating for social causes would jeopardize the reputation of sociology—and their own university positions. It was these men who wrote the history of sociology. Distancing themselves from the social reformers, they ignored the early female sociologists (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2007). Now that women have regained their voice in sociology—and have begun to rewrite its history—early female sociologists are again, as here, being acknowledged.

Harriet Martineau (1802–1876) provides an excellent example of how the contributions of early female sociologists were ignored. Although Martineau was from England, she is included here because she did extensive analyses of U.S. social customs.

Sexism was so pervasive that when Martineau first began to analyze social life, she would hide her writing beneath her sewing when visitors arrived; writing was "masculine" and sewing "feminine" (Gilman 1911/1971:88). Despite her extensive and acclaimed research on social life in both Great Britain and the United States, until recently Martineau was known primarily for translating Comte's ideas into English.

W(illiam) E(dward) B(urghardt) Du Bois (1868–1963) spent his lifetime studying relations between African Americans and whites.

## Racism at the Time: W. E. B. Du Bois

Not only was sexism assumed to be normal during this early period of sociology but so was racism. This made life difficult for African American professionals such as W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963). After earning a bachelor's degree from Fisk University, Du Bois became the first African American to earn a doctorate at Harvard. He then studied at the University of Berlin, where he attended lectures by Weber. After teaching Greek and Latin at Wilberforce University, Du Bois moved to Atlanta University in 1897 to teach sociology and do research. He remained there for most of his career (Du Bois 1935/1992).

The following *Down-to-Earth Sociology* features Du Bois' description of race relations when he was in college.

## Down-to-Earth Sociology

### W. E. B. Du Bois: The Souls of Black Folk

Du Bois wrote more like an accomplished novelist than a sociologist. The following excerpts are from pages 66–68 of his book, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Du Bois, 1903). In this book, Du Bois analyzes changes that occurred in the social and economic conditions of African Americans during the thirty years following the Civil War.

For two summers, while he was a student at Fisk, Du Bois taught in a segregated school in a little log cabin that he said was "way back in the hills" of rural Tennessee. These excerpts help us understand conditions at that time.

> *It was a hot morning late in July when the school opened. I trembled when I heard the patter of little feet down the dusty road, and saw the growing row of dark solemn faces and bright eager eyes facing me…. There they sat, nearly thirty of them, on the rough benches, their faces shading from a pale cream to deep brown, the little feet bare and swinging, the eyes full of expectation, with here and there a twinkle of mischief, and the hands grasping Webster's blue-black spelling-book. I loved my school, and the fine faith the children had in the wisdom of their teacher was truly marvelous. We read and spelled together, wrote a little, picked flowers, sang, and listened to stories of the world beyond the hill….*
>
> *On Friday nights I often went home with some of the children,—sometimes to Doc Burke's farm. He was a great, loud, thin Black, ever working, and trying to buy these seventy-five acres of hill and dale where he lived; but people said that he would surely fail and the "white folks would get it all." His wife was a magnificent Amazon, with saffron face and shiny hair, uncorseted and barefooted, and the children were strong and barefooted. They lived in a one-and-a-half-room cabin in the hollow of the farm near the spring….*
>
> *Often, to keep the peace, I must go where life was less lovely; for instance, 'Tildy's mother was incorrigibly dirty, Reuben's larder was limited seriously, and herds of untamed insects wandered over the Eddingses' beds.*

*Best of all I loved to go to Josie's, and sit on the porch, eating peaches, while the mother bustled and talked: how Josie had bought the sewing-machine; how Josie worked at service in winter, but that four dollars a month was "mighty little" wages; how Josie longed to go away to school, but that it "looked like" they never could get far enough ahead to let her; how the crops failed and the well was yet unfinished; and, finally, how mean some of the white folks were.*

