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Preface

We wrote this book with the belief that sociology plays a key role in modern intellectual culture and occupies a central place within the social sciences. We have aimed to write a book that combines classic theories of sociology with empirically grounded studies and examples from real life that reveal the basic issues of interest to sociologists today. The book does not bring in overly sophisticated notions; nevertheless, ideas and findings drawn from the cutting edge of the discipline are incorporated throughout. We hope it is a fair and nonpartisan treatment; we endeavored to cover the major perspectives in sociology and the major findings of contemporary American research in an evenhanded, although not indiscriminate, way.

MAJOR THEMES

The book is constructed around eight basic themes, each of which helps give the work a distinctive character. One of the central themes is the **micro and macro link**. At many points in the book, we show that interaction in micro-level contexts affects larger, or macro-level, social processes, and that these macro-level processes influence our day-to-day lives. We emphasize that one can better understand a social situation by analyzing it at both the micro and macro levels.

A second theme is that of the **world in change**. Sociology was born out of the transformations that wrenched the industrializing social order of the West away from the ways of life that characterized earlier societies. The world created by these changes is the primary object of sociological analysis. The pace of social change has continued to accelerate, and it is possible that we stand on the threshold of transitions as significant as those that occurred in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sociology has prime responsibility for charting the transformations of the past and grasping the major lines of development taking place today.

Another fundamental theme is the **globalization of social life**. For far too long, sociology has been dominated by the view that societies can be studied as independent and distinctive entities. But even in the past, societies never really existed in isolation. In current times, we can see a clear acceleration in processes of global integration. This is obvious, for example, in the expansion of international trade across the world, or the use of social media, which played a key role in recent popular uprisings against repressive governments throughout the Middle East. The emphasis on globalization also connects closely with the weight given to the interdependence of the industrialized and developing worlds today.

The book also focuses on the importance of **comparative study**. Sociology cannot be taught solely by understanding the institutions of any one particular

society. Although we have focused our discussion primarily on the United States, we have balanced it with a rich variety of materials drawn from other cultures. These include research carried out in other Western countries and in Russia and eastern European societies, which are currently undergoing substantial changes. The book also includes much more material on developing countries than has been usual in introductory texts. In addition, we strongly emphasize the relationship between sociology and anthropology, whose concerns often overlap. Given the close connections that now mesh societies across the world and the virtual disappearance of traditional social systems, sociology and anthropology have increasingly become indistinguishable.

A fifth theme is the necessity of taking a **historical approach** to sociology. This involves more than just filling in the historical context within which events occur. One of the most important developments in sociology over the past few years has been an increasing emphasis on historical analysis. This should be understood not solely as applying a sociological outlook to the past but as a way of contributing to our understanding of institutions in the present. Recent work in historical sociology is discussed throughout the text and provides a framework for the interpretations offered in the chapters.

Throughout the text, particular attention is given to a sixth theme—issues of **social class, gender, and race**. The study of social differentiation is ordinarily regarded as a series of specific fields within sociology as a whole—and this volume contains chapters that specifically explore thinking and research on each subject (Chapters 8, 10, and 11, respectively). However, questions about gender, race, and class relations are so fundamental to sociological analysis that they cannot simply be considered a subdivision. Thus many chapters contain sections concerned with the ways that multiple sources of social stratification shape the human experience.

A seventh theme is that a strong grasp of **sociological research methods** is crucial for understanding the world around us. A strong understanding of how social science research is conducted is crucial for interpreting and making sense of the many social “facts” that the media trumpet.

The final major theme is the relation between the **social and the personal**. Sociological thinking is a vital help to self-understanding, which in turn can be focused back on an improved understanding of the social world. Studying sociology should be a liberating experience: The field enlarges our sympathies and imagination, opens up new perspectives on the sources of our own behavior, and creates an awareness of cultural settings different from our own. Insofar as sociological ideas challenge dogma, teach appreciation of cultural variety, and allow us insight into the working of social institutions, the practice of sociology enhances the possibilities of human freedom.

