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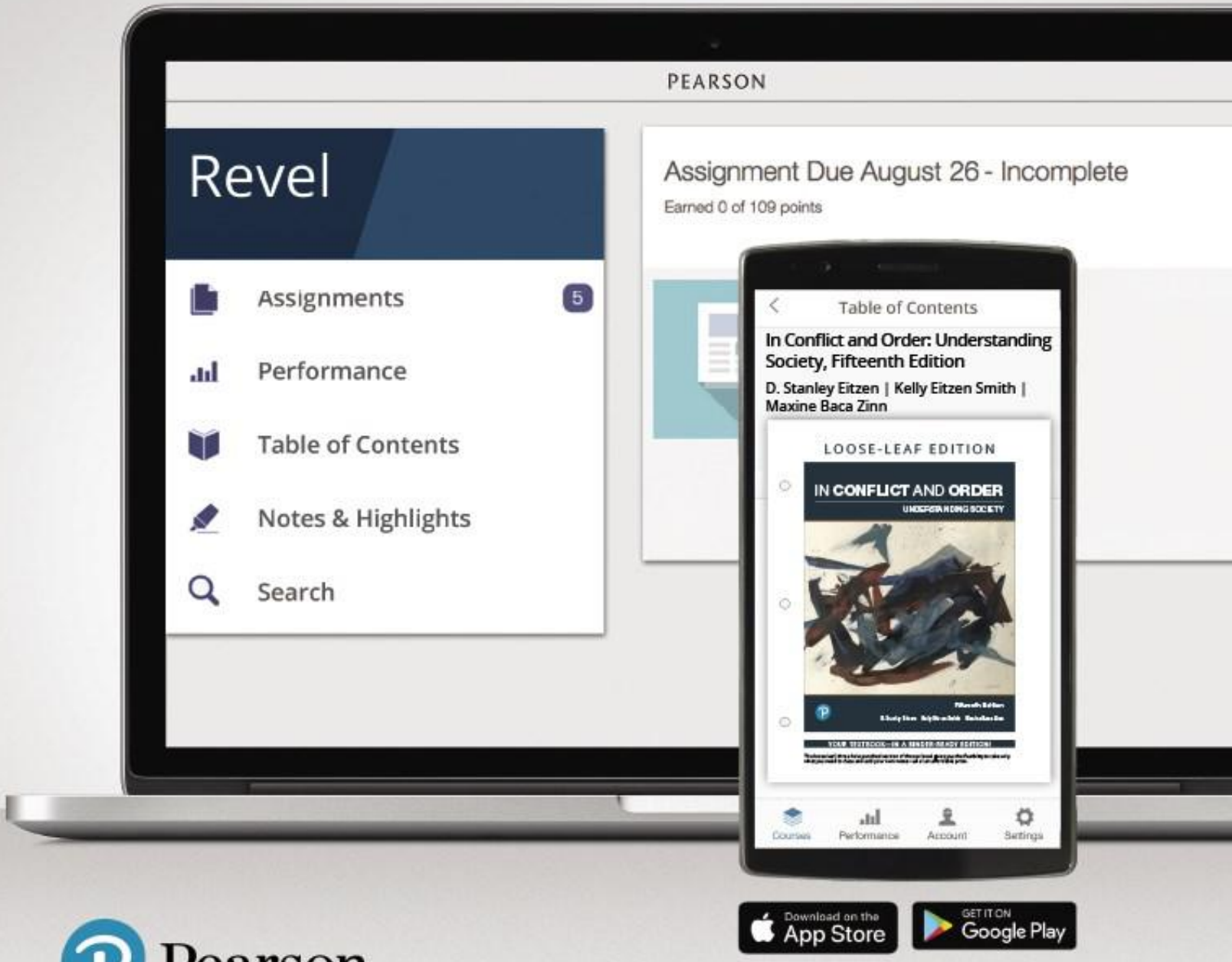
In Conflict and Order: Understanding Society, Fifteenth Edition

D. Stanley Eitzen | Kelly Eitzen Smith | Maxine Baca Zinn



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In Conflict and Order

Understanding Society

Fifteenth Edition

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Brief Contents

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Preface

Many introductory students will be exposed to sociology in only one course. They should leave that course with a new and meaningful way of understanding themselves, other people, their society, and other societies. The most fundamental goal of this book, then, is to help the student develop a sociological perspective.

This goal is emphasized explicitly in the first chapter and implicitly throughout *In Conflict and Order: Understanding Society*, fifteenth edition. The sociological perspective focuses on the social sources of behavior. It requires shedding existing myths and ideologies by questioning all social arrangements. One of the most persistent questions of the sociologist is, Who benefits from the existing customs and social order, and who does not? Because social groups are created by people, they are not sacred. Is there a better way?

Although there will be disagreement on the answers to these questions, the answers are less important, sociologically, than the willingness to call into question existing social arrangements that many people consider sacred. This is the beginning of the sociological perspective. But being critical is not enough. The sociologist must have a coherent way to make sense of the social world, and this leads us to the second goal of this edition of *In Conflict and Order*—the elaboration of a consistent framework from which to understand and interpret social life. *In Conflict and Order*, fifteenth edition, is guided by the assumption that there is an inherent duality in all societies. The realistic analysis of any one society must include both the integrating and stabilizing forces, on one hand, and the forces that are conducive to conflict and change, on the other. Society in the United States is characterized by harmony and conflict, integration and division, stability and change. This synthesis is crucial if the intricacies of social structure, the mechanisms of social change, and the sources of social problems are to be understood fully.

This objective of achieving balance between the order and the conflict perspectives is not fully realized in this book, however. Although both perspectives are incorporated into each chapter, the scales are tipped toward the conflict perspective. This imbalance is the conscious product of how the authors, as sociologists and teachers, view the structure and mechanisms of society. In addition to presenting what we believe is a realistic analysis of society, this imbalance counters the prevailing view of the order perspective, with its implicit sanctification of the status quo. Such a stance is untenable to us, given the spate of social problems that persist in U.S. society. The emphasis on the conflict approach, on the other hand, questions existing social arrangements, viewing them as sources of social problems, a position with which we agree. Implicit in such a position is the goal of restructuring society along more humane lines.

That we stress the conflict approach over the order model does not suggest that *In Conflict and Order* is a polemic. On the contrary, the social structure is also examined from a sympathetic view. The existing arrangements do provide for the stability and maintenance of the system. But the point is that, by including a relatively large dose of the conflict perspective, the discussion is a realistic appraisal of the system rather than a look through rose-colored glasses.

This duality theme is evident primarily at the societal level in this book. But even though the societal level is the focus of our inquiry, the small-group and individual levels are not ignored. The principles that apply to societies are also appropriate for the small social organizations to which we belong, such as families, work groups, athletic teams, religious organizations, and clubs. Just as important, the sociological perspective shows how the individual's identity is shaped by social forces and how in many important ways the individual's thoughts and actions are determined by group memberships. The relationship of the individual to the larger society is illustrated throughout the book in special panels that examine societal changes and forces impinging on individuals and the choices available to us as we attempt to cope with these societal trends.

Organization of the Book

The book is divided into five parts. Part One (Chapters 1 and 2) introduces the reader to the sociological perspective, the fundamental concepts of the discipline, and the duality of social life. These chapters set the stage for an analysis of the structure (organization) and process (change) of U.S. society. The emphasis is on the characteristics of societies in general and of the United States in particular.

Part Two (Chapters 3 through 6) describes the way in which human beings are shaped by society. The topics include the values that direct our choices, the social bases of social identity and personality, the mechanisms that control individual and group behavior, and the violation of social expectations—deviance. Throughout these chapters, we examine both the forces that work to make all of us living in the United States similar, and those that make us different.

Part Three (Chapters 7 through 10) focuses on systems of inequality. We look at how societies rank people in hierarchies. We also examine the mechanisms that ensure that some people have a greater share of wealth, power, and prestige than do others, and the positive and negative consequences

of such an arrangement. Other chapters focus on the specific hierarchies of stratification: class, race, and gender.

Part Four (Chapters 11 through 16) discusses another characteristic of all societies: the presence of social institutions. Every society historically has developed a fairly consistent way of meeting its survival needs and the needs of its members. The organization of society into families, for example, ensures the regular input of new members, provides for the stable care and protection of the young, and regulates sexual activity. In addition to discussions of the family, chapters in Part Four are devoted to education, the economy, the polity, religion, and healthcare. The understanding of institutions is vital to the understanding of society because these social arrangements are part of its structure, resist change, and have a profound impact on the public and private lives of people.

Part Five (Chapters 17 and 18) examines social change and human agency. This section begins with a chapter showing how three major economic and demographic social forces (globalization, immigration, and the aging of the population) are changing society. We end the book focusing on social change from the bottom up using the specific examples of the civil rights movement, feminist movements, and the gay rights movement. The goal of this chapter is to combat the structural determinism bias of the earlier chapters by focusing on how human beings, individually and collectively, change social structures.

Themes of the Book

As in previous editions, *In Conflict and Order*, fifteenth edition incorporates four themes: diversity, inequality and the fight for social justice, the changing economy, and global issues. First, although there are separate chapters on race, class, and gender, these fundamental sources of inequality are infused throughout the book in text, figures, and tables. Second, the tendency toward structural determinism is countered by Chapter 18 and various examples of human agency throughout the book: the powerless organizing to achieve power and positive social changes (e.g., civil rights, gay rights, rights for people with disabilities, and gender equity in sports and the workplace). Third, the sources and consequences of the structural transformation of the economy are examined. This is a pivotal shift in the U.S. economy with significant implications for individuals, communities, the society, and the global economy. And, fourth, the focus is often shifted away from the United States to other societies through descriptions, panels, and tables. This global perspective is important for at least two reasons: to illustrate the universality of sociological concepts and to help us understand how the world is becoming ever more interconnected.

These four themes—diversity, inequality and the fight for social justice, the changing economy, and global issues—are important concepts to consider sociologically. We see that social problems are structural in origin and that the pace of social change is accelerating, yet society's institutions are slow to change and meet the challenges. The problems of U.S. society are of great magnitude, and solutions must be found. But understanding must precede action, and that is one goal of *In Conflict and Order.*

Finally, we are unabashedly proud of being sociologists. Our hope is that you will capture our enthusiasm for exploring and understanding the intricacies and mysteries of social life.

Features

To help students develop and foster their sociological perspective, we integrate the following features throughout the book.

- **Global** panels present examples of the interconnections among the world's peoples.
- **Diversity** panels address tolerance and understanding of a wide range of groups, institutions, choices, and behaviors.
- **A Closer Look** panels elaborate on specific topics in detail.
- **Media and Society** panels examine how technological innovations and social media affect social life.

New to This Edition

This fifteenth edition of ***In Conflict and Order*** is different and improved in the following ways:

- **Updated statistics,** including the most recent U.S. census population data, Bureau of Labor employment data, Bureau of Justice crime data, and more. New figures and tables are incorporated throughout the book.
- **More information about the changing economy,** including extensive coverage of the rise of multinational corporations, megamergers, the fourth industrial revolution, the decrease in work benefits, the increase in temporary and "gig" employment, and the increasing gap between the wealthy and everyone else.
- **Extensive coverage of power and politics throughout the text**, including multiple aspects of the 2016 presidential election (campaign finance, lobbying, the use of social media, etc.). Throughout the text, we highlight policy changes since the election of Donald Trump (e.g., the border wall between the United States and Mexico, proposed travel bans, 2017 tax reform, and more).
- **New coverage of popular contemporary topics,** including increasing racial tensions (e.g., violence and conflict over police actions as racially motivated), increasing conflicts over gun control, new social movements such as Take a Knee, "#metoo," and "#timesup, the debate over immigration and the children of immigrants (Dreamers), public feelings about the media and "fake news," and the controversy over transgender rights.
- **Panels** "Media and Society," are found throughout. Some of the topics considered are as follows: gender

and social media; Facebook lobbying; family life in the digital age; and the evolution of the family on American television. Throughout the text, the impact of social media on various aspects of society are considered.

- **New chapter on health and healthcare** includes the rising costs of healthcare in America, health differences by class, race, ethnicity, and gender, the politics of healthcare reform, and lessons from other societies on alternative healthcare systems.

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Revel is an interactive learning environment that deeply engages students and prepares them for class. Media and assessment integrated directly within the authors' narrative lets students read, explore interactive 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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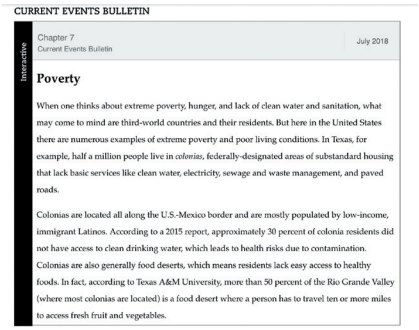
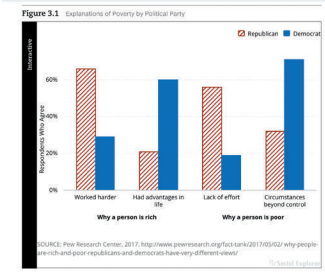
Revel FOR *UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY*
Providing educational technology for the way today's students read, think, and learn, Revel is an interactive learning environment that offers a fully digital experience. It uses frequent updates of articles and data to illustrate the current state of society. Students can interact with multiple types of media and assessments integrated directly within the authors' narrative:

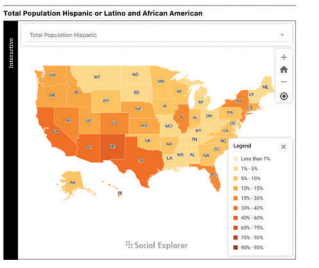
- Chapter-opening **Current Events Bulletins** feature author-written articles that put breaking news and current events into the context of Sociology. Examples include recent school shootings and the debate over gun control, transgender "bathroom bills" which force transgender students to use the bathroom that corresponds with their sex at birth, and the NCAA basketball corruption scandal.



- The Pearson Original **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 all while contextualizing core course concepts. These videos are incorporated into the chapters and can also be easily accessed from the instructor's Resources folder within Revel.

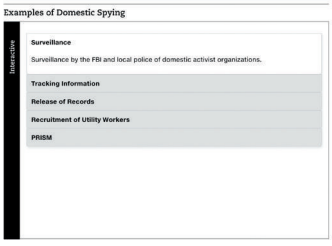
- **Interactive maps, figures, and tables** feature Social Explorer technology which allows for real-time data updates and rollover information to support the data and show movement over time. PowerPoint presentations with every Social Explorer Visualization can be accessed from the instructor's Resources folder within Revel.



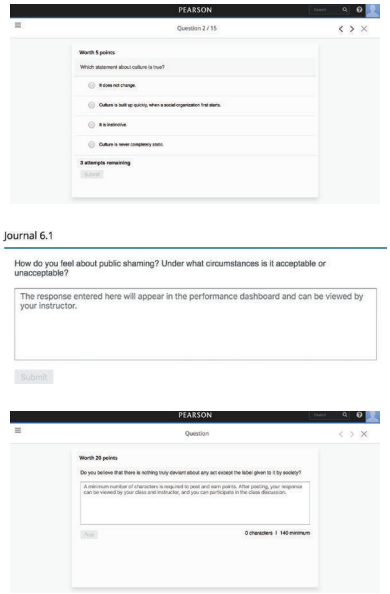


- **Primary source documents** are embedded in the narrative throughout the book. These readings provide students original writings from classical theorists and modern sociologists.

- **Interactive simulations and example lists** are throughout the chapters. The simulations highlight contemporary topics throughout the book. Detailed examples of topics covered in the narrative; these include corporate crime, relative deviance, domestic spying and more.



- **Assessments** tied to primary chapter sections, as well as full chapter exams, allow instructors and students to track progress and get immediate feedback.



- **Integrated Writing Opportunities**: To help students reason and write more clearly, each chapter offers three varieties of writing prompts:
  - **Journal prompts** at the end of each major section ask students to consider critical issues that relate to topics at the module level.
  - **Shared writing prompts**, linked to each chapter's conclusion, encourage students to consider how to address challenges described in the chapter. Through these prompts, instructors and students can address multiple sides of an issue by sharing their own views and responding to each other's viewpoints.
  - **Essay prompts** from Pearson's Writing Space, where instructors can assign both automatically graded and instructor-graded prompts. Writing Space is the best way to develop and assess 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 to improve results. 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 student work more focused and effective with customized grading rubrics they can see and personalized feedback. Writing Space can also check students' work for improper citation or plagiarism by comparing it against the world's most accurate text comparison database available from Turnitin.