*For two summers I lived in this little world…. I have called my tiny community a world, and so its isolation made it; and yet there was among us but a half-awakened common consciousness, sprung from common joy and grief, at burial, birth, or wedding; from common hardship in poverty, poor land, and low wages, and, above all, from the sight of the Veil* that hung between us and Opportunity. All this caused us to think some thoughts together; but these, when ripe for speech, were spoken in various languages. Those whose eyes twenty-five and more years had seen "the glory of the coming of the Lord," saw in every present hindrance or help a dark fatalism bound to bring all things right in His own good time. The mass of those to whom slavery was a dim recollection of childhood found the world a puzzling thing: it asked little of them, and they answered with little, and yet it ridiculed their offering. Such a paradox they could not understand, and therefore sank into listless indifference, or shiftlessness, or reckless bravado.*

In the 1800s, most Americans were poor, and formal education beyond the first several grades was a luxury. This photo depicts the conditions of the people Du Bois worked with.

*"The Veil" is shorthand for the Veil of Race, referring to how race colors all human relations. Du Bois' hope, as he put it, was that "sometime, somewhere, men will judge men by their souls and not by their skins" (p. 261).

It is difficult to grasp how racist society was at this time. As Du Bois passed a butcher shop in Georgia one day, he saw the fingers of a lynching victim displayed in the window (Aptheker 1990). When Du Bois went to national meetings of the American Sociological Society, restaurants and hotels would not allow him to eat or room with the white sociologists. How times have changed. Not only would today's sociologists boycott such businesses but also they would refuse to hold meetings in that state. At that time, however, racism, like sexism, prevailed throughout society, rendering it mostly invisible to white sociologists. Du Bois eventually became such an outspoken critic of racism that the U.S. State Department, fearing he would criticize the United States abroad, refused to issue him a passport (Du Bois 1968).

Each year between 1896 and 1914, Du Bois published a book on the condition of African Americans, including their relations with whites. Not content to collect and interpret data, Du Bois, along with Jane Addams and others from Hull House (see the next section), was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Deegan 1988). Continuing to battle racism both as a sociologist and as a journalist, Du Bois eventually embraced revolutionary Marxism. At age 93, dismayed that so little improvement had been made in race relations, he moved to Ghana, where he was buried (Stark 1989).

Jane Addams (1860–1935), a recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace, worked on behalf of poor immigrants. With Ellen G. Starr, she founded Hull-House, a center to help immigrants in Chicago. She was also a leader in women's rights (women's suffrage), as well as the peace movement of World War I.

## Jane Addams: Sociologist and Social Reformer

Of the many early sociologists who combined the role of sociologist with that of social reformer, none was as successful as Jane Addams (1860–1935), who was a member of the American Sociological Society from its founding in 1905. Like Martineau, Addams, too, came from a background of wealth and privilege. She attended the Women's Medical College of Philadelphia but dropped out because of illness (Addams 1910/1981). On a trip to Europe, Addams saw the work being done to help London's poor. The memory wouldn't leave her, she said, and she decided to work for social justice.

In 1889, Addams co-founded Hull House with Ellen Gates Starr. Located in Chicago's notorious slums, Hull House was open to people who needed refuge—to immigrants, the sick, the aged, the poor. Sociologists from the nearby University of Chicago were frequent visitors at Hull House. With her piercing insights into the exploitation of workers

and how rural immigrants adjusted to city life, Addams strove to bridge the gap between the powerful and the powerless. She co-founded the American Civil Liberties Union and campaigned for the eight-hour workday and for laws against child labor. She wrote books on poverty, democracy, and peace. Addams' writings and efforts at social reform were so outstanding that in 1931, she was a co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace. She and Emily Greene Balch are the only sociologists to have won this coveted award.

## Talcott Parsons and C. Wright Mills: Theory versus Reform

C. Wright Mills (1916–1962) was a controversial figure in sociology because of his analysis of the role of the power elite in U.S. society. Today, his analysis is taken for granted by many sociologists and members of the public.