ORGANIZATION

Every chapter in the Tenth Edition follows the same structure, making it easier for students to study. Each chapter opens with an attention-grabbing question that challenges students’ misconceptions about the topic.

Each chapter is broken down into four sections:

1. Basic concepts
2. Important theories
3. Current research
4. Unanswered questions

At the end of each section, students have the opportunity to test themselves with integrated “Concept Check” quizzes. New “Globalization by the Numbers” infographics transform raw numbers into visually interesting full-page displays that put the United States in a global context, illustrating for readers how the United States compares to other countries on key metrics. Furthermore, the Tenth Edition features “Big Picture” concept maps that integrate the learning objectives, key terms, “Concept Checks,” and “Thinking Sociologically” activities into a handy one-stop review tool at the end of each chapter.

The chapters follow a sequence designed to help students achieve a progressive mastery of the different fields of sociology, but we have taken care to ensure that the book can be used flexibly and will be easy to adapt to the needs of individual courses. Chapters can be deleted or studied in a different order without much loss. Each has been written as a fairly autonomous unit, with cross-referencing to other chapters at relevant points.

WHAT’S NEW IN THE TENTH EDITION

Chapter 1 (What Is Sociology?): The authors have updated the discussion of Alan Kreuger and Stacey Dale’s study of Ivy League–accepted students who decided on state-level colleges, which indicated that highly motivated individuals can do well even without an Ivy League diploma. The titles in the revamped “Globalization by the Numbers” infographic (“Key Works in Sociology”) have been updated.

Chapter 2 (Asking and Answering Sociological Questions): A new chapter-opening pop quiz asks students, having just learned about the evolution of sociology in Chapter 1, to consider the field of sociology today. The new opener explores the rise of big data and how sociologists can mine social media for information about whom we interact with, whom we befriend, and whom we love. The authors use this opener to then differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research in sociology, drawing upon Backstrom and Kleinberg’s “Romantic Partnerships and the Dispersion of Social Ties: A Network Analysis of Relationship Status on Facebook” as an example of a quantitative study and Diane Vaughn’s *Uncoupling* as an example of a qualitative study of relationships. The discussion helps to highlight the pros and cons of qualitative versus quantitative studies. A new discussion of the “science” in social science highlights the four shared standards of social science research. Data on car ownership have been updated.

Chapter 3 (Culture and Society): A new opener examines the impact of social media on the self-esteem of young adults. The opener draws on research by the Pew Research Center as well as numerous studies of Facebook users to show that the effect of social media on young adults is more often negative than positive. Data on smoking has been updated as well as data on the percentage of people living and working in urban areas. The demand for the iPhone 6 and 6+ in China is used to show how brands such as Apple can achieve worldwide cachet. A redesigned “Globalization by the Numbers Infographic” compares the percentage of Internet users found in all the regions of the world, highlighting the digital divide between the developed and developing worlds.

Chapter 4 (Socialization and the Life Course): A new chapter-opening pop quiz draws on a study by the Pew Research Center that asked more than 3,000 Americans which qualities they believed were most important to instill in their children. The opener also references the classic Middletown studies to highlight

how the lessons parents deem essential for their children vary over historical time. In the section on the mass media, data on video game use and parents' attitudes toward video games have been updated. The section includes a recent study by neuroscientists on the benefits of playing fast, action-packed video games. The section on work has been expanded to include references to the work of Arlie Russell Hochschild and Susan Ehrlich Martin on emotion work. Data in the section on childhood, including rates of child abuse, have been updated. The section on young adulthood includes new coverage of the delayed transition to adulthood, highlighting the work of Frank Furstenberg. Statistics in the sections on old age and women in the workforce have been updated. Part IV features substantive new coverage of recent research on race socialization, including the work of Tony Brown and Chase Lesane-Brown, who have investigated the messages that parents teach, how these messages have changed over time, and the effects of this socialization on children's lives. A new "Globalization by the Numbers" infographic provides a visual depiction of the delayed transition to adulthood by comparing the median ages of first sexual experience, first marriage, and first birth in ten different countries.