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Pearson is pleased to offer the following resources to qualified adopters of *In Conflict and Order: Understanding Society*. Several of these supplements are available to instantly download from Revel or on the Instructor's Resource Center (IRC); please visit the IRC at www.pearsonhighered.com/irc to register for access.

- **TEST BANK** Evaluate learning at every level. Developed by the author, and reviewed for clarity and accuracy, the Test Bank measures this material's learning objectives with multiple-choice and essay questions. You can easily customize the assessment to work in any major learning management system and to match what is covered in your course. Word, Blackboard, and WebCT versions are available on the IRC, and Respondus versions are available on request from www.respondus.com.
- **PEARSON MYTEST** This powerful assessment generation program includes all of the questions in the Test Bank. Quizzes and exams can be easily authored and saved online, and then printed for classroom use, giving you ultimate flexibility to manage assessments anytime and anywhere. To learn more, visit www.pearsonhighered.com/mytest.
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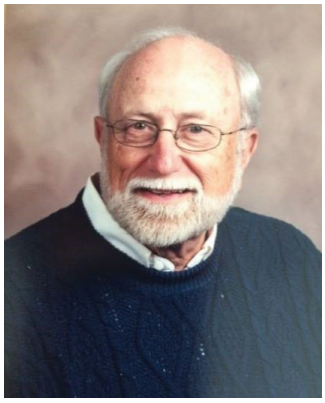
- **POWERPOINT** In order to support varied teaching styles while making it easy to incorporate dynamic Revel features in class, two sets of PowerPoint presentations are available for this edition: (1) A set of accessible lecture PowerPoint slides outline each chapter of the text. (2) An additional set of the lecture PowerPoint slides includes LiveSlides, which link to each social explorer data visualization and interactive map within the Revel product. These presentations are available to adopters in electronic formats at the Instructor's Resource Center (www.pearsonhighered.com/irc) or in the Instuctor Resources Folder within the Revel product.

About the Authors



D. STANLEY EITZEN (1934-2017) was professor emeritus in sociology at Colorado State University, where he taught for 21 years and received the John N. Stern Distinguished Professor award. Known as Stan to his friends, he was an avid fan of all sports and played football, basketball, and track in college. Prior to receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Kansas, he coached high school football, basketball, and track, and taught social studies. After going back to school and receiving an M.S. in social science, a second Master's, and a Ph.D. in sociology, he began a prolific career, publishing numerous articles and textbooks for more than 40 years such as *Social Problems*; *Diversity in Families*; *Globalization: the Transformation of Social Worlds*; *Solutions to Social Problems: Lessons from Other Societies*; *Sociology of North American Sport*; and *Fair and Foul: Rethinking the Myths and Paradoxes of Sport*. In addition to teaching and writing, Stan served as editor of the Social Science Journal, the Journal of the Western Social Science Association, and as President of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport. In retirement, Stan took up the hobbies of wood carving, painting (his art is on the cover of this book), the occasional golf game, and of course watching all manner of sports.

KELLY EITZEN SMITH received her Ph.D. From the University of Arizona in 1999. She is currently an applied sociologist and Assessment Coordinator for the School of Landscape Architecture and Planning, and a Research Associate for the Native Peoples Technical Assistance Office at the University of Arizona. Prior to these positions, she taught in the University of Arizona's sociology department and was the Associate Director of the Center for Applied Sociology. She is co-author of *Social Problems* (15th edition, with D. Stanley Eitzen and Maxine Baca Zinn), and *Experiencing Poverty: Voices from the Bottom* (Second Edition, with D. Stanley Eitzen). She currently assists the school with all aspects of accreditation including data collection, surveys, annual reports, program assessment, and self-study reports. She also conducts research and provides assistance at the Native Peoples Technical Assistance Office at the university. Her current research interests include housing and transportation affordability, poverty, urban social problems, tribal communities, community and neighborhood planning, and transit-oriented development.

MAXINE BACA ZINN is professor emeritus in the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University. She received her Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Oregon. Her books include *Women of Color in U.S. Society* (with Bonnie Thornton Dill), and *Gender Through the Prism of Difference* (with Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Michael Messner). She is the coauthor (with D. Stanley Eitzen) of several sociology textbooks including *Diversity in Families* and *Social Problems*, both of which won McGuffey awards for excellence over multiple editions from the text and academic authors association, and *Globalization: The Transformation of Social Worlds*. She served as President of the Western Social Science Association. In 2000 she received the American Sociological Association's Jessie Bernard Award, sociology's highest award for work on gender. She received the Charles Horton Cooley Award for distinguished scholarship from the Michigan Sociological Association in 2013, and the distinguished career award from the Latino section of the American Sociological Association in 2015.

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Dedication

I, Stan's daughter, am deeply honored and grateful to continue this work for the next generation of students. As one of Stan's colleagues said upon his passing: "He has left us, but his work remains. Indeed, he has left behind a rich intellectual and global legacy for us all."

–Kelly Eitzen Smith

Stan was my mentor, colleague, and friend. His innovative, engaged, and inspiring scholarship continues to make a difference.

–Maxine Baca Zinn

We dedicate this edition to D. Stanley Eitzen, whose legacy lives on in the pages of this book.

Kelly Eitzen Smith
Maxine Baca Zinn

Chapter 1
The Sociological Perspective

Learning Objectives

1.1 Understand the assumptions of the sociological perspective.

1.2 Describe the contributions of four key theorists to the development of sociology.

1.3 Develop a sociological research question and propose a research method to answer it.

1.4 Explain what it is about the sociological perspective that makes some people uncomfortable.

Life appears to be a series of choices for each of us. We decide how much schooling is important and what field to major in. We choose a job, a mate, and a lifestyle. But how free are we? Have you ever felt trapped by events and conditions beyond your control? Your religious beliefs may make you feel guilty for some behaviors. Your patriotism may cost you your life—even willingly. These ideological traps are powerful, so powerful that we usually do not even see them as traps. Have you ever continued a relationship with a friend, a group of friends, or a partner when you were convinced that this relationship was wrong for you? Have you ever participated in an act, which later seemed absolutely ridiculous, even immoral, because of peer pressure? Most likely your answers to these questions are in the affirmative because the people closest to us effectively command our conformity.

At another level, have you ever felt that because of your race, gender, age, ethnicity, or social class, certain opportunities were closed to you? For example, if you are a woman, you may want to seek a leadership position in your church, but you are denied because of that church's beliefs. Or if you are a man you may want to try certain jobs or hobbies, but to do so would call your masculinity into question.

Even more remotely, each of us is controlled by decisions made in corporate boardrooms, in government bureaus, and in foreign capitals. Whether we retain employment may not be the consequence of our work behavior but rather the result of corporate decisions to move a plant overseas, to outsource the work offshore, or to buy equipment that replaces human labor. Similarly, the actions of investment bankers and hedge fund managers can cause a worldwide financial crisis that affects millions of people, as occurred in the last months of 2007. When their too risky investments cratered, the stock market plunged, and some major banks and brokerage houses went bankrupt while others were rescued by the government. Panic ensued, and fortunes were lost. Millions of Americans lost as much as half of the value of their savings as their stock portfolios and the value of their homes plummeted.

All of these examples demonstrate that while life may appear to be a series of choices, an individual is affected by larger events outside their control. Sociology is the

discipline that attempts to understand these social forces—the forces outside us that shape our lives, interests, and personalities. In this chapter we introduce you to the concept, assumptions, and craft of sociology.

Sociology

1.1 Understand the assumptions of the sociological perspective.

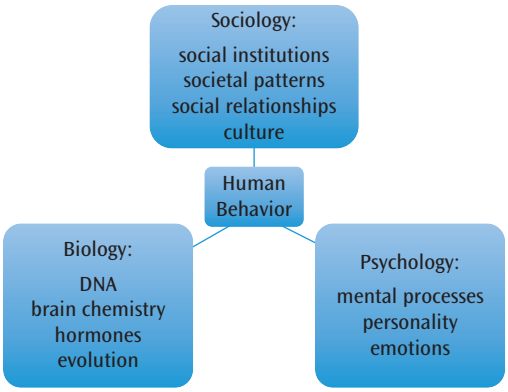
sociology
The scholarly discipline concerned with the systematic study of human society

Sociology is the scholarly discipline concerned with the systematic study of human society. As the science of society, institutions, and social behavior, sociology is interesting, insightful, and important. This is so because sociology explores and analyzes the ultimate issues of our personal lives, of society, and of the world. At the personal level, sociology investigates the causes and consequences of such phenomena as romantic love, violence, identity, conformity, deviance, personality, and interpersonal power. At the societal level, sociology examines and explains poverty, crime rates, racism, sexism, homophobia, pollution, and political power. At the global level, sociology researches such phenomena as societal inequality, war, conflict resolution, immigration patterns, climate change, and population growth. Other disciplines are also helpful in understanding these social phenomena, but sociology makes a unique contribution. The insights of sociology are important for individuals because they help us understand why we behave as we do. This understanding is not only liberating but a necessary precondition for meaningful social action to bring about social change.

Assumptions of the Sociological Perspective

To discover the underlying order of social life and the principles that explain human behavior, scientists have focused on different levels of phenomena. The result of this division of labor has been the creation of scholarly disciplines, each concentrating on a relatively narrow sphere of phenomena. Biologists interested in social phenomena have focused on organic bases for behavior such as DNA, brain chemistry, and hormone balance. Psychological explanations assume that the source of human behavior lies in the psyches of individuals causing guilt, aggression, phobias, lack of motivation, and low self-esteem. The understanding of human behavior benefits from the emphases of the various disciplines. Each discipline makes important contributions to knowledge. Of the three major disciplines focusing on human behavior, sociology is commonly the least understood. The explicit goal of this book is to remedy this fault by introducing the reader to the sociological ways of perceiving and interpreting the social world. Let us begin by considering the assumptions of the sociological approach that provide the foundation for this unique and insightful way of viewing and understanding the social world.

Figure 1.1 Explaining Human Behavior From Different Disciplines



INDIVIDUALS ARE, BY THEIR NATURE, SOCIAL BEINGS. There are two fundamental reasons for this assumption. First, human babies enter the world totally dependent on other people for their survival. This initial period of dependence means, in effect, that each of us has been immersed in social groups from birth. A second basis for the social nature of human beings is that throughout history people have found it to their advantage to cooperate with other people (for defense, for material comforts, to overcome the perils of nature, and to improve technology).

INDIVIDUALS ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, SOCIALLY DETERMINED. This essential assumption stems from the first assumption, that people are social beings. Individuals are products of their social environments for several reasons. During infancy, the child is at the mercy of adults, especially parents. These people shape the infant in an infinite variety of ways, depending on their proclivities and those of their society. The

parents have a profound impact on the child's ways of thinking about himself or herself and about other people. The parents transmit religious views, political attitudes, and attitudes toward the evaluation of others. The child is punished for certain behaviors and rewarded for others. Whether that child becomes a devout believer or atheist, a Republican or Democrat, a racist or integrationist depends in large measure on the parents, peers, and other people who interact with her or him.

The parents may transmit to their offspring some idiosyncratic beliefs and behaviors, but most significantly they act as cultural agents, transferring the ways of the society to their children. Thus, the child is born into a family and also into a society. This society into which individuals are born shapes their personalities and perceptions. Who we are, how we feel about ourselves, and how other people treat us are usually consequences of our social location such as social class, race/ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Individuals' personalities are also shaped by the way they are accepted, rejected, and defined by other people. Whether an individual is considered attractive or plain, popular or unpopular, worthy or unworthy depends on the values of society and the groups in which the individual is immersed. This is true now more than ever as the majority of the public uses social media to connect and engage with the broader society. Although genes determine one's physiology and potential, it is the social environment that determines the individual's personality and perceptions of the world.

Suggesting that human beings are socially determined is another way of saying that they are similar to puppets, manipulated by unseen forces. To say that we are puppets is too strong, however. This assumption is not meant to imply a total **social determinism** (the assumption that human behavior is explained exclusively by social factors). The puppet metaphor is used to convey the idea that much of who we are and what we do is a product of our social environment. But there are nonconformists, deviants, and innovators. Society is not a rigid, static entity composed of robots. While the members of society are shaped by their social environment, they also change that environment. Human beings are the shapers of society as well as the shapees. This leads us to the third assumption of the sociological approach.

social determinism
The assumption that human behavior is explained exclusively by social factors

INDIVIDUALS CREATE, SUSTAIN, AND CHANGE THE SOCIAL FORMS WITHIN WHICH THEY CONDUCT THEIR LIVES. Even though individuals are largely puppets of society, they are also puppeteers. Social groups of all sizes and types (families, peer groups, work groups, corporations, communities, and societies) are constructed by people. Interacting people create a social structure that becomes a source of control over those individuals (i.e., they become puppets of their own creation). But the continuous interaction of the group's members also changes the group.

There are four important implications of this assumption that groups are human-made. First, these social forms that are created have a certain momentum of their own that defies change. The ways of doing and thinking common to the group are viewed as natural and right. Although human-made, the group's expectations and structures take on a sacred quality—the sanctity of tradition—that constrains behavior in the socially prescribed ways.

A second implication is that social organizations, because they are created and sustained by people, are imperfect. Slavery benefited some segments of society by taking advantage of other segments. A free enterprise system creates winners and losers. The wonders of technology make worldwide transportation and communication easy and relatively inexpensive but create

Parents transmit religious views, political attitudes, and attitudes toward others to their children.
SOURCE: Zoonar GmbH/Val Thoermer/Alamy Stock Photo

Through collective action, individuals are capable of changing the structure of society and even the course of history.

SOURCE: Citizen of the Planet/Alamy Stock Photo

pollution and waste natural resources. These examples show that there are positive and negative consequences of the way people have organized themselves.

The third implication is that through collective action, individuals are capable of changing the structure of society and even the course of history. Consider, for example, the social movement in India led by Mahatma Gandhi that ended colonial rule by Great Britain or the civil rights movement in the South led by Martin Luther King Jr.

The final significance of this assumption is that individuals are not passive. Rather, they actively shape social life by adapting to, negotiating with, and changing social structures. This process is called **human agency**. A discussion devoted to this meaningful interaction between social actors and their social environment, bringing about social change, is reserved for the final chapter. Human agency provides the crucial vantage point and insights from the bottom up, whereas most of this book examines social life from the top down.

human agency
When individuals actively shape social life by adapting to, negotiating with, and changing social structures

The Sociological Imagination

C. Wright Mills (1916–1962), in his classic *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), wrote that the task of sociology was to realize that individual circumstances are inextricably linked to the structure of society. The **sociological imagination** involves several related components:

sociological imagination
The ability to see the societal patterns that influence individuals, families, groups, and organizations

- The sociological imagination is stimulated by a willingness to view the social world from the perspective of others.
- It involves moving away from thinking in terms of the individual and her or his problem, focusing rather on the social, economic, and historical circumstances that produce the problem. Put another way, the sociological imagination is the ability to see the societal patterns that influence individuals, families, groups, and organizations.
- Possessing a sociological imagination, one can shift from the examination of a single family to national budgets, from a low-income person to national welfare policies, from an unemployed person to the societal shift from manufacturing to a service/knowledge economy, from a single mother with a sick child to the high cost of health care for the uninsured, and from a homeless family to the lack of affordable housing.

- To develop a sociological imagination requires a detachment from the taken-for-granted assumptions about social life. One must be willing to question the structural arrangements that shape social behavior.
- When we have this imagination, we begin to see the solutions to social problems not in terms of changing problem people but in changing the structure of society.