Like Du Bois and Addams, many early North American sociologists saw society, or parts of it, as exploitative and in need of reform. During the 1920s and 1930s, for example, Robert Park and Ernest Burgess (1921) not only studied crime, drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, and prostitution but also offered suggestions for how to alleviate these social problems. But by the 1940s, the emphasis shifted from social reform to social theory. A major sociologist of this period, Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), developed abstract models of society that influenced a generation of sociologists. His models of how the parts of society work together harmoniously did nothing to stimulate social activism.

Another sociologist, C. Wright Mills (1916–1962), deplored such theoretical abstractions. Trying to push the pendulum the other way, he urged sociologists to get back to social reform. In his writings, he warned that the nation faced an imminent threat to freedom—the coalescing of interests of a *power elite*, the top leaders of business, politics, and the military. Interest in Mills' analyses increases each time that the United States undergoes turbulence. Since social unrest peaks at various times, followed by valleys of relative calm, so does social activism and Mills' popularity. You will be reading about Mills in later sections of this book.

## The Continuing Tension: Basic, Applied, and Public Sociology

As you have seen, two contradictory goals—analyzing society versus working toward its reform—have run through North American sociology since its founding. This tension is still with us (Morris 2017). Let's see how it is being resolved.

**basic (or pure) sociology**
sociological research for the purpose of making discoveries about life in human groups, not for making changes in those groups

**BASIC SOCIOLOGY** Some sociologists see their proper role as doing **basic** (or **pure**) **sociology**. They want to find out what is happening in some aspect of society and the reasons for it, but they do not have a goal of applying that knowledge. Other sociologists reply, "Knowledge for what?" They argue that gaining knowledge through research is not enough, that sociologists need to use their expertise to help reform society, especially to help bring justice and better conditions to the poor and oppressed.

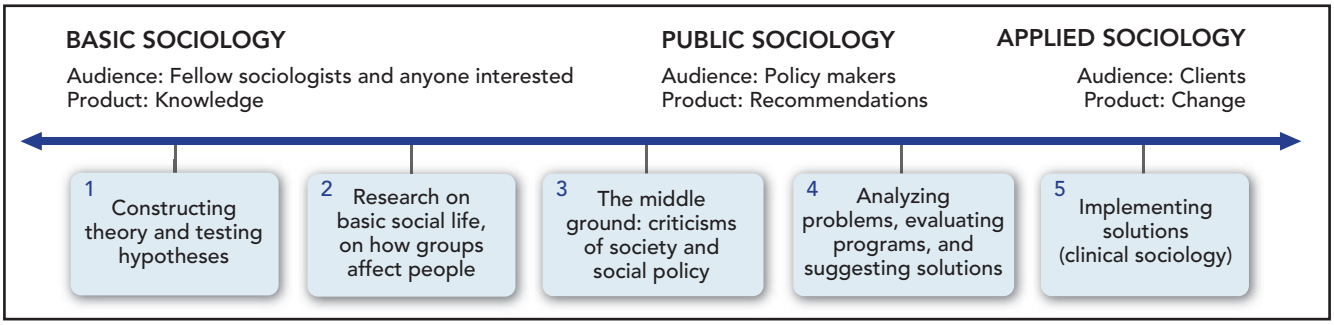
**applied sociology**
the use of sociology to solve problems—from the micro level of classroom interaction and family relationships to the macro level of poverty and pollution

**APPLIED SOCIOLOGY** As Figure 1.3 shows, one attempt to go beyond basic sociology is **applied sociology**, using sociology to solve problems. Applied sociology goes back to the roots of sociology: As you have seen, sociologists were founding members of the NAACP. Today's applied sociologists lack the broad vision that the early sociologists had of reforming society, but their application of sociology is wide-ranging. Some work for business firms to solve problems in the workplace, while others investigate social problems such as rape, pornography, poverty, pollution, or the spread of AIDS. Sociology is even being applied to find ways to disrupt terrorist groups (Sageman 2008a) and to improve technology for the mentally ill (Kelly and Farahbakhsh 2013).