Chapter 5 (Social Interaction and Everyday Life in the Age of the Internet): A new "Globalization by the Numbers" infographic looks at data on the rise of mobile cellular subscriptions in different regions of the world and in specific countries such as Ghana, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Russia, Greece, and the United States. The authors have added a new discussion of Elijah Anderson's research from *Cosmopolitan Canopy*, in which he argues that social interaction in urban spaces is not all doom and gloom. Data on Internet usage have been updated.

Chapter 6 (Groups, Networks, and Organizations): The section on obesity has been updated with research on food deserts. Data on Internet usage as well as telecommuting have also been updated. A new section titled "Dating and Mating Online" considers how online dating websites like Match and OkCupid, as well as apps like Skout and Tinder, are taking face-to-face encounters out of the initial stages of dating. A new "Globalization by the Numbers" infographic titled "Non-profit & Volunteer Sector" looks at nonprofit and volunteer work as a percentage of the total workforce in a handful of countries across the globe.

Chapter 7 (Conformity, Deviance, and Crime): A new chapter-opening pop quiz challenges students' preconceived notions about why Mafia members commit crimes by drawing on anthropologist Francis Ianni's research into mob families. The case of famous computer hacker Kevin Mitnick has been added as an example of how assessments of deviance can vary among groups. The new section on race and the criminal justice system analyzes the ways we try to control, police, and punish deviant behavior—and how our legal system disproportionately punishes individuals of color—in particular, African American men. A new section on mass incarceration draws on Michelle Alexander's research in *The New Jim Crow*, which argues that mass incarceration has created a new kind of caste system in the United States, as well as the work of Devah Pager on the difficulties former inmates face when attempting to find jobs upon release. A new section on the death penalty looks at public opinion in the United States on capital punishment, drawing on David Garland's work on the historical development of capital punishment in the United States. A new discussion of security and terrorism includes coverage of Harvey Molotch's study of new security techniques and how these extreme security measures treat everyone like potential deviants. The data in the section on male and female crime rates, crimes against gays and lesbians, and cybercrime have

been updated. The discussion of new policing techniques draws on Victor Rios's research in *Policed* on the strain that policies like stop and frisk places on heavily policed communities, and how young men respond to the pervasive presence of police and other authority figures in their schools and neighborhoods. A revamped "Globalization by the Numbers" infographic has been updated with the most up-to-date statistics on prisoners in the United States.

Chapter 8 (Stratification, Class, and Inequality): A new chapter-opening pop quiz asks students to identify which form of borrowing—credit card debt, student loan debt, or car and automobile debt—is currently the largest in the United States. This new opener on how Americans, especially those with limited means, are increasingly forced to take out loans introduces students to the concept of stratification. Data on income and wealth inequality and poverty in the United States have been updated. The section on education has been updated with current data on median income by educational attainment. The discussion of contemporary class differences in the United States has been updated with more current data and references a number of new public opinion polls on income inequality and the proportion of Americans who identify as belonging to each social class. The section on opportunities for mobility includes coverage of a new study that found that social mobility in the U.S. has not changed much over the last fifty years; the role of race and education in social mobility is discussed in more depth. The discussion of poverty in the U.S. looks at the recent shift in opinion on the causes of poverty and the role of government in helping the poor; data on poverty in the U.S., including statistics on the working poor, has been updated. A new section in Part 3 on current research discusses Thomas Piketty's seminal new book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. A new "Globalization by the Numbers" infographic compares levels of income inequality across various countries.