The Historical Development of Sociology

1.2 Describe the contributions of four key theorists to the development of sociology.

positivism
Knowledge based on systematic observation, experiment, and comparison

social facts
Social factors that exist external to individuals such as tradition, values, laws, and religious ideology

Sociology emerged in Western Europe in the late eighteenth century during the Enlightenment (also known as the Age of Reason). Spurred by dramatic social changes such as the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution, urbanization, and capitalism, intellectuals during this period promoted the ideals of progress, democracy, freedom, individualism, and the scientific method. These ideas replaced those of the old medieval order, in which religious dogma and unquestioned obedience to royal authorities dominated. The new intellectuals believed that human beings could solve their social problems. They also believed that society itself could be analyzed rationally. Out of this intellectual mix, several key theorists laid the foundation for contemporary sociological thought. We focus briefly on the contributions of four: Auguste Comte, Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber. We further elaborate on the sociological explanations of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber throughout this book.

Auguste Comte (1798–1857): The Science of Society

The founder of sociology was a Frenchman, Auguste Comte, who coined the word *sociology*—from the Latin *socius* ("companion," "with others") and the Greek *logos* ("study of")—for the science of society and group life. Comte sought to establish sociology as a science (his initial name for the discipline was "social physics") free of religious arguments about society and human nature using the Enlightenment's emphasis on **positivism** (knowledge based on systematic observation, experiment, and comparison). Comte was convinced that, using scientific principles, sociologists could solve social problems such as poverty, crime, and war.

French philosopher Auguste Comte coined the word *sociology*.
SOURCE: Chronicle/Alamy Stock Photo

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917): Social Facts and the Social Bond

Durkheim provided the rationale for sociology by emphasizing social facts. His classic work *Suicide* (Durkheim, 1951, first published in 1897) demonstrates how social factors explain individual behavior. Durkheim focused on **social facts**—social factors that exist external to individuals such as tradition, values, laws, religious ideology, and population density. The key for Durkheim was that these factors affect the behaviors of people, thus allowing for sociological explanations rather than biological and psychological reasoning.

The 99% Movement is an excellent example of class consciousness.

SOURCE: Norma Jean Gargasz/Alamy Stock Photo

Durkheim was also interested in social integration—what holds groups and society together. His works show how belief systems bind people together; how public ceremonies and rituals promote solidarity; how labeling some people as deviant reaffirms what society deems to be right; and how similarities (shared traditions, values, ideology) provide the societal glue in traditional societies, while differences (division of labor) provide the social bond in complex societies (i.e., due to the specialization in work roles, people need each other).

Durkheim made invaluable contributions to such core sociological concepts as social roles, socialization, anomie, deviant behavior, social control, and the social bond. In particular, Durkheim's works provide the foundation for the order model that is found throughout this book and will be explained thoroughly in Chapter 2.

Karl Marx (1818–1883): Economic Determinism

Karl Marx devoted his life to analyzing and criticizing the society he observed. He was especially concerned with the gap between the people at the bottom of society and the elite, between the powerless and the powerful, the dominated and the dominant. Marx reasoned that the type of economy found in a society provides its basic structure (system of stratification, unequal distribution of resources, the bias of the law, and ideology). Thus, he was vitally interested in how the economic system of his day—capitalism—shaped society. The owners of capital (the bourgeoisie) exploited their workers (the proletariat) to extract maximum profits. They used their economic power to keep the less powerful in their place and to benefit unequally from the educational system, the law, and other institutional arrangements in society. These owners of capital also determined the prevailing ideas in society because they controlled the political system, religion, and media outlets. In this way, members of the working class accept the prevailing ideology. Marx called this **false consciousness** (believing in ideas that are not in a group's objective interests but rather in the best interests of the capitalist class). Social change occurs when the contradictions inherent in capitalism (see Chapter 11) cause the working class to recognize their oppression and develop **class consciousness** (recognizing their class interests, common oppression, and an understanding of who the oppressors are), resulting in a revolt against the system. Thus, class conflict is the engine of social change.

false consciousness
Believing in ideas that are not in a group's objective interests but rather in the best interests of the capitalist class

class consciousness
Recognizing class interests, common oppression, and an understanding of who the oppressors are

Marx made extraordinary contributions to such core sociological concepts as systems of inequality, social class, power, alienation, and social movements. Marx's view of the world is the foundation of the conflict perspective, which is infused throughout this book and explained in Chapter 2.

Max Weber (1864–1920): A Response to Marx

Although it is an oversimplification, it helps to think of Weber's thought as a reaction to the writings of Marx. In Weber's view, Marx was too narrowly deterministic. In response, Weber showed that the basic structure of society comes from three sources: the political, economic, and cultural spheres, not just the economic, as Marx argued. Similarly, social class is not determined just by economic resources but also includes status (prestige) and power dimensions. Political power does not stem just from economic resources, as Marx argued, but also from the expressive qualities of individual leaders (**charisma**). But power can also reside in organizations (not individuals), as Weber showed in his extensive analysis of bureaucracy. Weber countered Marx's emphasis on material economic concerns by showing how ideology shapes the economy. Arguably his most important work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber, 1958, first published in 1904) demonstrates how a particular type of religious thought (the protestant belief system) made capitalism possible. In sum, Weber's importance to sociology is seen in his mighty contributions to such core concepts as power, ideology, charisma, bureaucracy, and social change.

charisma
A special charm or appeal that causes people to feel attracted and excited by someone (such as a politician)

The Craft of Sociology

1.3 Develop a sociological research question and propose a research method to answer it.

Sociological research is dependent on reliable scientific data and logical reasoning. Sociologists use multiple methods of gathering data and studying populations. Before we describe how sociologists gather reliable data and make valid conclusions, let us examine the kinds of questions sociologists ask.

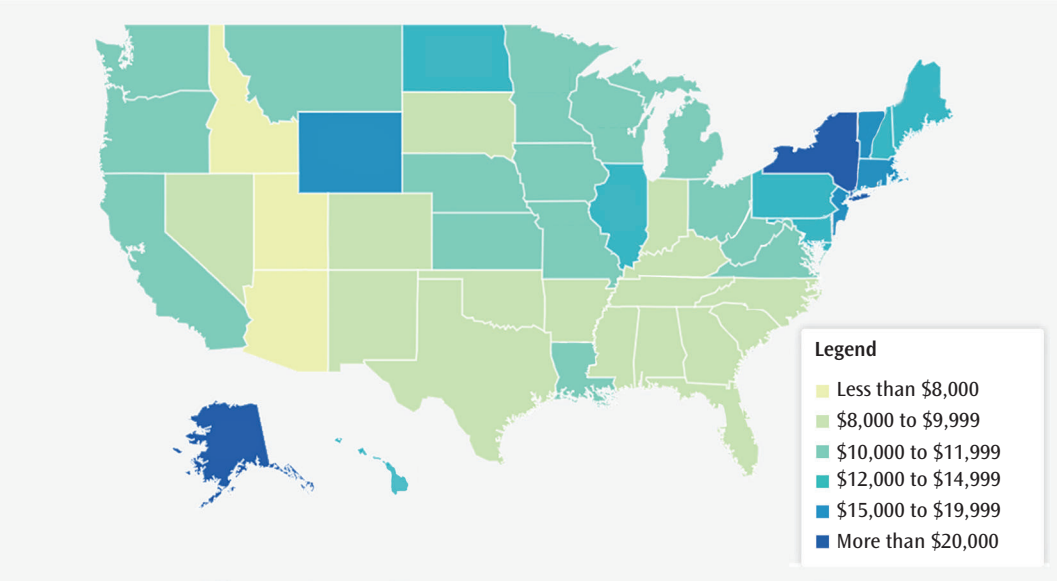
Sociological Questions

To begin, sociologists ask factual questions. For example, let's assume that we want to know whether the U.S. public education system provides equal educational opportunities for all youth. To determine this, we need to do an empirical investigation to find the facts concerning such items as the amount spent per pupil by school districts within each state. Within school districts, we need to know the facts concerning the distribution of monies by neighborhood schools. Are these monies appropriated equally, regardless of the social class or racial composition of the school? Are curriculum offerings the same for girls and boys within a school? Are extra fees charged for participation in extracurricular activities, and does this affect the participation of children by social class?

Sociologists also may ask comparative questions—that is, how does the situation in one social context compare with that in another? Most commonly, these questions involve the comparison of one society with another. Examples here might be the comparisons among industrialized nations on infant mortality, murder, drug use, or the mathematics scores of 16-year-olds. Or, using the previous example, how do states compare to each other on per-pupil spending (see Figure 1.2)? How does the United States compare to Sweden on educational equality? These are all examples of comparative questions.

A third type of question that a sociologist may ask is historical. Sociologists are interested in trends. What are the facts now concerning divorce, immigration, crime, and political participation, for example, and how have these patterns changed over time?

Figure 1.2 Current Per-Pupil Spending of Public Elementary-Secondary School Systems



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2017). Annual Survey of School System Finances: Per-Pupil Amounts for Current Spending of Public Elementary-Secondary School Systems by State: Fiscal Year 2015.

The three types of sociological questions considered so far determine the way things are. But these types of questions are not enough. Sociologists go beyond the factual to ask why. Why have real wages (controlling for inflation) declined since 1973 in the United States? Why are the poor poor? Why do birth rates decline with industrialization? Why do some people commit crimes and not others? These types of "why" questions lead to the development of theories. A **sociological theory** is a set of ideas that explains a range of human behavior and a variety of social and societal events. A researcher's theoretical approach guides the research process from the types of questions that are asked to the development of a hypothesis to the analysis of the results.

sociological theory
A set of ideas that explains a range of human behavior and a variety of social and societal events

Sources of Data

Sociologists do not use stereotypes to explain behavior, nor do they speculate based on faulty samples. Because we are part of the world that is to be explained, sociologists must obtain evidence that is beyond reproach. In addition to observing scrupulously the canons of science, there are four basic sources of data that yield valid results for sociologists: survey research, experiments, observation, and existing data. We describe these techniques briefly here.

SURVEY RESEARCH. Sociologists are interested in obtaining information about people with certain social attributes. They may want to know how political beliefs and behaviors are influenced by differences in sex, race, ethnicity, religion, and social class. They may want to determine whether poor people have different values from other people in society, the answer to which will have a tremendous impact on the ultimate solution to poverty. Or they may want to know whether voting patterns, work behaviors, or marital relationships vary by income level, educational attainment, or religious affiliation.

To answer these and similar questions, the sociologist may use personal interviews, written questionnaires, or online surveys to gather the data. The researcher may obtain information from all possible subjects or from a selected **sample** (a representative part of a population). Because the former method is often impractical due to population size,

sample
A representative part of a population

a random sample of subjects is selected from the larger population. If the sample is selected scientifically (i.e., each individual in the population under study has an equal chance of being included in the sample) a relatively small proportion can yield satisfactory results—that is, the inferences made from the sample will be reliable about the entire population. For example, a probability sample of only 2,000 from a total population of 1 million can provide data very close to what would be discovered if a survey were taken of the entire 1 million.

A special type of survey research, **longitudinal surveys**, holds special promise for understanding human behavior. This type of research collects information about the same persons over many years. For example, the Panel Study of Income Dynamics at the University of Michigan is the longest-running longitudinal household survey in the world. It began in 1968 and has followed more than 18,000 individuals and their descendants, collecting data on marriage, child development, income, employment, and other topics (University of Michigan, 2017).

longitudinal surveys
This type of research collects information about the same persons over many years

EXPERIMENTS. A **variable** is something that can be changed, such as a characteristic, value, or belief. To understand the cause-and-effect relationship among a few variables, sociologists use controlled experiments. Let us assume, for example, that we want to test whether students' attitudes toward aging are affected by what they see in film. Using the experimental method, the researcher will take a number of students and randomly assign some to watch a film that portrays aging in a negative light, accompanied by a neutral lecture on aging statistics. The other group, the **control group**, will not watch the film but will hear the same lecture on aging. (The control group is a group of subjects not exposed to the independent variable—in this case, the film.) Before viewing the film, all the students will be given a test of their attitudes toward aging. This pretest establishes a benchmark from which to measure any changes in attitudes. The other group is called the **experimental group** because they are exposed to the independent variable—the film. The researcher might hypothesize that those students in the experimental group will have more negative attitudes toward aging than the control group that only heard the neutral lecture. Following the film and lecture, the students in both groups will be tested again on their attitudes toward aging. If this posttest reveals that the experimental group differs from the control group in attitudes toward aging (the **dependent variable**), then it is assumed that the film (the **independent variable**) is the source of the change. In other words, the independent variable is the presumed cause, and the dependent variable is the presumed effect of the independent variable.

variable
Something that can be changed such as a characteristic, value, or belief

control group
A group of subjects that is not exposed to the independent variable in an experiment

experimental group
A group of subjects that is exposed to the independent variable in an experiment

dependent variable
The variable being measured in an experiment. It may or may not be affected by the independent variable

independent variable
A variable that may or may not affect the dependent variable

OBSERVATION. There are two methods of observation in sociological research: participant and nonparticipant. Using **participant observation**, the researcher actually joins the group being studied in order to fully understand their behavior. For example, in order to study a particular religious group, the researcher might become a member, attending ceremonies and studying the group's beliefs. The researcher, without intervention, can observe as accurately as possible what occurs in a community, group, or social event. This type of procedure is especially helpful in understanding such social phenomena as the decision-making process, the stages of a riot, the attraction of cults for their members, or different employment experiences. For example, in 2001 Barbara Ehrenreich published her book *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. In her book she details her experiences working as a waitress, hotel maid, Walmart employee, house cleaner, and nursing home aide. Her experiences show the difficulties of paying for housing and transportation on low wages.

participant observation
The researcher joins the group being studied in order to fully understand their behavior

Using **nonparticipant observation**, the researcher does not become a part of the group that they are studying or participate directly in any activities being observed. The goal of nonparticipant observation is to observe events and social interactions in their natural environment. Nonparticipant observation is often used with other research methods like surveys, interviews, and existing data. In 2016, Harvard sociologist

nonparticipant observation
The researcher does not join the group or participate directly in any activities being observed

Sociologists use methods such as participant observation to study groups such as the homeless.

SOURCE: Marmaduke St. John/Alamy Stock Photo

Matthew Desmond published his book detailing the lives of eight families living in the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee. In *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, Desmond uses nonparticipant observation to show what it is like for poor families living on the edge of eviction and those landlords who hold their fates in their hands.

EXISTING DATA. The sociologist can also use existing data to test theories. The most common sources of information are the various agencies of the government. Data are provided for the nation, regions, states, communities, and census tracts on births, deaths, income, education, unemployment, business activity, health delivery systems, prison populations, military spending, poverty, migration, crime, and so on. Important information can also be obtained from such sources as business firms, athletic teams and leagues, unions, and professional associations. Statistical techniques can be used with these data to describe populations and the effects of social variables on various dependent variables.

Objectivity

A fundamental problem with the sociological perspective is the bane of the social sciences—objectivity. We are all guilty of harboring stereotyped conceptions of different social groups. Moreover, we interpret events, material objects, and people's behavior through the perceptual filter of our own religious and political beliefs. When fundamentalists oppose the use of certain books in school, when abortion is approved by a legislature, when the president advocates cutting billions from the federal budget by eliminating social services, or when the Supreme Court denies private schools the right to exclude certain racial groups, most of us rather easily take a position in the ensuing debate.

Sociologists are thus caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, they are members of society with beliefs, feelings, and biases. On the other hand, their professional task is to study society in a disciplined and scientific way. This latter requirement is that scientist–scholars be dispassionate, objective observers. In short, if they take sides, they lose their status as scientists.

value neutrality
To be absolutely free of bias in research

This ideal of **value neutrality** (to be absolutely free of bias in research) is problematic. First of all, should scientists be morally indifferent to the implications of their

research? In sociology, often the types of problems researched and the strategies used tend either to support the existing societal arrangements or to undermine them. Should sociologists remain neutral about these implications?

Second, is a purely neutral position possible? Most likely it is not. This argument is based on several related assumptions. One is that the values of the scientist–scholar enter into the choices of what will be studied and what questions will be asked. For example, in the study of poverty, a critical decision involves the object of the study—should one study the poor themselves or the system that tends to perpetuate poverty among a certain segment of society? The answer might very well depend on the researcher's values. Or, in choosing to study female prostitution, whether one believes that female prostitutes are sexually empowered or that they are exploited may change the types of questions asked or the interpretation of what is observed.