**public sociology**
applying sociology for the public good; especially the use of the sociological perspective (how things are related to one another) to guide politicians and policy makers

**PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY** To encourage sociologists to apply sociology, the American Sociological Association (ASA) is promoting a middle ground between research and reform called **public sociology**. By this term, the ASA refers to harnessing the sociological perspective for the benefit of the public. Of special interest to the ASA is getting politicians and policy makers to apply the sociological understanding of how society works as they develop social policy (American Sociological Association 2004; Gans 2014). Public sociology would incorporate both items 3 and 4 of Figure 1.3.

**Figure 1.3** Comparing Basic and Applied Sociology




**SOURCE:** By the author. Based on DeMartini 1982, plus events since then.

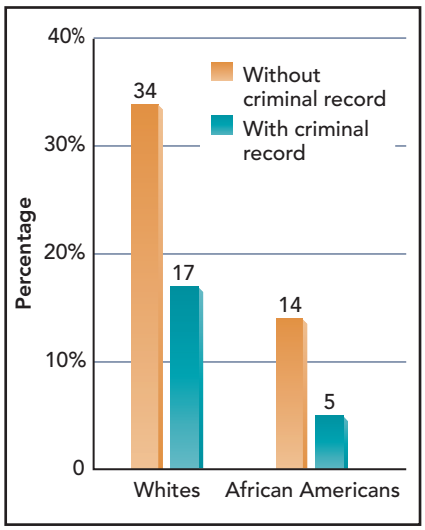
The lines between basic, applied, and public sociology are not always firm. In the following *Cultural Diversity in the United States*, you can see how basic sociology can morph into public sociology.

## Cultural Diversity in the United States

### Unanticipated Public Sociology: Studying Job Discrimination

Basic sociology—research aimed at learning more about some behavior—can turn into public sociology. Here is what happened to Devah Pager (2003). When Pager was a sociology graduate student at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, she did volunteer work at a homeless shelter. When some of the men told her how hard it was to find work if they had been in prison, she wondered if the men were exaggerating. Pager decided to find out what difference a prison record makes in getting a job. She sent pairs of college men to apply for 350 entry-level jobs in Milwaukee. One team was African American, and one was white. Pager prepared identical résumés for the teams, but with one difference: On each team, one of the men said he had served eighteen months in prison for possession of cocaine.

**Figure 1.4** Call-Back Rates by Race–Ethnicity and Criminal Record




**SOURCE:** Courtesy of Devah Pager.

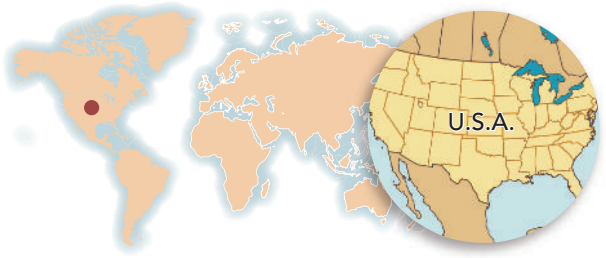



Figure 1.4 shows the difference that the prison record made. Men without a prison record were two or more times more likely to be called back.

But Pager came up with another significant finding. Look at the difference that race–ethnicity made. White men with a prison record were more likely to be offered a job than African American men who had a clean record!

Sociological research often remains in obscure journals, read by only a few specialists. But Pager's findings got around, turning basic research into public sociology. Someone told President George W. Bush about the research, and he announced in his State of the Union speech that he wanted Congress to fund a $300 million program to provide mentoring and other support to help former prisoners get jobs (Kroeger 2004).

In further research, Pager has documented how prison and race are a double-edged sword that cuts the bonds of employment (Pager et al. 2009). As you can see, sometimes only a thin line separates basic and public sociology.

#### For Your Consideration

→ What findings would you expect if women had been included in this research? Why?

With roots that go back a century or more, this contemporary debate about the purpose and use of sociology is likely to continue for another generation. At this point, let's consider how theory fits into sociology.

# Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology

**1.4 Explain the basic ideas of symbolic interactionism, functional analysis, and conflict theory.**

**common sense**
those things that "everyone knows" are true

**theory**
a general statement about how some parts of the world fit together and how they work; an explanation of how two or more facts are related to one another

Facts never interpret themselves. To make sense out of life, we use our **common sense**. That is, to understand our experiences (our "facts"), we place them into a framework of more-or-less related ideas. Sociologists do this, too, but they place their observations into a conceptual framework called a theory. A **theory** is a general statement about how some parts of the world fit together and how they work. It is an explanation of how two or more "facts" are related to one another.

Sociologists use three major theories: symbolic interactionism, functional analysis, and conflict theory. Each theory is like a lens through which we can view social life. Let's first examine the main elements of each theory and then apply each to the U.S. divorce rate to see why it is so high. As we do this, you will see how each theory, or perspective, provides a distinct interpretation of social life.

## Symbolic Interactionism

**symbolic interactionism**
a theoretical perspective in which society is viewed as composed of symbols that people use to establish meaning, develop their views of the world, and communicate with one another

The central idea of **symbolic interactionism** is that *symbols*—things to which we attach meaning—are the key to understanding how we view the world and communicate with one another. Two major sociologists who developed this perspective are George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) and Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929). Let's look at the main elements of this theory.

**SYMBOLS IN EVERYDAY LIFE** Without symbols, our social life would be no more sophisticated than that of animals. For example, without symbols, we would have no aunts or uncles, employers or teachers—or even brothers and sisters. I know that this sounds strange, but it is symbols that define our relationships. There would still be reproduction, of course, but no symbols to tell us how we are related to whom. We would not know to whom we owe respect and obligations, or from whom we can expect privileges—two elements that lie at the essence of human relationships.

I know it is vague to say that symbols tell you how you are related to others and how you should act toward them, so let's make this less abstract:

> ***Suppose that you have fallen head over heels in love. Finally, after what seems forever, it is the night before your wedding. As you are contemplating tomorrow's bliss, your mother comes to you in tears. Sobbing, she tells you that she had a child before she married your father, a child that she gave up for adoption. Breaking down, she says that she has just discovered that the person you are going to marry is this child.***

You can see how the symbol will change overnight—and your behavior, too!

The symbols "boyfriend" and "brother"—or "girlfriend" and "sister"—are certainly different, and, as you know, each symbol represents rather different behavior.

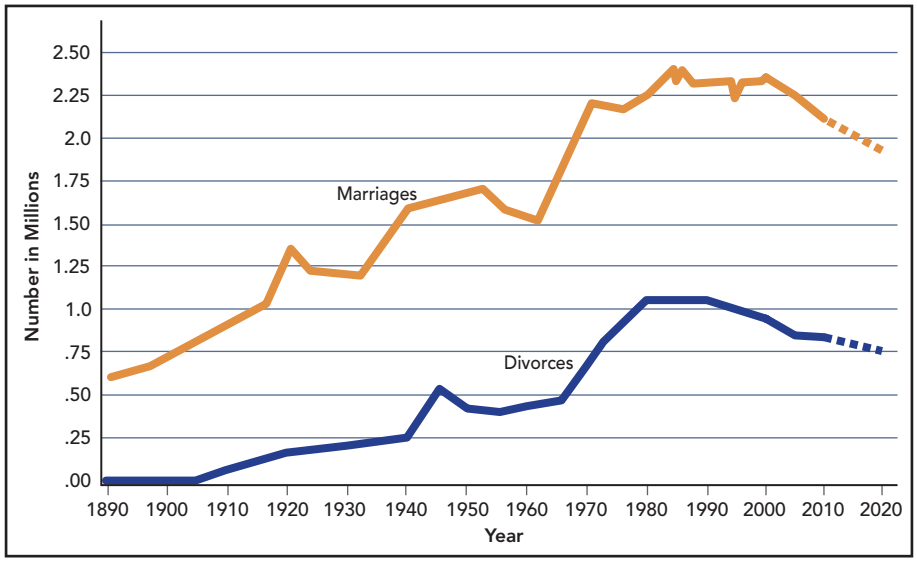
Not only do relationships depend on symbols but so does society itself. Without symbols, we could not coordinate our actions with those of others. We could not make plans for a future day, time, and place. Unable to specify times, materials, sizes, or goals, we could not build bridges and highways. Without symbols, we would have no movies or musical instruments, no hospitals, no government, no religion. The class you are taking could not exist—nor could this book. On the positive side, there would be no war.