Chapter 9 (Global Inequality): Chapter 9 begins by looking at the explosion of global billionaires as part of what Fareed Zakaria has deemed "the rise of the rest." It then turns to the dark side of globalization, telling the story of the recent collapse of a large garment factory in Bangladesh. Data on global inequality, including the World Bank's 2014 classifications, have been updated. The section on global commodity chains theory now uses the Apple iPhone to show how manufacturing is becoming increasingly globalized. The section on health examines the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Data on population growth, rural and urban populations, child mortality, literacy rates, HIV/AIDS, and malnutrition have been updated. The chapter includes coverage of Roberto Patricio and Timothy Moran's 2012 book *Unveiling Inequality*, which explores the underlying causes of persistent inequality in the world today. The revamped "Globalization by the Numbers" infographic on global inequality has been updated with the most recent data.

Chapter 10 (Gender Inequality): The chapter's opening quiz, which looks at the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, has been updated with the most recent data on the proportion of female CEOs at *Fortune* 500 companies. The authors draw on the recent sex-discrimination suit brought against Tinder as an example of sexism in the male-dominated high-tech industry. Data on labor force participation, occupational sex segregation, the gender pay gap, and political participation have been updated. The section on sex differences now references a study by John Archer on aggression in the real world. A new section titled "Blurring the Boundaries between the Genders" looks at how growing numbers of young adults in the United States are challenging the male-female dichotomy, instead choosing to identify as noncisgender or gender queer. The section on gendered inequalities

in education looks at recent research by Elizabeth Gunderson et al. on the role of parents and teachers in the development of gender-related math attitudes as well as Edward Morris's study of perceptions and experiences of black girls in classrooms. The discussion of occupational segregation uses the example of computer programming to illustrate how the influx of women into particular fields may wax and wane over time. Coverage of Christine Williams's research into the glass escalator has been updated to more fully reflect the concept of intersectionality. The section on the division of labor now draws on insights from the American Time Use Survey as well as Michelle Budig, Joya Misra, and Irene Boeckman's study of the motherhood penalty. The Steubenville rape case is now highlighted in the section on violence against women. A redesigned "Globalization by the Numbers" infographic examines gender inequality in countries across the globe by comparing the levels of labor force participation, representation in government, and educational attainment of women.

Chapter 11 (Race & Ethnicity): Chapter 11 now includes an entirely new section on racial theory that details three theoretical lenses—social psychological, structural, and processual—that help us interpret how racial groups develop, how they interact, why race-based inequalities persist, and how individuals experience racial differences. Data on the changing racial makeup of the United States have been updated to reflect the latest research. Data on immigration, educational attainment, health, and political representation have also been updated. A new "Globalization by the Numbers" infographic, titled "Racial & Ethnic Populations," shows the breakdown of racial and ethnic groups in six different countries, highlighting for students how the racial and ethnic categories that are relevant to a nation vary widely.

Chapter 12 (Aging): Data on life expectancy, global aging, Alzheimer's disease, and Social Security have been updated. Figures on the projected population aged 65 and over as well as the growth of the elderly population and poverty rates by age have all been updated. Data in the sections on elder abuse and health problems have also been updated. A revamped "Globalization by the Numbers" infographic look at the graying of the world population, comparing the median age, life expectancy, and the age breakdown of the population of seven countries.

Chapter 13 (Government, Political Power, and Social Movements): The chapter-opening quiz, which asks students what percentage of the world's population lives in countries classified as "free," has been updated with the most recent data. In the discussion of failed states, the chapter looks to Yemen, where the government has collapsed. A revised discussion of participatory democracy better clarifies the differences between a participatory democracy and a direct democracy. Data in the section on the role of the military have been updated, including a figure that compares the military budgets of fifteen countries. The section on politics and voting has been updated with new content on the Romney/Obama race and the results of three new public opinion polls. Data on spending in the section on interest groups have been updated. Data on the political participation of women; Internet and political participation, including the percentage of people who use their cell phones to keep up with political news; trust in government; and voter turnout have been updated. There is new content on censorship in China, where government leadership fears that the Internet can threaten state security and enable political opposition groups. The section titled "Does the Internet Promote Democracy" has been substantially updated with new content on censorship in China. A new "Globalization by the Numbers" infographic compares voter turnout rates of a handful

of countries and also takes an in-depth look at who votes in the United States by age, sex, and racial group.