Furthermore, our values lead us to decide from which vantage point we will gain access to information about a particular social organization. If researchers want to understand how a prison operates, they must determine whether they want a description from the inmates, from the guards, from the prison administrators, or from the state board of corrections. Each view provides useful insights about a prison, but obviously biased ones.

In summary, bias is inevitable in the study and analysis of social problems. The choice of a research problem, the perspective from which one analyzes the problems, and the solutions proposed all reflect a bias that either supports the existing social arrangements or does not. Moreover, unlike biologists, who can dispassionately observe the behavior of sperm and the egg at conception, sociologists are participants in the social life they seek to study and understand. As they study homelessness, poor children, or urban blight, sociologists cannot escape from their own feelings and values. They must, however, not let their feelings and values render their analysis invalid. In other words, research and reports of research must reflect reality, not as the researcher might want it to be. Sociologists must display scientific integrity, which requires recognizing biases in such a way that these biases do not invalidate the findings. When research is properly done in this spirit, an atheist can study a religious sect, a pacifist can study the military–industrial complex, a divorced person can study marriage, and a person who abhors the beliefs of the Ku Klux Klan can study that organization and its members.

A Challenge to Think Sociologically

1.4 Explain what it is about the sociological perspective that makes some people uncomfortable.

Sociology can be uncomfortable to some because the behavior of the subjects is not always certain. Prediction is not always accurate because people can choose among options or be persuaded by irrational factors. For example, will a child born to poor, drug-addicted parents struggle in school and have poor life outcomes? We can predict, based on statistics or previous research, that this may happen, but there are no certainties. In chemistry, on the other hand, scientists know exactly what will occur if a certain measure of sodium is mixed with a precise amount of chlorine in a test tube. Civil engineers armed with the knowledge of rock formations, rainfall patterns, types of soils, wind currents, and temperature extremes know exactly what specifications are needed when building a dam in a certain place. They could not know these, however, if the foundation and building materials kept shifting. That is the problem—and the source of excitement—for the sociologist.

Sociology is also uncomfortable for some because it is not black and white—it is not like a math problem with only one right answer. For example, in explaining poverty one

sociologist may focus on family background and the lack of upward mobility between generations, another may focus on our system of education that disadvantages some and not others, while another may focus on occupational conditions that trap people in poverty. As previously indicated, sociologists may explain behavior in different ways based on their particular theoretical perspective. This may be frustrating to some students who would rather have just one correct answer or perspective on a social problem, but this is exactly what is exciting about the sociological perspective!

Finally, sociology is not a comfortable discipline because it challenges and critically examines long-standing cultural beliefs, institutions, and behaviors. Sociology frightens some people because it questions what they normally take for granted. Sociologists ask such questions as: How does society really work? Who really has power? Who benefits under the existing social arrangements, and who does not? To ask such questions means that the inquirer is interested in looking beyond the commonly accepted official definitions. The underlying assumption of the sociologist is that things are not as they seem. Is the mayor of your town the most powerful person in the community? Is the system of justice truly just? Is the United States a meritocratic society in which talent and effort combine to stratify people fairly? To make such queries calls into question existing myths, stereotypes, and official dogma.

The critical examination of society sensitizes the individual to the inconsistencies present in society. Clearly, that will result if you ask: Why does the United States, in the name of freedom, protect dictatorships around the world? Why do we encourage subsidies to the affluent but resent those directed to the poor? How high would George W. Bush have risen politically if his surname was Hernandez and his parents had been migrant workers? Why are people who have killed Whites more likely to be sentenced to death than people who have killed African Americans? Why, in a democracy such as the United States, are there so few truly democratic organizations?

A common reaction by students to sociology is that they find this inquiry threatening. Sociology is subversive—that is, sociology undermines our foundations because it questions all social arrangements, whether religious, political, economic, or familial. Even though this critical approach may be uncomfortable for some people, it is necessary for understanding human social arrangements and for finding solutions to social problems. Thus, we ask that you think sociologically. The process may be uncomfortable at first, but the results will bring enlightenment, interest, and excitement in all things social.

Chapter Review

1.1 Understand the assumptions of the sociological perspective.

- Sociology is the scholarly discipline concerned with the systematic study of human society. It is the discipline that attempts to understand the social forces that shape our lives, interests, and personalities. Sociologists, then, work to discover the underlying order of social life and the principles regarding it that explain human behavior.
- The assumptions of the sociological perspective are that (a) individuals are, by their nature, social beings; (b) individuals are socially determined; and (c) individuals create, sustain, and change the social forms within which they conduct their lives.
- The sociological imagination involves (a) a willingness to view the social world from the perspective of others; (b) focusing on the social, economic, and historical circumstances that influence families, groups, and organizations; (c) questioning the structural arrangements that shape social behavior; and (d) seeing the solutions to social problems not in terms of changing problem people but in changing the structure of society.

1.2 Describe the contributions of four key theorists to the development of sociology.

- Sociology emerged as a science in the late eighteenth century. The development of sociology was dependent on four European intellectuals. Auguste Comte was the founder of sociology. His

emphasis was on a rigorous use of the scientific method. Émile Durkheim emphasized social factors that exist external to individuals such as tradition, values, laws, and religion. Karl Marx wrote about the importance of economics in understanding social stratification, power, and ideology. Max Weber, in reaction to Marx, argued that the structure of society comes from political, economic, and cultural spheres, not just the economic sphere as Marx suggested.

1.3 Develop a sociological research question and propose a research method to answer it.

- Sociology is a science, and the rules of scientific research guide the efforts of sociologists to discover the principles of social organization and the sources of social constraints on human behavior.
- Sociological research involves factual, comparative, historical, and theoretical questions.
- Survey research is a systematic means of gathering data to obtain information about people's behaviors, attitudes, and opinions.
- Sociologists may use experiments to assess the effects of social factors on human behavior. One of two similar groups—the experimental group—is exposed to an independent variable. If this group later differs from the control group, then the independent variable is known to have produced the effect.
- Participant and nonparticipant observation are techniques for obtaining reliable information. Various social organizations such as prisons, hospitals, schools, churches, cults, families, communities, and corporations can be studied and understood through systematic observation.
- Sociologists also use existing sources of data to test their theories.
- Sociology depends on reliable data and logical reasoning. Although value neutrality is impossible in the social sciences, bias is minimized by the norms of science.

1.4 Explain what it is about the sociological perspective that makes some people uncomfortable.

- Sociology is uncomfortable for many people because (a) the behavior of people is not always certain; (b) it involves multiple theoretical perspectives; and (c) it challenges and critically examines long-standing cultural beliefs, institutions, and behaviors.

Key Terms

charisma, p. 7
class consciousness, p. 6
control group, p. 9
dependent variable, p. 9
experimental group, p. 9
false consciousness, p. 6
human agency, p. 4
independent variable, p. 9
longitudinal surveys, p. 9
nonparticipant observation, p. 9
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positivism, p. 5
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social determinism, p. 3
social facts, p. 5
sociological imagination, p. 4
sociological theory, p. 8
sociology, p. 2
value neutrality, p. 10
variable, p. 9

Chapter 2

The Duality of Social Life: Order and Conflict

Learning Objectives

2.1 Compare and contrast the order and conflict models of social systems.

2.2 Provide examples to demonstrate the integrative forces in society that maintain order.

2.3 Provide examples to demonstrate the divides in society that lead to conflict.

2.4 Analyze a social problem from the order and conflict perspectives.

A classic experiment was conducted in the 1960s when 24 previously unacquainted boys, age 12, were brought together at a summer camp (Sherif and Sherif, 1966). For three days the boys, who were unaware that they were part of an experiment, participated in camp activities. During this period, the camp counselors (actually, they were research assistants) observed the friendship patterns that emerged naturally. The boys were then divided into two groups of 12. The boys were deliberately separated in order to break up the previous friendship patterns. The groups were then isolated from each other for five days. During this period, the boys were left alone by the counselors so that what occurred was the spontaneous result of the boys' behavior. The experimenters found that in both groups there developed (a) a division of labor; (b) a hierarchical structure of ranks—that is, differences among the boys in power, prestige, and rewards; (c) the creation of rules; (d) punishments for violations of the rules; (e) specialized language such as nicknames and group symbols that served as positive in group identifications; and (f) member cooperation to achieve group goals.

This experiment illustrates the process of social organization. The counselors did not insist that these phenomena occur in each group; they seemed to occur naturally. The question is why? How do we explain the common social structure that emerged within each group? This chapter explains two models of society (two perspectives within sociology) that answer these questions quite differently: order and conflict.

Social Systems: Order and Conflict

2.1 Compare and contrast the order and conflict models of social systems.

The analysis of society begins with a mental picture of its structure. This image (or model) influences what scientists look for, what they see, and how they explain the phenomena that occur within the society.

One of the characteristics of societies—the existence of segmentation—is the basis for the two prevailing models of society. Every society is composed of parts. This differentiation may result from differences in age, race, sex, physical ability, education, family background, wealth, organizational membership, type of work, or any other characteristic considered important by the members. The fundamental question concerning differentiation is this: *What is the basic relationship among the parts of society?* The two contradictory answers to this question provide the rationale for the two models of society: order and conflict.

One answer is that the parts of society are in harmony. They cooperate because of similar or complementary interests and because they need each other to accomplish those things beneficial to all (examples are the production and distribution of goods and services and protection). Going back to the Sherif experiment, the order model would emphasize the division of labor that emerged in both groups of boys—a division of labor that helped the boys to achieve group goals. According to this model, the basic relationship that emerged spontaneously was one of cooperation.

Another answer is that the subunits of society are basically in competition with each other. This view is based on the assumption that the things people desire most (wealth, power, resources, and high status) are always in short supply; hence, competition and conflict are universal social phenomena. Again going back to the Sherif experiment, the conflict model would emphasize the hierarchical structure of the boys in terms of power and the development of rules and punishments (i.e., who developed those rules and who benefits from them). According to this model, the basic relationship that emerged spontaneously was one of competition, domination, and subordination.

Which model of society is correct? The camp experiment demonstrates that both models offer important insights into human behavior and the duality of society in terms of order and conflict.

The Order Model

The **order model** (also referred to as **functionalism or structural functionalism**) attributes to societies the characteristics of cohesion, consensus, cooperation, reciprocity, stability, and persistence. Societies are viewed as social systems, composed of interdependent parts that are linked together, creating order and stability. The parts of the system are basically in harmony with each other, and each serves a different function to keep society in balance. If something disrupts this order, the parts will adjust to produce a new stable order. The high degree of cooperation (and societal integration) is accomplished because there is a high degree of consensus on societal goals and on cultural values. Moreover, the different parts of the system are assumed to need each other because of complementary interests. Because the primary social process is cooperation and the system is highly integrated, all social change is gradual, adjustive, and reforming. Societies are therefore basically stable units.

order model (functionalism or structural functionalism)
A model that views society as composed of interdependent parts that work together, creating order and stability. Society is seen as cooperative, stable, and in harmony

For order theorists, the central issue is: What is the nature of the social bond? What holds groups together? This was the focus of Émile Durkheim, the French social theorist of the early 1900s (see Chapter 1). The various forms of integration were used by Durkheim to explain differences in suicide rates, social change, and the universality of religion (Durkheim, 1951; 1960; 1965).

For Durkheim, there are two types of societies, based on the way the members are bonded. In smaller, less complex societies, solidarity among the members occurs through the collective holding of beliefs (ideologies, values, moral sentiments, and traditions). Social integration, therefore, occurs because the members are alike. Modern, complex societies, in contrast, achieve social integration through differentiation. Society is based on the division of labor, in which the members involved in specialized tasks are united by their dependence on each other.

manifest consequence
The intended consequences of rules, norms, activities, and social structures

latent consequence
The unintended consequences of rules, norms, activities, and social structures

One way to focus on integration is to determine the manifest and latent consequences of social structures, norms, and social activities. Do these consequences contribute to the integration (cohesion) of the social system? Durkheim, for example, noted that the punishment of crime has the **manifest consequence** (intended) of punishing and deterring the criminal. The **latent consequence** (unintended) of punishment, however, is the societal reaffirmation of what is to be considered moral, correct behavior. The society is thereby integrated through belief in the same rules.

Taking Durkheim's lead, sociologists of the order persuasion have made many insightful analyses of various aspects of society. By focusing on all the functions and consequences of social structures and activities—intended and unintended—we can see behind the facades and thereby understand more fully such disparate social arrangements and activities as ceremonies (from weddings to sporting events), social stratification, fashion, propaganda, and even political machines.

The Conflict Model

conflict model
A model that views society as composed of competing parts that are in conflict with each other over power and resources

The assumptions of the **conflict model** (the view of society that posits conflict as a normal feature of social life, influencing the distribution of power and the direction and magnitude of social change) are opposite from those of the order model. The basic form of interaction is not cooperation but competition, which often leads to conflict. Because the individuals and groups of society compete for advantage, the degree of social integration is minimal and tenuous. Social change results from the conflict among competing groups and therefore tends to be drastic and revolutionary. The ubiquitousness of conflict results from the dissimilar goals and interests of social groups. It is, moreover, a result of social organization itself.

The most famous conflict theorist was Karl Marx. He theorized that there exists in every society (except in, Marx believed, the last historical stage of communism) a dynamic tension between two groups—those who own the means of production and those who work for the owners. Contrary to Durkheim, who saw modern industry

Marx believed that in every society there is conflict between those who own the means of production and workers.

SOURCE: Philip Scalia/Alamy Stock Photo

and its required division of labor as promoting social solidarity, Marx viewed these groups as the sources of division and exploitation. Marx focused on inequality—the oppressors and the oppressed, the dominant and the dominated, the powerful and the powerless. For him, the powerful protect their privileges by supporting the status quo. The laws, religion, education, politics, and mass media all work for the benefit of the advantaged. The powerful use and abuse the powerless, thereby sowing the seeds of their own destruction. The destruction of the elite is accomplished when the dominated people unite and overthrow the dominants.

Another emphasis of conflict theorists is that the unity or order present in society is superficial because it results not from consensus but from coercion. The powerful, it is asserted, use force and fraud to keep society running smoothly, with benefits mostly accruing to those in power.

The Duality of Social Life

The basic duality of social life can be seen by summarizing the opposite ways in which order and conflict theorists view the nature of society. If asked, "What is the fundamental relationship among the parts of society?" the answers of order and conflict theorists would disagree. This disagreement leads to and is based on a number of related assumptions about society. These assumptions are summarized in Table 2.1.

One interesting but puzzling aspect of Table 2.1 is that these two models are held by different scientific observers of the same phenomenon. How can experts on society derive such different assumptions? The answer is that both models are partially correct. Each model focuses on reality—but on only part of that reality. Scientists have tended to accept one or the other of these models, thereby focusing on only part of social reality, for at least two reasons: (1) one model or the other was in vogue at the time of the scientist's intellectual development or (2) one model or the other made the most sense for the analysis of the particular problems of interest—for example, the interest of Émile Durkheim, who devoted his intellectual energies to determining what holds society together, or the fundamental concern of Karl Marx, who explored the causes of revolutionary social change.

To help you understand how both models provide valuable insight into social phenomena, we turn to an analysis of sport.

SPORT FROM THE ORDER AND CONFLICT PERSPECTIVES. Order theorists examining any aspect of society emphasize the contribution that aspect makes to the stability

Table 2.1 Duality of Social Life: Assumptions of the Order and Conflict Models of Society

	Order Model	Conflict Model
Question: What is the fundamental relationship among the parts of society?		
Answer:	Harmony and cooperation	Competition, conflict, domination, and subordination
Why:	The parts have complementary interests. Basic consensus on societal norms and values	The things people want are always in short supply. Basic dissent on societal norms and values
Degree of integration:	Highly integrated	Loosely integrated. Whatever integration is achieved is the result of force and fraud
Type of social change:	Gradual, adjustive, and reforming	Abrupt and revolutionary
Degree of stability:	Stable	Unstable

of society (this section is dependent on Eitzen and Sage, 2013). Sport, from this perspective, preserves the existing social order in several ways. To begin, sport symbolizes the American way of life—competition, individualism, achievement, and fair play. Not only is sport compatible with basic U.S. values, but it also is a powerful mechanism for socializing youth to adopt desirable character traits, such as the acceptance of authority, obeying rules, and striving for excellence.