George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) is one of the founders of symbolic interactionism, a major theoretical perspective in sociology. He taught at the University of Chicago, where his lectures were popular. Although he wrote little, after his death students compiled his lectures into an influential book, *Mind, Self, and Society*.

**IN SUM** Symbolic interactionists analyze how social life depends on the ways we define ourselves and others. They study face-to-face interaction, examining how people make sense out of life and their place in it.

**APPLYING SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM** Look at Figure 1.5, which shows U.S. marriages and divorces over time. Let's see how symbolic interactionists would use changing symbols to explain this figure. For background, you should understand that marriage used to be a *lifelong commitment*. A hundred years ago (and less), getting divorced was viewed as immoral, a flagrant disregard for public opinion, and the abandonment of adult responsibilities. Let's see what changed.

**FIGURE 1.5** U.S. Marriage, U.S. Divorce



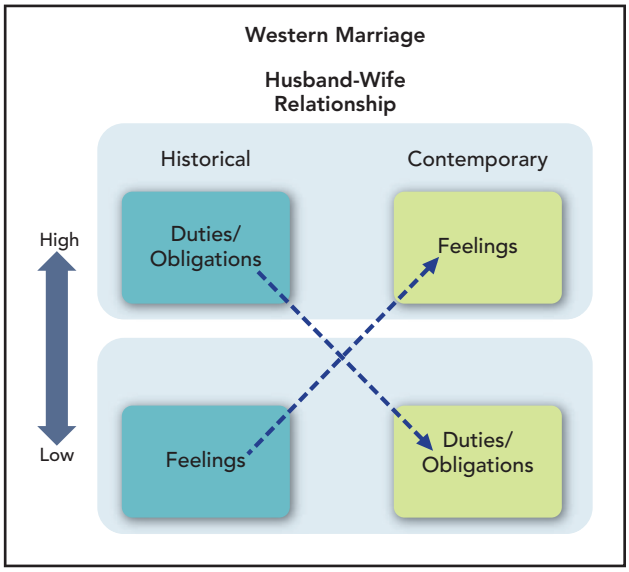

**NOTE:** In 1996, some states stopped reporting their divorces. Currently, these states are California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, and Minnesota. I made an adjustment for the missing data.

**SOURCE:** By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 1998:Table 92 and 2017:Tables 82, 141; earlier editions for earlier years. The broken lines indicate the author's estimates.

*The meaning of marriage* Historically in the West, marriage was based on obligation and duty. By the 1930s, young people were coming to view marriage in a different way, a change that was reported by sociologists of the time. In 1933, William Ogburn observed that people were placing more emphasis on the personality of their potential mates. Then in 1945, Ernest Burgess and Harvey Locke reported that people were expecting more affection, understanding, and compatibility from marriage. As feelings became more important in marriage, duty and obligation became less important. Eventually, marriage came to be viewed as an arrangement that was based mostly on feelings—on attraction and intimacy. Marriage then became an arrangement that could be broken when feelings changed. Figure 1.6 depicts this fundamental historical change in marriage.

*The meaning of divorce* As divorce became more common, its meaning also changed. Rather than being a symbol of failure, divorce came to indicate freedom and new beginnings. Removing the stigma from divorce shattered a strong barrier that had prevented husbands and wives from breaking up.

**Figure 1.6** Western Marriage




**SOURCE:** By the author.

*The meaning of parenthood* Parents used to have little responsibility for their children beyond providing food, clothing, shelter, and moral guidance. And they needed to do this for only a short time, because children began to contribute to the support of the family early in life. Among some people, parenthood is still like this. In Colombia, for example, children of the poor often are expected to support themselves by the age of 8 or 10. In industrial societies, however, we assume that children are fragile, vulnerable beings who must depend on their parents for financial and emotional support for many years—often until they are well into their 20s. In some cases, this is now being extended to the 30s. The greater responsibilities that we assign to parenthood place heavier burdens on today's couples and, with them, more strain on marriage.

*The meaning of love* And we can't overlook the love symbol. As surprising as it may sound, to have love as the main reason for marriage *weakens* marriage. In some depth of our being, we expect "true love" to deliver constant emotional highs. This expectation sets people up for crushed hopes because dissatisfactions in marriage are inevitable. When the disappointments come, spouses tend to blame one another for failing to deliver the illusive satisfaction.

**IN SUM** Symbolic interactionists look at how changing ideas (or symbols) of marriage, divorce, parenthood, and love put pressure on married couples. No single change is *the* cause of our divorce rate. Taken together, however, these changes provide a strong push toward marriages breaking up.

**functional analysis**
a theoretical framework in which society is viewed as composed of various parts, each with a function that, when fulfilled, contributes to society's equilibrium; also known as *functionalism* and *structural functionalism*

## Functional Analysis

The central idea of **functional analysis** is that society is a whole unit, made up of interrelated parts that work together. Functional analysis (also known as *functionalism* and *structural functionalism*) is rooted in the origins of sociology. Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer viewed society as a kind of living organism, similar to an animal's body. Just as a person or animal has organs that function together, they wrote, so does society. And like an organism, if society is to function smoothly, its parts must work together in harmony.

Durkheim also viewed society as being composed of many parts, each with its own function. He said that when all the parts of society fulfill their functions, society is in a "normal" state. If they do not fulfill their functions, society is in an "abnormal" or "pathological" state. To understand society, then, functionalists say that we need to look at both *structure* (how the parts of a society fit together to make the whole) and *function* (what each part does, how it contributes to society).

Robert K. Merton (1910–2003), who spent most of his academic career at Columbia University, was a major proponent of functionalism, one of the main theoretical perspectives in sociology.

**ROBERT MERTON AND FUNCTIONALISM** Robert Merton (1910–2003) dismissed the comparison of society to a living organism, but he did maintain the essence of functionalism—the image of society as a whole unit composed of parts that work together. Merton used the term *functions* to refer to the beneficial consequences of people's actions: Functions help keep a group (society, social system) in balance. In contrast, *dysfunctions* are the harmful consequences of people's actions. Dysfunctions undermine a system's equilibrium.

Functions can be either manifest or latent. If an action is *intended* to help some part of a system, it is a *manifest function*. For example, suppose that government officials become concerned that women are having so few children. Congress offers a $10,000 tax-free bonus for every child born to a married couple. The intention, or manifest function, of the bonus is to increase childbearing within the family unit. Merton pointed out that people's actions can also have *latent functions*; that is, they can have *unintended* consequences that help a system adjust. Let's suppose that the bonus works. As the birth rate jumps, so does the sale of diapers and baby furniture. Because the

benefits to these businesses were not the intended consequences, they are latent functions of the bonus.

Of course, human actions can also hurt a system. Because such consequences usually are unintended, Merton called them *latent dysfunctions*. Let's assume that the government has failed to specify a "stopping point" with regard to its bonus system. To collect more bonuses, some people keep on having children. The more children they have, however, the more they need the next bonus to survive. Large families become common, and poverty increases. As welfare and taxes jump, the nation erupts in protest. Because these results were not intended and because they harmed the social system, they would be *latent* dysfunctions of the bonus program.

**IN SUM** From the perspective of functional analysis, society is a functioning unit, with each part related to the whole. Whenever we examine a smaller part, we need to look for its functions and dysfunctions to see how it is related to the larger unit. This basic approach can be applied to any social group, whether an entire society, a college, or even a group as small as a family.