Sport also supports the status quo by promoting the unity of society's members through patriotism (e.g., the national anthem, militaristic displays, and other nationalistic rituals accompanying sports events). For example, after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the singing of "God Bless America" during the seventh inning stretch became a national baseball tradition, demonstrating loyalty, unity, and patriotism. The obligatory patriotism during sporting events is demonstrated most vividly in the controversy surrounding NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick. Kaepernick, in peaceful protest of police brutality and racial injustice in America, broke the norm of standing during the national anthem by kneeling. Other NFL players soon followed, prompting President Trump to criticize the NFL and tweet that the NFL should fire players who do not stand during the national anthem (Rodrigue and Person, 2017). In response to the president's remarks, players from a number of professional sports have chosen to kneel during the national anthem in protest (what is now being called the Take a Knee Movement). The public is divided on the issue, with some supporting the players' constitutional rights to peaceful protest and others offended by the players' actions. The point remains, however, that whether you agree or disagree with the protestors, patriotism is an integral part of sports.

Finally, sport inspires us through the excellent and heroic achievements of athletes, the magical moments in sport when the seemingly impossible happens, and the feelings of unity in purpose and loyalty of fans.

Clearly, then, sport from the order perspective benefits society. Sport socializes youth into proper channels, sport unites, and sport inspires. Thus, to challenge or to criticize sport is to challenge the foundation of our society's social order.

Conflict theorists argue that the social order reflects the interests of the powerful. Sport is organized at every level—youth, high school, college, professional, and Olympic—to exploit athletes and meet the goals of the powerful (e.g., public relations, prestige, and especially profits). See A Closer Look panel titled "Should College Athletes Unionize? A Conflict Perspective of Sports." Conflict theorists would point out the

Sports support the status quo by promoting the unity of society's members through patriotism.

SOURCE: Dirk Shadd/ZUMAPRESS/Newscom

A Closer Look

Should College Athletes Unionize? A Conflict Perspective of Sports

On April 25, 2014, Northwestern University football players participated in a vote that could change the face of college athletics. Spearheaded by the National College Players Association and former quarterback Kain Colter, the team voted on whether to become part of a union, the first union in college sports. Prior to the vote, the National Labor Relations Board in Chicago ruled that players receiving grant-in-aid scholarships are employees of the university and have the right to organize. In 2015, however, Northwestern players were denied their request to form the first union for student athletes.

The arguments for unionization are clearly aligned with the conflict perspective of sports. Universities make millions, if not billions, of dollars from the big revenue-generating sports like football. Northwestern University football generates approximately $30 million a year (Curry, 2014). At the same time athletes struggle to find classes that do not conflict with their sport schedule, spend up to 50 hours a week on their sport, run the risk of concussions and other sports-related injuries and being stuck with sports-related medical bills, and have no security if they are injured and can no longer play.

The 2015 ruling against unionization is a win for Northwestern University, which appealed the National Labor Relations Board ruling, stating that its players are students, not employees (Ganim, 2014). Also threatened by the idea of unionization is the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), a multi-billion-dollar-a-year organization. Recall Marx's perspective on power—the powerful protect their privileges by supporting the status quo. In this case, the status quo is to keep college athletes from forming unions and giving them power to make demands from their universities.

dangers when sports are dominated by a profit margin. In the competition to stay on top or remain competitive, schools or coaches may engage in unethical practices. For example, in September 2017, the FBI arrested four NCAA basketball coaches and an Adidas manager for fraud and corruption surrounding the recruitment of college athletes.

Sport inhibits the potential for protest and revolution by society's have-nots in three ways. First, sport validates the prevailing myths of capitalism, such as anyone can succeed if he or she works hard enough. If a person fails, it's his or her fault and not that of the system. Second, sport as entertainment diverts attention away from the harsh realities of poverty, unemployment, and dismal life chances. And third, sport gives false hope to oppressed members of society because they see sport as a realistic avenue of upward social mobility. The high visibility of wealthy athletes provides proof that athletic ability translates into monetary success. The reality, of course, is that only an extremely small percentage of aspiring athletes ever achieve professional status (see Table 2.2).

Conflict theorists agree with order theorists on many of the facts concerning sport but differ significantly in interpretation. Both agree that sport socializes youth, but conflict theorists view this socialization negatively because they see sport as a mechanism to get youth to follow orders, work hard, and fit into a system that is not necessarily beneficial to them. Both agree that sport maintains the status quo. But instead of this

Table 2.2 Probability of Competing Beyond High School

Student Athletes	Men's Basketball	Women's Basketball	Football	Baseball	Men's Ice Hockey	Men's Soccer
High School Student Athletes	546,428	429,380	1,083,308	488,815	35,155	440,322
NCAA Student Athletes	18,684	16,593	73,660	34,554	4,102	24,803
Percent High School to NCAA Division I	1.0%	1.2%	2.6%	2.1%	4.6%	1.3%
Percent High School to NCAA Division II	1.0%	1.1%	1.8%	2.2%	0.5%	1.5%
Percent High School to NCAA Division III	1.4%	1.6%	2.4%	2.8%	6.5%	2.8%
Overall Percent High School to NCAA	3.4%	3.9%	6.8%	7.1%	11.7%	5.6%
Percent NCAA to Major Professional	1.1%	0.9%	1.5%	9.1%	5.6%	1.4%

Note: These percentages are based on estimated data and should be considered approximations of the actual percentages.

SOURCE: NCAA, 2017; http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/estimated-probability-competing-college-athletics.

being interpreted as good, as the order theorists maintain, conflict theorists view this as bad because it reflects and reinforces the unequal distribution of power and resources in society.

Synthesis of the Order and Conflict Models

The assumptions of both models are contradictory for each comparison shown in Table 2.1, and their contradictions highlight the duality of social life. Social interaction can be harmonious or acrimonious. Societies are integrated or divided, stable or unstable. Social change can be fast or slow, revolutionary or evolutionary.

Taken alone, each of these perspectives fosters a faulty perception and interpretation of society, but taken together, they complement each other and present a complete and realistic model. A synthesis that combines the best of each model would appear, therefore, to be the best perspective for understanding the structure and process of society.

The initial assumption of a synthesis approach is that *the processes of stability and change are properties of all societies*. There is an essential paradox to human societies: They are always ordered, yet they are always changing. These two elemental properties of social life must be recognized by the observer of society. Within any society there are forces providing impetus for change (such as technology) and there are forces insisting on rooted permanence (such as customs, religious beliefs, and major institutions). These two processes constitute the dialectic (opposing forces) of society. As contrary tendencies, they generate tension because the instrumental forces are constantly prodding the institutions to change when it is not their nature to do so.

The second assumption is that *societies are organized, but the process of organization generates conflict*. Organization implies, among other things, the differential allocation of power. Inequalities in power are manifested in at least two conflict-generating ways: differentials in decision making and inequalities in the system of social stratification (social classes and minority groups). Scarce resources can never be distributed equally to all people and groups in society. The powerful are always differentially rewarded and make the key decisions as to the allocation of scarce resources.

A third basic assumption for a synthesis model is that *society is a social system*. The term *social system* has three important implications: (a) that there is not chaos but some semblance of order—that action within the unit is, in a general way, predictable; (b) that boundaries exist that may be in terms of geographical space or membership; and (c) that there are parts that are interdependent—thus conveying the reality of differentiation and unity. A society is a system made up of many subsystems (e.g., groups, organizations, and communities). Although these subsystems are all related in some way, some are strongly linked to others, whereas others have only a remote linkage. The interdependence of the parts implies further that events and decisions in one sector may have a profound influence on the entire system. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001, for example, had profound effects throughout U.S. society (e.g., the airline and leisure industries suffered financial setbacks resulting in layoffs; airlines received government subsidies while workers put out of work were denied; the stock market declined; screening procedures in airports were elevated, causing long delays; and the Justice Department instituted new rules that invaded privacy). Some events, however, have little or no effect on all of U.S. society. Most important for the synthesis approach is the recognition that the parts of the system may have complementary interests with other parts but may also have exclusive, incompatible interests and goals. There is generally some degree of cooperation and harmony found in society because of consensus over common goals and because of similar interests (e.g., defense against external threats). Some degree of competition and dissent is also present because of incompatible interests, scarcity of resources, and unequal rewards. Societies, then, are imperfect social systems.

A fourth assumption is that *societies are held together by complementary interests, by consensus on cultural values, and also by coercion*. Societies do cohere. There are forces that bind diverse groups together into a single entity. The emphasis of both order and conflict models provides twin bases for such integration—consensus and coercion.

Finally, *social change is a ubiquitous phenomenon in all societies*. It may be gradual or abrupt, reforming or revolutionary. All social systems change. Order theorists have tended to view change as a gradual phenomenon occurring either because of innovation or because of differentiation (e.g., dividing units into subunits to separate activities and make the total operation more efficient). This view of change is partially correct. Change can also be abrupt; it can come about because of social movements, or it can result from forces outside the society (i.e., as a reaction to events outside the system or an acceptance of the innovations of others).

The remainder of this chapter illustrates the duality of social life by examining the forces in U.S. society that serve to unify people and maintain order and the forces that divide and cause conflict.

The Integrative Forces in Society

2.2 Provide examples to demonstrate the integrative forces in society that maintain order.

Order theorists recognize that conflict, disharmony, and division occur within societies, particularly in complex, heterogeneous societies. They stress, however, the opposite societal characteristics of cooperation, harmony, and solidarity. They see U.S. society as "we the people of the United States" rather than as a conglomerate of sometimes hostile groups. In particular, order theorists focus on what holds society together. What are the forces that somehow keep anarchy from becoming a reality—or as the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes asked long ago, "Why is there not a war of all against all?" The answer to this fundamental question is found in the combined effects of a number of factors.

Functional Integration

Probably the most important unifying factor is the phenomenon of **functional integration** (the unity among divergent elements of society resulting from a specialized division of labor, noted by Durkheim). In a highly differentiated society such as the United States, with its specialized division of labor, interaction among different segments occurs with some regularity. Interdependence often results because no group is entirely self-sufficient. The farmer needs the miller, the processor, and retail agents, as well as the fertilizer manufacturer and the agricultural experimenters. Manufacturers need raw materials, on one hand, and customers, on the other. Management needs workers, and the workers need management.

functional integration
The unity among different elements of society resulting from a specialized division of labor

These groups, because they need each other, because each gains from the interaction, work to perpetuate a social framework that maximizes benefits to both parties and minimizes conflict or the breaking of the relationship. Written and unwritten rules emerge to govern these relationships, usually leading to cooperation rather than either isolation or conflict and to linkages between different (and potentially conflicting) groups.

Consensus on Societal Values

A second basis for the unification of diverse groups in the United States is that almost all people hold certain fundamental values in common. Order theorists assume that commonly held values are like social glue binding otherwise diverse people in a cohesive

societal unit. Unlike functional integration, unity is achieved here through similarity rather than through difference.

Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers, two contemporary sociologists, argue that most people in U.S. society affirm the following values (2011:5–6):

1. *Freedom.* The commonly held idea that people should be free from coercive restrictions imposed by others.
2. *Prosperity.* The belief that the economy should generate a good standard of living for most people, not just the privileged elite.
3. *Efficiency.* The idea that the economy should generate rational outcomes, maximizing the efficient use of resources.
4. *Fairness.* The notion that people should be treated justly and they should have equal opportunity to succeed.
5. *Democracy.* The belief that public policy decisions should reflect the wish of the public, not just the powerful elite.

Many symbols epitomize the consensus of people in the United States with respect to basic values. One such unifying symbol is the national flag. Although a mere piece of cloth, the flag clearly symbolizes something approaching the sacred. Reverence for the flag is evidenced by the shock shown when it is defiled and by the punishment given to defilers. Many who have criticized the Take a Knee Movement have accused the protestors of disrespecting the flag. The choice of the flag as an object to spit on or burn has been a calculated one by dissident groups throughout history. They choose to defile it precisely because of what it represents and because most citizens revere it so strongly. In 1989, the Supreme Court ruled that an individual who had desecrated the flag was guaranteed the right to do so because the Constitution protects the freedom of political expression. This decision outraged the majority of citizens, and politicians seized the opportunity to pass legislation making flag desecration an illegal act.

Similarly, such documents as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are held in high esteem and serve to unify citizens. The heritage of the United States is also revered through holidays such as Thanksgiving, Memorial Day, and Independence Day. Consensus is also achieved through the collective reverence for such leaders as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and John F. Kennedy.

The Social Order

A third factor that unifies people in the United States, at least minimally, is that they are all subject to similar influences and rules of the game. U.S. inhabitants are answerable to the same body of law (at the national level), and they are under the same government. Additionally, they use the same system of monetary exchange, the same standards for measurement, and so on. The order in society is evidenced by our taking for granted such assorted practices as obeying traffic lights, the use of credit, and the acceptance of checks or debit cards in lieu of money.

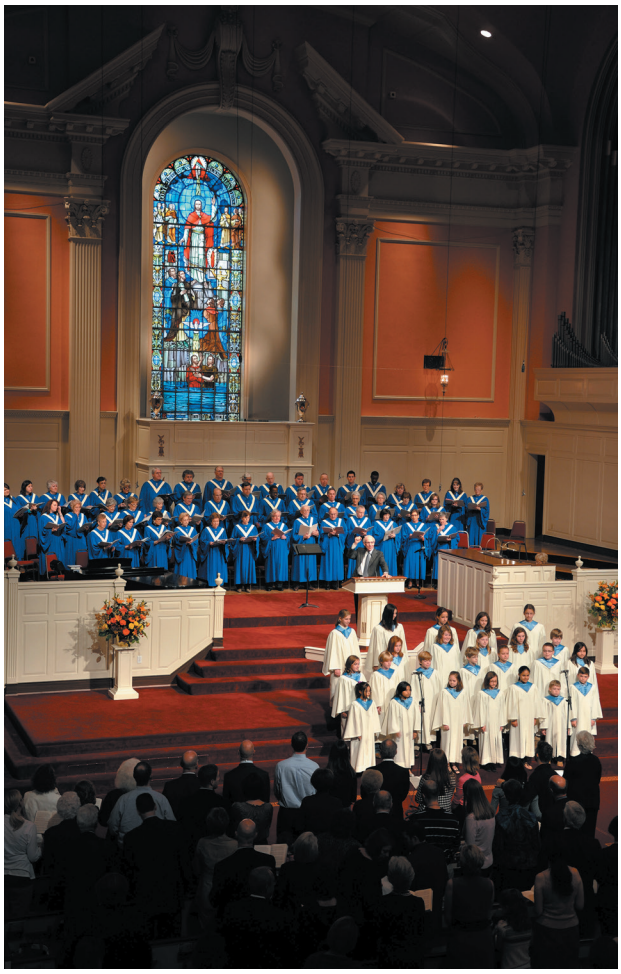
Group Membership

Another source of unity is group memberships. Some groups are exclusive because they limit membership to people of a particular race, ethnic group, income category, religion, or other characteristic. The existence of exclusive organizations creates tension if people are excluded who want to be included because exclusiveness generally implies feelings of superiority. Country clubs, fraternities, some churches, and some neighborhoods are based on the twin foundations of exclusiveness and superiority. There are other groups, however, whose membership consists of people from varying backgrounds (i.e., the membership includes rich and poor or Black and White). Consequently, heterogeneous organizations such as political parties, religious denominations or churches, and

veterans' organizations allow members the chance not only to interact with people unlike themselves but also to join together in a common cause.

Many, if not most, Americans who belong to several organizations belong to organizations with different compositions by race, religion, or other salient characteristics. To the extent that these cross-cutting memberships and allegiances exist, they tend to cancel out potential cleavages along social class, race, or other lines. Individuals belonging to several different organizations will probably feel some cross pressures (i.e., pulls in opposite directions), thereby preventing polarization.

Additionally, most people belong to at least one organization such as a school, church, or civic group with norms that support those of the total society. These organizations support the government and what it stands for, and they expect their members to do the same.



Group memberships serve to reinforce unity and preserve the status quo.
SOURCE: Q-Images/Alamy Stock Photo

International Competition and Conflict

Every two years, the world is treated to either the Summer or Winter Olympic Games, an international sports competition with more than 200 nations participating. This very visible event serves to promote national unity and pride as Americans watch their winning athletes stand on the podium while the national anthem is played, and the nightly news reports the medal counts by country. Events such as these serve to unify Americans regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or political beliefs.

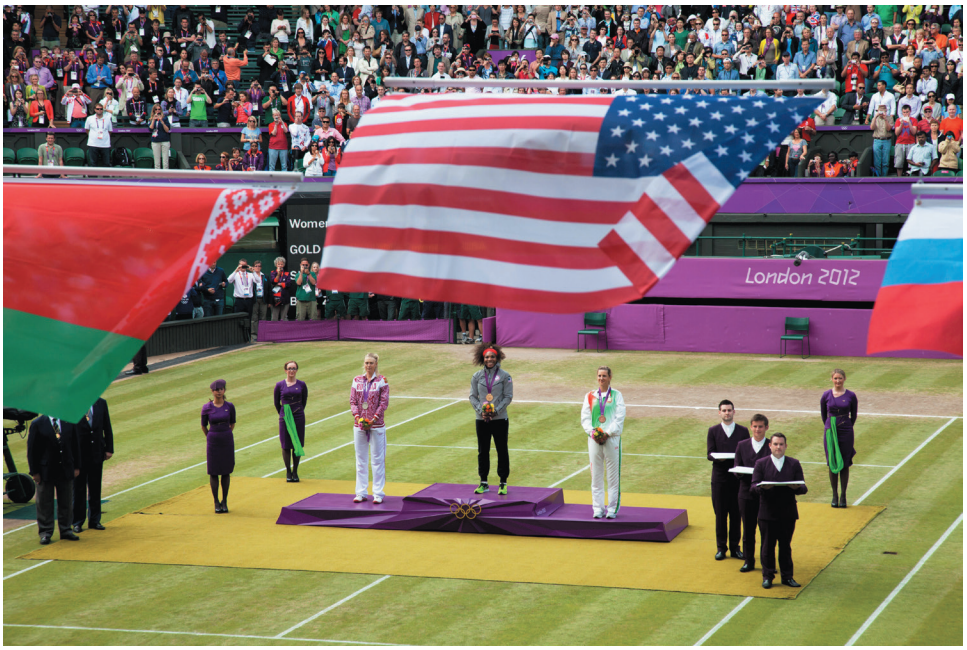
An external threat to the society's existence also unifies us. The advice Machiavelli gave his prince is a regrettable truth: "If the Prince is in trouble, he should promote a war." This was the advice that Secretary of State William Seward gave to President Lincoln prior to the Civil War. Although expedient advice from the standpoint of preserving unity, it was, Lincoln noted, only a short-term solution.

A real threat to security unifies those groups, no matter how diverse, that feel threatened. Thus, a reasonable explanation for the lack of unity in the U.S. involvement in an Indochinese war was that the Vietcong were not perceived by most Americans as a real threat to their security. The Soviet buildup in armaments in the 1980s, on the other hand, was perceived as a real threat, unifying many Americans in a willingness to sacrifice in order to catch up with and surpass the Soviets. The Persian Gulf War in 1991, however, was an instance when most Americans were unified against a dictator who threatened democracy and stability in the Middle East. Following the September 11, 2001, attacks by terrorists on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Americans of all types rallied behind their president in a sense of outrage and a common purpose in reducing as much as possible the threat of terrorism. The threat of terrorism has become the new source of unity from external sources.

The Mass Media

The world is in the midst of a communications revolution. Television, for example, has expanded to encompass virtually every home in the United States. The Internet has fundamentally changed how people relate to one another, how individuals get their news and learn about topics, how people conduct their work, and how people share

The Olympic Games serve to promote national unity and pride.



SOURCE: Michael Kemp/Alamy Stock Photo

their ideas. Order theorists see forms of mass media as performing several integrative functions. Government officials, for example, can use the media to shape public actions (e.g., to unite against an enemy or to vote on certain issues). The media also reinforce the values and norms of society. Newspaper editorials and blogs extol certain people and events while decrying others. Crime dramas reinforce the rules of society, with the criminals captured and punished by the end of the hour. The heroes of the United States are praised and its enemies vilified. Our way of life is the right way; the ways of others are considered incorrect or downright immoral. The mass media can be viewed in another way, however, which is that people have a tendency to gravitate toward sites that appeal to their own viewpoints. This may create within-group unity but can contribute greatly to societal division (discussed below).

Planned Integration

Charismatic figures or other people of influence may work to unite segmented parts of the system (conversely, they can promote division). Thus, a union leader or the archbishop of a Catholic diocese can, through personal exhortation or by example, persuade group members to cooperate rather than compete or to open membership requirements rather than maintain exclusiveness.

Public officials on the local, state, and national levels can use their power to integrate the parts of society in three major ways: (a) by passing laws to eliminate barriers among groups, (b) by working to solve the problems that segment the society, and (c) by providing mediators to help negotiate settlements between such feuding groups as management and labor.

co-optation
Appointing a member of a dissident group to a policy-making body to appease the dissenting group

High officials such as the president can use various means of integration. First, there is the technique of **co-optation** (appointing a member of a dissident group to a policy-making body to appease the dissenting group). Second, they can use their executive powers to enforce and interpret the laws in such a way as to unite groups within the society. Finally, the president and other high officials can use the media to persuade the people. Since the 2016 election of President Trump, the president's use of Twitter as a platform to connect with the public (he sent almost 1,000 tweets in the first six months of his presidency) has largely centered on making provocative statements, discrediting the media, criticizing foreign leaders, and complaining about his critics. While the

president has a large following of supporters, he has an equally large, vocal group of detractors. One might argue that in spite of common U.S. values and functional integration, the forces that divide society have never been greater.

The Fragmentation of Social Life: Deepening Divides in U.S. Society

2.3 Provide examples to demonstrate the divides in society that lead to conflict.

Societies are integrated, but disunity and disharmony also exist to some degree in all societies. It is especially important to examine the segmenting influences in U.S. society, for they aid in explaining contemporary conflict and social change. While there are many indicators of reduced societal cohesion, let's consider four: increasing polarization, declining trust in societal institutions, the widening inequality gap, and the deepening divides over diversity.

Increasing Polarization

Public voices, whether in the legislature or in the media, have become more shrill, more demanding of ideological purity, and, consequently, more dividing than uniting. As the sides coalesce at the extremes, the possibility of consensus, compromise, and civility shrinks. There is a philosophical divide between the two major political parties. In Congress, for example, Republicans favor solutions that help business. Thus, they oppose unions and the government regulation of business. In seeking to revive the economy, they believe in the power of tax cuts, primarily for the wealthy, assuming that the benefits will trickle down. Republicans also oppose government welfare programs because they believe that subsidies encourage dependency rather than self-reliance and individual accountability. Lower taxes and reduced welfare reveal their wish to make government smaller. In their view, government is not the solution; it is the problem.

Democrats, in contrast, believe in strong government regulation to protect the environment, workers, and consumers. They support unions and a rising minimum wage. They work for a strong safety net for the disadvantaged. To stimulate an economic recovery, Democrats believe in the financial powers of the government. In short, Democrats see the government as the solution to many of these problems.

In the past, Republicans and Democrats in Congress debated these issues and often reached consensus. The discourse, for the most part, was civil. Recently, though, political partisans have sometimes demonized their opponents, using ridicule and threats to make their cases. Most significant, compromise between Republicans and Democrats on any particular issue has become increasingly rare.

An ever-greater proportion of the public has become more polarized because of changes in the media. Fifty years ago, there were three broadcast networks. Regardless of the network chosen for the news, the message was essentially the same; that is, it was mainstream. Balance and objectivity were the norm. But now, with the advent of cable television, talk radio, political blogs, chat rooms, political magazines, and specialized websites, consumers can choose messages that reinforce their beliefs. Liberals can read, watch, and listen to liberal outlets such as MSNBC, while conservatives can limit their exposure to conservative venues, such as Fox News. According to Harvard Law Professor Cass Sunstein, when we hear only one side or are with only like-minded people, soft views harden, becoming more dogmatic. This phenomenon is known as **group polarization** (Sunstein, 2009). Have you ever "unfriended" someone on social media because you disagreed with their viewpoints? That also contributes to group polarization. For an in-depth example, see the Media and Society panel "The Coverage of Proposed Tax Reform—Two Points of View."

group polarization
The tendency for people to take extreme positions in the direction they were already inclined due to group membership

Media and Society

The Coverage of Proposed Tax Reform: Two Points of View

In September 2017, the Trump administration and Republican leaders rolled out a proposal for tax reform. The resulting coverage by two different news outlets shows how the media may emphasize different aspects of the same topic or event. When people only read or watch the news outlets that reinforce their belief systems, conflict and group polarization are magnified.

MSNBC

In an article titled "Fresh Evidence Discredits Key White House Tax Claim," a writer for MSNBC's *Rachel Maddow Show* argues that the assertion that the wealthy are not getting a tax cut under the proposed plan is an outright lie. In fact, the largest benefits from the plan would go to the top 1 and top 0.1 percent of households, while the poor and middle class would receive few benefits. MSNBC cites statistics from the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center that the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans would get an 8.5 percent tax break of $129,030; the wealthiest 0.1 percent would get a 10.2 percent break of $722,510; the typical middle-class household would get a 1.2 percent break of about $660; and the poor would get about a 0.5 percent break of $60. While President Trump claimed publicly that he would not benefit from the tax reform, the numbers indicate that he will indeed personally benefit from the plan (Benen, 2017).

Fox News

In an article published the same day titled "Trump: Tax Cuts Will Be 'Rocket Fuel' for Economy," a writer for Fox News emphasizes the benefits from the tax reform to corporations and businesses. Also mentioned is the overall tax cut to the middle class to help jump-start the economy. The number of tax brackets would be collapsed from seven to three (simplifying the tax system), and it is pointed out that the plan recommends a surcharge for the very wealthy (Fox News, 2017).

Declining Trust in Societal Institutions

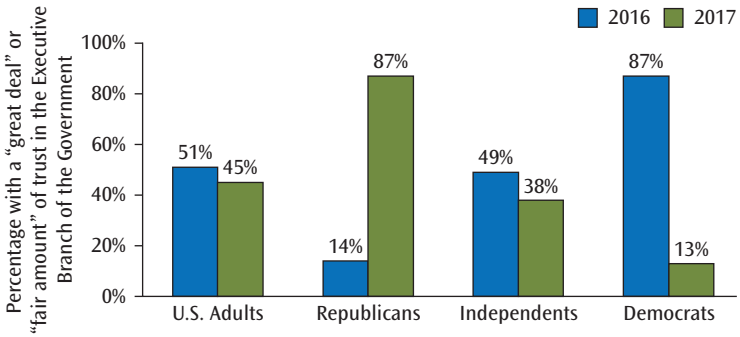
An important ingredient in the glue that holds society together is trust in society's institutions. Trust in the business world, for example, unravels when corporations from time to time are caught in fraudulent actions such as deceptive advertising, bribery, and other scandals. Most notably, many millions of homeowners were brought to bankruptcy or foreclosure with the bursting of the housing bubble caused by unscrupulous actions by lending institutions and inadequate government oversight.

A 2017 Harvard-Harris nationally representative poll shows that Americans are distrustful of the mainstream media. Almost 65 percent of those polled believe that the mainstream media report fake news, an idea promoted by President Trump. Not surprisingly, Republicans were more likely to be distrustful of mainstream media (80 percent) versus 53 percent of Democrats polled (Easley, 2017).

Religious institutions have been rocked by scandals, calling their legitimacy into question (Parenti, 2010). There have been televangelists implicated in financial malfeasance. There have been hypocritical preachers who, while damning gays and lesbians, were engaged in homosexual activities. There are guru-worshiping cults that sometimes have engaged in sexual abuse, forced confinement, and other nefarious practices. The child molestations by priests and the subsequent cover-up by the Catholic hierarchy have caused a great financial burden on the Church as well as personal grief and doubts. These personal transgressions are not just the acts of flawed individuals, but they also reveal the corruption of religious organizations. As Michael Parenti states:

> These perpetrators and their organizations are corrupt and criminally hurtful of human life. They have operated with something close to impunity, using their sacred robes, elevated status, and moral authority to prey upon the vulnerable, while making the religious establishment their base of operation, a den of soul-damaging deeds. (Parenti, 2010:153)

Figure 2.1 Trust in the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government



SOURCE: Gallup Poll (Jones, 2017). http://news.gallup.com/poll/219674/trust-judicial-branch-executive-branch-down.aspx?g_source=position2&g_medium=related&g_campaign=tiles

The federal government also is mistrusted by millions of citizens. When Obama was in the White House, Republicans in the House and Senate used a variety of tactics to stall efforts by the Democrats to pass progressive legislation. This resulted, for the most part, in gridlock. When legislation was passed, such as the Affordable Care Act, many objected because they felt it was an assault on individual freedoms. Add to all of this the role of money and questions of whose interests are served by the actions of government officials (see Chapter 12). In 2013, when the political gridlock resulted in the first government shutdown in 17 years, the American public overwhelmingly lost faith and trust in its government. A poll conducted two months after the shutdown revealed that just one in 20 Americans believe the U.S. system of democracy works well and needs no changes (cited in Boerma, 2014).

With the change in administrations from Obama to Trump, the polarization and distrust in the federal government has grown overall, with noticeable shifts in different directions according to political party (see Figure 2.1).

In short, the actions in the business world, media, religion, and politics increase the cynicism in citizens and thereby diminish the trust required to make markets and society cohere.

The Widening Inequality Gap

Compared to other developed nations, the chasm between the rich and the poor in the United States is wide and steadily increasing. The share of the national income of the richest 20 percent of households in 2016 was 51.1 percent, while the bottom 20 percent received only 3.1 percent of the nation's income (Semega, Fontenot, and Kollar, 2017). The earnings gap, as measured by comparing the top 5 percent of the earnings distribution by the bottom 20 percent, is now the greatest since the Census Bureau began keeping track in 1947. At the bottom end of wealth and income, 40.6 million Americans were below the government's official poverty line in 2016, and 18.5 million of them were in so-called deep poverty, earning less than half the official poverty threshold. The safety net for them is weak and getting weaker. Funds for Head Start are so inadequate that just 31 percent of children ages three to five who are eligible are enrolled in the program, and just 6 percent of eligible children under the age of three have access (National Head Start Association, 2017). The numbers of homeless and hungry are rising. It's not just the gap between the rich and the poor but between the rich and average workers.

The data on inequality show clearly that the United States is moving toward a two-tiered society. This has important implications for society. It divides people into different camps, thereby fueling debates over everything from tax reforms to health care to welfare programs for the poor.

Conflict over immigration has reached an all-time high.

SOURCE: Janine Wiedel Photolibrary/Alamy Stock Photo

Increasing Diversity

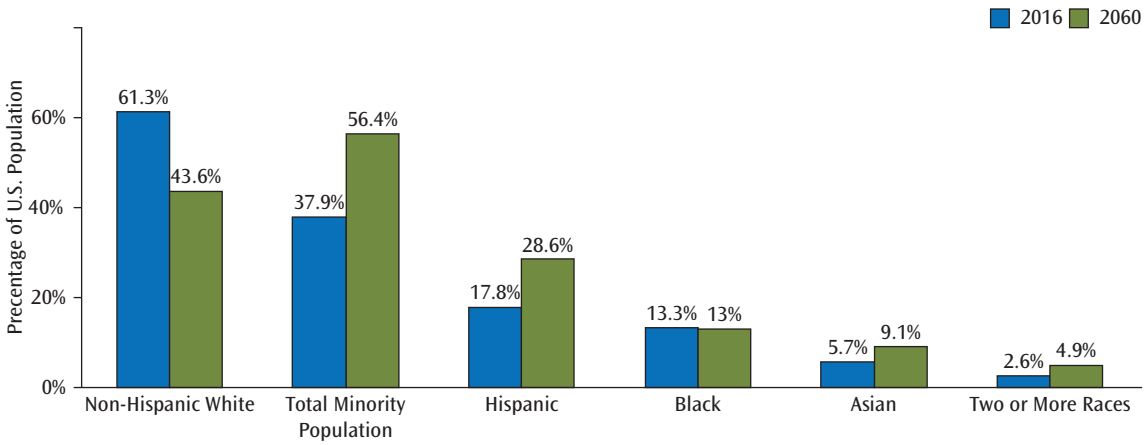
The United States, perhaps more than any other society, is populated by a multitude of ethnic groups, racial groups, and religious groups. The diversity is further increased by the existence of regional differences and by a generation gap. Although assimilation has occurred to some degree, the different groups and categories have not blended into a homogeneous mass but continue to remain separate—often with a pride that makes assimilation unlikely and conflict inevitable (see the Diversity panel "Violence and Division in America").