**APPLYING FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS** Now let's apply functional analysis to the U.S. divorce rate. Functionalists stress that industrialization and urbanization undermined the traditional functions of the family. For example, before industrialization, the family formed an economic team. On the farm, where most people lived, each family member had jobs or "chores" to do. The wife was in charge not only of household tasks but also of raising small animals, such as chickens, milking cows, collecting eggs, and churning butter. She also did the cooking, baking, canning, sewing, darning, washing, and cleaning. The daughters helped her. The husband was responsible for caring for large animals, such as horses and cattle, for cultivating, planting, and harvesting, and for maintaining buildings and tools. The sons helped him.

This certainly doesn't sound like life today! But what does it have to do with divorce? Simply put, there wasn't much divorce because the husband and wife formed an economic team in which each depended on the other for survival. There weren't many alternatives.

Other functions also bound family members to one another: educating the children, teaching them religion, providing home-based recreation, and caring for the sick and elderly. All these were functions of the family, certainly quite different from today's situation. To further see how sharply family functions have changed, look at this example from the 1800s:

> ***When Phil became sick, he was nursed by Ann, his wife. She cooked for him, fed him, changed the bed linens, bathed him, read to him from the Bible, and gave him his medicine. (She did this in addition to doing the housework and taking care of their six children.) Phil was also surrounded by the children, who shouldered some of his chores while he was sick. When Phil died, the male neighbors and relatives made the casket while Ann, her mother, and female friends washed and dressed the body. Phil was then "laid out" in the front parlor (the formal living room), where friends, neighbors, and relatives paid their last respects. From there, friends moved his body to the church for the final message and then to the grave they themselves had dug.***

**IN SUM** When the family loses functions, it becomes more fragile, making an increase in divorce inevitable. These changes in economic production illustrate how the family has lost functions. When making a living was a cooperative, home-based effort, husbands and wives depended on one another for their interlocking contributions to a mutual endeavor. With their individual paychecks, today's husbands and wives increasingly function as separate components in an impersonal, multinational, and even global system. The fewer functions that family members share, the fewer are their "ties that bind"—and these ties are what help husbands and wives get through the problems they inevitably experience.

Sociologists who use the functionalist perspective stress how industrialization and urbanization undermined the traditional functions of the family. Before industrialization, members of the family worked together as an economic team, as in this photo of a farm family in Nebraska in 1886. (This is a sod house built into the hillside.) As production moved away from the home, it took with it first the father and, more recently, the mother. One consequence is a major dysfunction, the weakening of family ties.

## Conflict Theory

Conflict theory provides a third perspective on social life. Unlike the functionalists, who view society as a harmonious whole with its parts working together, conflict theorists stress that society is composed of groups that compete with one another for scarce resources. If you look at the surface, you might see cooperation, but scratch that surface and you will find a struggle for power.

**conflict theory**
a theoretical framework in which society is viewed as composed of groups that are competing for scarce resources

**KARL MARX AND CONFLICT THEORY** Marx, the founder of conflict theory, witnessed the Industrial Revolution that transformed Europe. He saw that peasants who had left the land to work in cities earned barely enough to eat. Things were so bad that the average worker died at age 30, the average wealthy person at age 50 (Edgerton 1992:87). Shocked by this suffering and exploitation, Marx began to analyze society and history. As he did so, he developed **conflict theory**. He concluded that the key to human history is *class conflict*. In each society, some small group controls the means of production and exploits those who are not in control. In industrialized societies, the struggle is between the *bourgeoisie*, the small group of capitalists who own the means to produce wealth, and the *proletariat*, the mass of workers who are exploited by the bourgeoisie. The capitalists control the legal and political system: If the workers rebel, the capitalists call on the power of the state to subdue them.

When Marx made his observations, capitalism was in its infancy and workers were at the mercy of their employers. There was none of what many of today's workers take for granted—minimum wages, eight-hour days, coffee breaks, five-day work weeks, paid vacations and holidays, medical benefits, sick leave, unemployment compensation, Social Security, and for union workers, the right to strike. Marx's analysis reminds us that these benefits came not from generous hearts but by workers forcing concessions from their employers.