Currently, the minority population is growing in the United States (see Figure 2.2). Many Whites fear becoming a numerical minority and are especially concerned about the influx of Latino and Asian immigration, most notably undocumented immigrants. As a result, more than 31 states have passed laws making English the official state language. In-state college tuition has been denied to noncitizens in some states. White supremacy groups and other hate groups are growing in number. Vigilante groups have organized to watch the border. An indicator of fragmentation along racial lines is the "White flight" from high-immigration areas. The trends toward gated neighborhoods, the rise of private schools, and home schooling are also manifestations of exclusiveness rather than inclusiveness.

Along with increasing racial and ethnic diversity, there is religious diversity with millions of Jews, Muslims, and other non-Christians, including Buddhists and Hindus, as well as atheists. Some groups, most notably Muslims, are often victims of hate crimes. In 2015, approximately 20 percent of hate crimes reported to the FBI involved religion (59 percent involved race, and 18 percent involved sexual orientation).

Some Americans are also threatened by the increasing visibility of sexual orientation diversity. Even though in 2015 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage is legal nationwide, public opinion polls demonstrate that while support for same-sex marriage is at an all-time high, 32 percent of Americans are still opposed (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Figure 2.2 Population Projections by Race and Ethnicity: 2016 and 2060



Notes: Total minority population refers to everyone other than the non-Hispanic White alone population. Non-Hispanic Whites totaled 61.3 percent of the population in 2016. When including Hispanic Whites, the White population in 2016 was 76.9 percent. Two populations have numbers too small to appear on the graph. American Indian/Alaska Native: 2016 is 1.3 percent and 2060 is 0.6 percent. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 2016 and 2060 are both 0.2 percent.

SOURCE: U.S. Census source for 2060 projections: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015.

In sum, our ever-increasing diversity is a fact of life in U.S. society. If we do not find ways to accept the differences among us, we will fragment into class, race, ethnic, and sexual enclaves. The challenge is to shift from building walls to building bridges.

Diversity

Violence and Division in America

The conflict perspective emphasizes that groups in society often have competing interests and that society is inherently fragmented and unstable. Unfortunately, there are numerous examples of violence and division across the country that support this viewpoint.

1. *Religious violence*. After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, America saw a huge rise in hate crimes against American Muslims. Now, 16 years later, the arsons at mosques, threats of violence, shootings, and outright assaults are again on the rise. An analysis of anti-Muslim incidents in 2015 shows a 78 percent increase over the prior year (Levin, 2016). After the election of President Trump, the first two months of 2017 saw four mosques that were burned to the ground and other mosques the victim of vandalism. Some blame the rising violence on President Trump's remarks during his campaign and his temporary ban on travelers from Muslim-majority countries, arguing that such rhetoric fuels people's fears and hostility.

There has been a similar rise in violence against and threats to Jewish institutions. In the first two months of 2017, Jewish institutions received 148 bomb threats (Andone, 2017). One synagogue in Seattle was sprayed with the words, "Holocaust is Fake History." In August 2017, White nationalists marched on the University of Virginia campus chanting, "Jews will not replace us," a rally that ended in violence and the death of three people. These are just a few of the many examples of violence against religious groups in America.

2. *Partisan violence*. In June 2017, at a practice the day before the annual congressional baseball game, James Hodgkinson, a Bernie Sanders follower and anti-Trump protestor, opened fire on the players, critically injuring House majority whip Steve Scalise and wounding three others. Republicans were quick to accuse Democrats of inciting the hostilities of their followers (Pilkington, Gabbatt, and Beckett, 2017). This type of partisan violence is not new, however. In 2011, U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords and 18 others were shot (six people died) outside a grocery store in Tucson, Arizona. Giffords, a Democrat, was holding a "Congress on Your Corner" public event. From the famous assassinations of Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy to the assassination attempts on George W. Bush and Barack Obama, partisan violence is part of American history.

(*Continued*)

3. *Racial violence*. According to the FBI's statistics, the majority (59 percent) of reported hate crimes in America are racially motivated. The examples of racial violence throughout history are abundant. In 2015, 21-year-old Dylann Roof, a White supremacist, opened fire in a predominantly Black church in South Carolina and killed nine people (Blain, 2017). Other recent acts of violence include the appearance of nooses in public places in Washington, DC (the National Gallery of Art, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the Hirshhorn Museum). Furthermore, recent acts of racial violence involving police officers shooting or using questionable excessive force against Black, often unarmed or fleeing men have been brought to the public eye. As a result, movements like Black Lives Matter, the Movement for Black Lives, the Take a Knee Movement, and others have formed to protest not only the violence but the ineffective justice system that favors not guilty verdicts or mistrials for the officers involved.

4. *LGBTQ violence*. In 2016, Omar Mateen went into a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, and opened fire on 350 people, killing 49 and wounding another 53. Violence against the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer) community is widespread. In 1998, Matthew Shepard, a student in Wyoming, was tortured and murdered for being gay. That same year, James Byrd Jr. was tied and dragged behind a truck and killed in Texas for being gay and Black. The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2009, expands the federal hate crime law to include crimes motivated by a victim's gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Because of the law, the FBI is now required to track statistics on hate crimes based on gender and gender identity. In 2016, according to the FBI, at least 77 LGBTQ people were killed, including 27 who were transgender.

Order, Conflict, and Social Problems

2.4 Analyze a social problem from the order and conflict perspectives.

The order and conflict models of society are both significant, and they are used in the remainder of this book. While each model, by itself, is important, a realistic analysis must include both. The order model must be included because there is integration, order, and stability; because the parts of society are more or less interdependent; and because most social change, especially of our major institutions, is gradual. The conflict model is equally important because society is not always a harmonious unit. To the contrary, much of social life is based on competition. Societal integration is fragile; it is often based on subtle or blatant coercion.

A crucial difference between the two models is the implicit assumption of each as to the nature of the social structure (rules, customs, institutions, social stratification, and the distribution of power). The order perspective assumes that the social structure is basically right and proper because it serves the fundamental function of maintaining society. There is, therefore, an implicit acceptance of the status quo, assuming that the system works. As we examine the major institutions of society in this book, one task is to determine how each institution aids in societal integration. Yet at the same time a major consideration centers on the question of who benefits under these arrangements and who does not. Thus, the legitimacy of the system is always doubted.

social problems
Societally induced conditions that harm any segment of the population, or acts or conditions that violate the norms and values of society

The two models of society also differ in their approach to social problems. **Social problems** are societally induced conditions that harm any segment of the population, or acts or conditions that violate the norms and values of society. Many of the topics covered in this book are social problems—for example, race and gender inequality, poverty and homelessness, and discrimination.

The order and conflict perspectives constrain their adherents to view the causes, consequences, and remedies of social problems in opposing ways. The order perspective focuses on deviants themselves. This approach (which has been the conventional way of studying social problems) asks, Who are the deviants? What are their social and psychological backgrounds? With whom do they associate? Deviants somehow

do not conform to the standards of the dominant group; they are assumed to be out of phase with conventional behavior. This is believed to occur most often as a result of inadequate socialization. In other words, deviants have not internalized the norms and values of society because they either are brought up in an environment of conflicting value systems (as are children of immigrants or the poor in a middle-class school) or are under the influence of a deviant subculture such as a gang. Because the order theorist uses the prevailing standards to define and label deviants, the existing practices and structures of society are accepted implicitly. The remedy is to rehabilitate the deviants so that they conform to the societal norms.

The conflict theorist takes a different approach to social problems. The adherents of this perspective criticize order theorists for blaming the victim. To focus on the individual deviant locates the symptom, not the disease. Deviants are a manifestation of a failure of society to meet the needs of individuals. The sources of poverty, crime, drug addiction, and racism are found in the laws, the customs, the quality of life, the distribution of wealth and power, and the accepted practices of schools, governmental units, and corporations. In this view, then, the schools are the problem, not the dropouts; the maldistribution of wealth, not the poor; the roadblocks to success for minority-group members, not apathy on their part. The established system, in this view, is not sacred. Because the system is the primary source of social problems, it, not the individual, must be restructured.

Although most of this book attempts to strike a balance between the order and conflict perspectives, the conflict model is clearly favored when social problems are brought into focus. This is done explicitly for two reasons. The subject matter of sociology is not individuals, who are the special province of psychology, but society. If sociologists do not make a critical analysis of the social structure, who will? Also, we are convinced that the source of social problems is found within the institutional framework of society. Thus, a recurrent theme of this book is that social problems are societal in origin and not the exclusive function of individual pathologies.

Chapter Review

2.1 Compare and contrast the order and conflict models of social systems.

- Sociologists have a mental image (model) of how society is structured, how it changes, and what holds it together. Two prevailing models—order and conflict—provide contradictory images of society.
- The order model (also known as functionalism or structural functionalism) describes society as ordered, stable, and harmonious, with a high degree of cooperation and consensus. Change is gradual and reforming. All parts of society are interdependent which creates order and stability. The order model focuses on the functions and consequences of social structures and activities.
- Conflict model theorists view society as competitive, fragmented, and unstable. Social integration is minimal and tenuous. Social change, which can be revolutionary, results from clashes among conflicting groups. From this perspective, people are in competition for power and resources, and those with power take advantage of the powerless.
- The order and conflict models present extreme views of society. Taken alone, each fosters a faulty perception and interpretation of society. A realistic model of society combines the strengths of both models. The assumptions of such a synthesis are that (a) the processes of stability and change are properties of all societies; (b) societies are organized, but the very process of organization generates conflict; (c) society is a social system, with the parts linked through common goals and similar interests, and is competitive because of scarce resources and inequities; (d) societies are held together both by consensus on values and by coercion; and (e) social change may be gradual or abrupt, reforming or revolutionary.

2.2 Provide examples to demonstrate the integrative forces in society that maintain order.

- The integrative forces in the United States are functional integration, consensus on values, the social order, group memberships, international competition and threats from other societies, the mass media, and planned integration.

2.3 Provide examples to demonstrate the divides in society that lead to conflict.

- The divisive forces bringing about segmentation in U.S. society are increasing polarization, diminished trust in societal institutions, the widening inequality gap, and divides over diversity. Thus, society has the potential for cleavage and conflict.

2.4 Analyze a social problem from the order and conflict perspectives.

- The two models of society differ in their approach to social problems. The order perspective focuses on the deviants themselves, their socialization, and the groups they belong to. Conflict theorists believe that the institutional framework of society is the primary source of social problems, not the individual deviant.

Key Terms

conflict model, p. 16
co-optation, p. 24
functional integration, p. 21
group polarization, p. 25
latent consequence, p. 16
manifest consequence, p. 16
order model (functionalism or structural functionalism), p. 15
social problems, p. 30

Chapter 3
Culture

Learning Objectives

3.1 Understand the characteristics of culture.

3.2 Understand the types of shared knowledge that together make up a society's culture.

3.3 Explain the factors that lead to both (a) common dominant values in the United States and (b) disagreement over values in the United States.

In 2009, Sony Pictures released the movie *2012*, a movie based on the fact that the Ancient Mayan long-count calendar ends on December 21, 2012. Some had taken this to mean that the world was going to end in 2012, an idea encouraged by numerous websites. The movie depicts a global cataclysm that occurs on December 21 and destroys the world as we know it.

Along similar lines, much was made of the year 2000. It delineated the end of a thousand-year period and the beginning of another millennium. It is believed to mark the 2,000th year after the birth of Jesus. Some cults believed that this date would bring the apocalypse (the end of the present temporal world) because of their interpretation of two books in the Bible—Daniel in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New Testament. Obviously for them, the number 2,000 is of ultimate importance. But is it? Why is a calendar divided into 1,000-year epochs meaningful? If it is important, then did the new millennium begin on January 1, 2000, or January 1, 2001? To begin, the calendar we use, beginning with the birth of Jesus, is off by as much as six years. A sixth-century monk, Dionysius Exiguus, computed the Christian calendar. Scholars now believe that Exiguus was wrong because Herod, ruler of Judea at the time of Jesus' birth, died in 4 BC, and Jesus was probably born a year or two before that (Zelizer, 1999). So, was the year 2000 really 2005 or 2006?

When the West marked the year 2000, the Chinese celebrated the year 4698. For followers of Zoroastrianism in Iran, the year was 2390; for Muslims, it was 1421, for it had been that many years since the birth of the prophet Muhammad; and for Jews, it was the year 5760. Obviously, the starting date for calendars is an arbitrary decision on which societies differ. And yet, a calendar that is not universally accepted throughout the world and that is off by as much as six years and one that did not begin with zero was, nevertheless, used by most of the Western world to designate January 1, 2000, as the beginning of a new millennium. Because some people believed that chaos would ensue on this date, they stocked up on canned goods and other necessities, demonstrating that even though the notion of the beginning of a new millennium and when it occurred are social constructions, people attach meanings to these social constructions. These cultural meanings then become powerful determinants of human behavior.

An important focus of sociology is the social influences on human behavior. As people interact over time, two fundamental sources of constraints on individuals

social structure
The linkages and networks among the members of a social organization

culture
The knowledge, beliefs, and customs that the members of a social organization share (both material and nonmaterial)

emerge—social structure and culture. **Social structure** refers to the linkages and networks among the members of a social organization. **Culture**, the subject of this chapter, is the knowledge that the members of a social organization share (both material and nonmaterial). Because this shared knowledge includes ideas about what is right, how one is to behave in various situations, religious beliefs, and communication, culture constrains not only behavior but, as demonstrated in the previous examples, how people think about and interpret their world.

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section describes the characteristics of culture and its importance for understanding human behavior. The second section examines the shared knowledge that make up a society's culture. The third section focuses on one particular aspect of culture—values. This discussion is especially vital for understanding the organization and some of the problems of U.S. society. We conclude with a discussion of values from the order and conflict perspectives.

Culture: The Knowledge That People Share

3.1 Understand the characteristics of culture.

While cultures around the world are very different, they share some common elements. We find that while culture is constantly forming and re-forming, it channels human behavior in predictable and often confining ways. Let's look more closely at the defining characteristics of culture.

Culture Is An Emergent Process

As individuals interact on any kind of sustained basis, they exchange ideas about all sorts of things. In time they develop common ideas, common ways of doing things, and common interpretations for certain actions. In so doing, the participants have created a culture. The emergent quality of culture is an ongoing process; it is built up slowly rather than being present at the beginnings of social organization. The culture of any group is constantly undergoing change because the members are in continuous interaction. **Popular culture** (cultural patterns that are widespread) constantly shifts as technology advances and as music, fashion, movies, and television promote new or different ideas and behaviors. Culture, then, is never completely static.

popular culture
Cultural patterns that are widespread and constantly changing

Culture Is Learned

Culture is not instinctive or innate in the human species; it is not part of the biological equipment of human beings. The biological equipment of humans, however, makes culture possible. That is, we are symbol-making creatures capable of attaching meaning to particular objects and actions and communicating these meanings to other people. When a person joins a new social organization, she or he must learn the culture of that group. This is true for the infant born into a society as well as for a college student joining a sorority or fraternity, a young man or woman joining the armed forces, or immigrants in a new country. This process of learning the culture, called **socialization**, is the subject of the next chapter. When we learn the culture of a society, or a group within society, we share with others a common understanding of words and symbols; we know the rules, what is appropriate and inappropriate, what is moral and immoral, and what is beautiful and what is ugly. Even the down-deep emotions of disgust, anger, and shame are related to the culture. A food that makes one gag in one society (e.g., insects) may be considered a delicacy in another.

socialization
The process of learning one's culture

Upon joining the military, individuals must learn a whole new culture.

SOURCE: panda3800/Shutterstock

Culture Channels Human Behavior

Culture, because it emerges from social interaction, is an inevitable development of human society. More important, it is essential in the maintenance of any social system because it provides two crucial functions—predictability of action and stability. To accomplish these functions, however, culture must restrict human freedom (although, as we shall see, cultural constraints are not normally perceived as such).

How does culture work to constrain individuals? Or stated another way, how does culture become internalized in people so that their actions are controlled? Culture operates not only outside individuals but also inside them. Sigmund Freud recognized this process when he conceptualized the superego as the part of the personality structure that internalizes society's morals and thus inhibits people from committing acts considered wrong by their parents, a group, or the society.

internalization
When society's demands become part of the individual's personality, acting to control her or his behavior whether people are watching or not

The process of **internalization** (during which society's demands become part of the individual, acting to control her or his behavior) is accomplished mainly in three ways. First, culture becomes part of the human makeup through the belief system into which a child is born. This belief system, provided by parents and those people immediately in contact with children, shapes their ideas about the surrounding world and also gives them certain ideas about themselves. A child in the United States, for example, may be taught to accept Christian beliefs without reservation. These beliefs are literally force-fed, since alternative belief systems are considered unacceptable. It is interesting to note that after the child internalizes Christian beliefs, they are often used as levers to keep the child in line.

reference groups
Groups that an individual wants to belong to

Second, culture is internalized through psychological identification with the groups to which individuals belong (membership groups) or to which they want to belong (**reference groups**). Individuals want to belong; they want to be accepted by other people. Therefore, they tend to conform to the behavior of their immediate group as well as to the wishes of society at large. Research in childhood socialization has continually shown the importance of this process. The internalization of society's norms is reflected in the fact that children, from age five onward, show less and less liking for in-group members who do not conform to group norms (Nesdale, 2007:222).

Finally, culture is internalized by providing the individual with an identity. People's age, sex, race, religion, and social class affect the way others perceive them and the way they perceive themselves.

Culture, then, is not freedom but rather constraint. Of the entire range of possible behaviors (which probably are considered appropriate by some society somewhere), the person of a particular society chooses only from a narrow range of alternatives. Individuals do not see the prison-like qualities of culture because they have internalized the culture of their society. From birth, children are shaped by the culture of the society into which they are born. They retain some individuality because of the configuration of forces unique to their experience (gene structure, peers, parents' social class, religion, and race), but the behavioral alternatives deemed appropriate for them are narrow.

Culture even shapes thought and perception. What we see and how we interpret what we see are determined by culture. For example, every culture has different beliefs about what makes a person beautiful, what foods are good to eat, and what clothing is appropriate to wear. So one culture may perceive a man wearing a kilt as bizarre or ridiculous, where another may see a man wearing a kilt as perfectly acceptable.

For an illustrative case of the kind of mental closure that may be determined by culture, consider the following riddle about a father and son driving down a highway: "There is a terrible accident in which the father is killed, and the son, critically injured, is rushed to a hospital. There, the surgeon approaches the patient and suddenly cries, 'My God, that's my son!'" How is it possible that the critically injured boy is the son of the man in the accident as well as the son of the surgeon? The correct answer to this riddle is that the surgeon is of course the boy's mother. Some North Americans, male and female alike, have been socialized to think of the occupation of surgeon as a "male" occupation (or, likewise, the occupation of nurse as a "female" occupation). If Russians were given this riddle, it would not be a riddle at all because approximately three-fourths of Russian physicians are women. Culture thus constrains not only actions but also thinking.

Culture Maintains Boundaries

Culture not only limits the range of acceptable behavior and attitudes but also instills in its adherents a sense of naturalness about the alternatives peculiar to a given society (or other social organization). Thus, there is a universal tendency to deprecate the ways of people from other societies as wrong, old-fashioned, inefficient, or immoral and to think of the ways of one's own group as superior (as the only right way). The concept for this phenomenon is **ethnocentrism**. The word combines the Greek word *ethnikos*, which means "nation" or "people," and the English word *center*. One's own race, religion, or society is the center of all and therefore superior to all.

ethnocentrism
The belief that one's own race, religion, or society is the center of all and therefore superior to all

Ethnocentrism is demonstrated in statements such as "My fraternity is the best," "We are God's chosen people," or "Polygamy is immoral." To call the playoff game between the American and National Leagues the "World Series" implies that baseball outside the United States (and Canada) is inferior. Religious missionaries provide a classic example of a group convinced that their own faith is the only correct one. Ethnocentrism is pervasive in many institutions. For examples of institutional ethnocentrism, see A Closer Look panel titled "Ethnocentrism in U.S. Schools."

It is also ethnocentric to view other culture's food choices as weird or bizarre. For example, various websites on the Internet list the top "disgusting" foods around the world such as balut (fertilized duck egg) in the Philippines, or maggot cheese in Italy. The Travel Channel even has a show titled Bizarre Foods, where a host samples "bizarre" dishes from other countries.

Further examples of ethnocentrism from U.S. history are **manifest destiny**, exclusionary immigration laws such as the Oriental Exclusion Act, and Jim Crow segregation laws. A more current illustration of ethnocentrism can be seen in the war in Iraq, where the United States attempted to export the so-called American way of life because of beliefs that democracy and free market capitalism are necessities for the good life and therefore best for all people.

manifest destiny
The nineteenth-century belief or doctrine that it was the destiny of the United States to expand its territory over all of North America

A Closer Look

Ethnocentrism in U.S. Schools

In 1994, the Lake County (Florida) school board enacted a new school policy for the 22,000 children in the district. The policy: Teachers will be required to teach their students that America's political system, its values, and its culture in general are superior to other cultures in every regard. Specifically, it stated that if classes included instruction about other cultures, they must also include an emphasis on and appreciation for American heritage.

This school policy is clearly ethnocentric. Opponents of the board's decision argue that the blatant teaching of "We're Number One" masks our flaws, mistakes, and immoral acts. To believe in one's superiority is also to believe in the inferiority of others. This has racist overtones, it hinders cooperation among nations, and it fosters exclusionary policies.

Another more recent example of ethnocentrism in schools comes from Arizona. In May 2010 Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed a law prohibiting Arizona schools from offering classes that advocate ethnic solidarity, promote the overthrow of the U.S. government, or are designed for specific ethnic groups. In effect, the law dismantled the state's Mexican American studies programs when Hispanic students fill nearly half the seats in Arizona's public schools (Calefati, 2010).

By imposing a curriculum that forbids the exploration of divergent cultures while propping up the dominant one, there's another process at work here, what we might call *ethnonormativity*. This takes the teachings of one culture—the colonizer's—and makes it the standard version of history while literally banning other accounts, turning the master narrative into the "normal" one and further denigrating marginalized perspectives (Amster, 2010:1).

In both the Florida and Arizona examples, the people in power used their influence to enforce ethnocentric policies that affect thousands of students (then 22,000 in Florida and 55,000 in Arizona). In Arizona, the ban means that students lose access to not only Mexican American studies but African American and Native American studies as well. In 2017, a federal judge ruled that the state violated the constitutional rights of Mexican American students by enforcing the ban. The judge argued that the law was racially motivated and denied many students the opportunity to explore their own heritage or to learn about the history of other ethnic groups besides their own.

SOURCE: Kevin Foy/Alamy Stock Photo

While not commonly eaten in the United States, insects are a high-protein snack regularly consumed in countries such as China.

Ethnocentrism, because it implies feelings of superiority, leads to division and conflict among subgroups within a society and among societies, each of which feels superior. Ethnocentric ideas are real because they are believed and they influence perception and behavior. Analysts of U.S. society (whether they are Americans or not) must recognize their own ethnocentric attitudes and the way these attitudes affect their own objectivity.

Anthropologists have helped us to understand that in the cultural context of a given society, a practice that seems bizarre may make considerable sense. For example, in his classic work on cultural relativism, anthropologist Marvin Harris (1974) has

explained why sacred cattle are allowed to roam the countryside in India while the people may be starving. Outsiders see cow worship as the primary cause of India's hunger and poverty—cattle do not contribute meat, but they do eat crops that would otherwise go to human beings. Harris, however, argues that cattle must not be killed for food because they are the most efficient producers of fuel and food. To kill them would actually cause the economy to collapse. Harris' point is that the customs of a society should not be evaluated by our standards, but evaluated in the light of the culture and their functions for that society. This is called **cultural relativity**. The problem with cultural relativity, of course, is ethnocentrism—the tendency for the members of each society to assume the rightness of their own customs and practices and the inferiority, immorality, or irrationality of those found in other societies.

cultural relativity
When the customs of a society are not judged and compared to others but evaluated in the light of the culture and their functions for that society

To summarize, culture emerges from social interaction. The paradox is that although culture is human-made, it exerts a tremendous complex of forces that constrain the actions and thoughts of human beings. The analyst of any society must be cognizant of these two qualities of culture, for they combine to give a society its unique character. Culture explains social change as well as stability; culture explains existing social arrangements (including many social problems); culture explains a good deal of individual behavior because it is internalized by the individual members of society and therefore has an impact (substantial but not total) on their actions and personalities.

Types of Shared Knowledge

3.2 Understand the types of shared knowledge that together make up a society's culture.

The concept of culture refers to knowledge that is shared by the members of a social organization. In analyzing any social organization and, in this case, any society, it is helpful to conceive of culture as combining six types of shared knowledge—symbols and language, technology, ideologies, societal norms, values, and roles.

Symbols and Language

By definition, language refers to symbols that evoke similar meanings in different people. Communication is possible only if people attribute the same meaning to such stimuli as sounds, gestures, or objects. Language, then, can be written, spoken, or unspoken. A shrug of the shoulders, a pat on the back, the gesturing with a finger (which finger can be very significant), a wink, and a nod are examples of unspoken language and vary in meaning from society to society. An example to illustrate the importance of cultural symbols comes from a former president. In the 1990s, former president George H. W. Bush unknowingly used the wrong symbolic gesture while on a trip to Australia. While riding in his limousine, the president flashed a "V" sign with the palm of his hand facing inward. In Australia, this does not mean victory—it is the equivalent of flashing the middle finger in the United States.

Language, in particular, influences the ways in which the members of a society perceive reality. The idea that language shapes thought is called **linguistic relativity** and is most often associated with the classic writings of two linguists, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf. Sapir and Whorf have demonstrated linguistic relativity by the way the Hopi and Anglos differ in the way they speak about time. The Hopi language has no verb tenses and no nouns for times, days, or years. Consequently, the Hopi think of time as continuous and without breaks. The English language, in sharp contrast, divides time into seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades, and centuries. The use of verb tenses in English clearly informs everyone

linguistic relativity
Language shapes thought and how people perceive reality

whether an event occurred in the past, present, or future. Clearly, precision regarding time is important to English-speaking peoples, whereas it is less important to the Hopi.

Other examples:

- There is an African tribe that has no word for the color gray. This implies that they do not see gray, even though we know that there is such a color and readily see it in the sky and in hair. The Navajo do not distinguish between blue and green, yet they have two words for different kinds of black.

Unspoken gestures do not mean the same thing in all societies.
SOURCE: Sergey Nivens/Alamy Stock Photo

- The Aimore tribe in eastern Brazil has no word for two. The Yancos, an Amazon tribe, cannot count beyond *poettarrarorin-coaroac*, their word for three. The Temiar people of West Malaysia also stop at three. Can you imagine how this lack of numbers beyond two or three affects how they perceive reality?
- Combining ethnocentrism with social construction, the Western world refers to the Arab countries as in the "Middle East." This is "true" only if one views the world from England, which has been the norm for 200 years or so.

The social interpretation of reality is not limited to language. For example, some people believe that there is such a thing as holy water. There is no chemical difference between water and holy water, but some people believe that the differences in properties and potential are enormous. Similarly, consider the difference between saliva and spit (Brouillette and Turner, 1992). There is no chemical difference between them; the only difference is that in one case the substance is inside the mouth and in the other it is outside. We swallow saliva continuously and think nothing about it, yet one would not gather his or her spit in a container and then drink it. Saliva is defined and labeled positively and spit negatively, yet the only difference is a shared social definition and the language used to describe them.

Technology

Technology refers to the information, techniques, and tools used by people to satisfy their varied needs and desires. For analytic purposes, two types of technology can be distinguished—material and social. **Material technology** refers to knowledge of how to make and use things. It is important to note that the things produced are not part of the culture. They represent the knowledge that people share and that makes it possible to build and use the object. *The knowledge is culture, not the object*. For example, the knowledge of how to make and use a table (not the table itself) is part of material technology.

material technology
The knowledge of how to make and use things

Social technology is the knowledge about how to establish, maintain, and operate the technical aspects of social organization. Examples of this are procedures for operating a university, a municipality, or a corporation or the kind of specialized knowledge citizens must acquire to function in society (knowing the laws, how to complete income tax forms, how to vote in elections, and how to use credit cards and banks).

social technology
The knowledge about how to establish, maintain, and operate the technical aspects of social organization

Ideologies

Ideologies are shared beliefs about the physical, social, and metaphysical worlds. They may, for example, be statements about the existence of supernatural beings, the best form of government, or racial and ethnic pride.

Ideologies help individuals interpret events. They also provide the rationale for particular forms of action. They can justify the status quo or demand revolution. A number of competing ideologies exist within U.S. society—for example, fundamentalism and atheism, capitalism and socialism, and republican and democrat. Clearly, ideology unites as well as divides and is therefore a powerful human-made cultural force within societies.

Societal Norms

norms
Societal prescriptions (rules) for how one is to act in given situations

Norms are societal prescriptions for how one is to act in given situations—for example, at a football game, party, concert, restaurant, church, park, or classroom. We also learn how to act with members of the opposite sex, with our elders, with social inferiors, and with equals. Thus, behavior is patterned. We know how to behave, and we can anticipate how other people will behave. This knowledge allows interaction to occur smoothly.

ethnomethodology
The scientific study of the commonplace activities of daily life

Ethnomethodology is a subdiscipline in sociology that is the scientific study of the commonplace activities of daily life. Its goals are to discover and understand the underpinnings of relationships (the shared meanings that implicitly guide social behavior). The assumption is that much of social life is scripted—that is, the players act according to society's rules/norms (the script). Societal scripts determine the conduct in a family, in the department store between customer and salesperson, between doctor and patient, between boss and employee, between coach and player, and between teacher and student.

What happens when people do not act according to the common understandings (the script)? Examples of possible norm breaking include the following: (a) when answering the phone, you remain silent; (b) when selecting a seat in the audience, you ignore the empty seats and choose to sit next to a stranger (violating that person's privacy and space); (c) in an elevator, instead of facing the door you face the other person in the elevator; and (d) you bargain with clerks over the price of every item of food you wish to purchase. These behaviors violate the rules of interaction in our society. When the rules are violated, the other people in the situation do not know how to respond. Typically, they become confused, anxious, and angry. The breaking of norms is often the subject of humor on television shows. When a hidden camera captures a deliberate norm violation and the unknowing subject's reaction, the audience reacts with laughter. These behaviors buttress the notion that most of the time social life is very ordered and orderly. We behave in prescribed ways, and we anticipate that other people will do the same.

folkways
Norms that are viewed as less important and are not severely punished if violated

In addition to being necessary for the conduct of behavior in society, societal norms vary in importance. Norms that are less important (the **folkways**) are not severely punished if violated. Examples of folkways in U.S. society are the following: People should not wear curlers to the opera; a person does not wear a business suit with flip-flops; and people should not talk during another person's speech.

mores
Norms that are viewed as important and to violate them is to violate the morals of a society

Violation of the **mores** (pronounced "more-rays") of society is considered important enough by society to merit severe punishment. This type of norm involves morality. Some examples of mores are the following: A person must have only one spouse at a time; thou shalt not kill (unless defending one's country); and one must be loyal to the United States. As discussed briefly in Chapter 2, this patriotism and loyalty to the United States is demonstrated most vividly in the controversy surrounding professional athletes who choose to kneel in peaceful protest against racial injustice rather than stand during the national anthem before their athletic event. In doing so, they are breaking the norm of standing (there is no law that says they must stand). The public reaction to this protest indicates that the norm of standing during the anthem has reached the status of being a more, with some arguing that breaking the norm is akin to moral decay. As a result, some coaches are threatening to fire athletes, not play them, or not sign them for future contracts.