Chapter 14 (Work and Economic Life): The updated opener connects the strike by workers at the Yue Yuen factories in China to larger trends in the global economy. There is a new discussion of a fifth stage of capitalism: global capitalism. The examination of mass customization now considers the rise of 3D printing and smartphone apps. The discussion of informal economies has been expanded to discuss “darknet markets” such as the Silk Road. Data in the section on corporations and corporate power have been updated and there is new content on the recent financial crisis and M&As in China. Data in the section on transnational corporations have been updated and there is a new discussion of intermodal transport. The discussion of Intel, the company currently dominating the global personal computer microchip industry, has been updated. A new section looks at recent research done by the Russell Sage Foundation on the deteriorating quality of low-wage jobs in the United States. Data on strikes, unemployment, labor union membership, and earnings have been updated. A new “Globalization by the Numbers” infographic compares the unemployment rates in eleven different countries, providing readers with an in-depth look at who’s unemployed in the United States by gender, race, and educational attainment.

Chapter 15 (Families and Intimate Relationships): The chapter opener has been updated with new data as well as a discussion of how companies like Tylenol and Target are embracing more inclusive images and ideas about American families. The section on feminist approaches includes new data from the 2014 Time Use Study. Data on stay-at-home dads and average family size have been updated. The section titled “Marriage and Families in the United States” has been updated with a discussion of the rising age at first marriage and the rise in rates of cohabitation. Two new figures show the median age at first marriage for men and women in the United States from 1890 to 2014 and households by type from 1970 to 2012. The discussion of documented differences in family structure across ethnic groups has been thoroughly revised and updated with the most current data on birth rates, nonmarital child bearing, and intermarriage. A new figure looks at the percentage of all births to unmarried women and the birth rate of unmarried women from 1940 to 2013. The section on divorce draws on recent research by Carr, Springer, and Williams on the psychological impact of divorce on children. Data on single-parent families have been updated. The section on same-sex couples has been thoroughly updated to reflect new legislation legalizing same-sex marriage. The sections on child abuse and intimate partner violence have been updated with current data and research. New research by Huang et al. and Kuperberg is highlighted in the section on cohabitation. The final section on single people has been updated with new research on Millennials. A new “Globalization by the Numbers” infographic, titled “Maternity Leave Benefits,” compares the amount of paid leave offered to new mothers in eleven different countries.

Chapter 16 (Education): The chapter opener, which looks at high school graduation rates in the United States, has been updated with the most current data. A new section titled “Achievement Gap: Components, Patterns, and Explanations” draws on new research by sociologist Sean Reardon’s into the widening academic achievement gap between the rich and the poor. Data on gender and achievement, global literacy rates, homeschooling, and international students have been updated. The discussion of stereotype threat has been expanded to include stereotype promise, a term coined by sociologist Jennifer Lee, who found that students who believe they

are judged as members of a positively stereotyped group have been found to do better on tests. A new “Globalization by the Numbers” infographic, titled “Educational Attainment,” compares the percentage of the population currently enrolled in secondary school and the mean years of schooling in several countries.

Chapter 17 (Religion in Modern Society): The chapter’s opener includes an updated discussion of politics in the Middle East, updated data about the size of religious groups, and a reference to a 2014 poll on Americans’ view of Islam. Data in the section on secularization, including measures of religiosity in the United States and abroad, have been updated. Data throughout the section on world religions, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism, have been updated. The “Religion in the United States” section has been updated with more current data on religiosity, religious participation, and the “rise of the nones.” The section on Islamic nationalism has been significantly revised to reflect current events, including the election of Hassan Rouhani as president and the Iran nuclear deal. The section titled “The Spread of Islamic Revivalism” now includes a discussion of ISIS. The discussion of religious violence references the Charlie Hedbo attacks. A new “Globalization by the Numbers” infographic looks at global religious affiliation as well as religious affiliation in the United States.

Chapter 18 (The Sociology of the Body: Health, Illness, and Sexuality): The chapter opener, which asks students to consider the causes of our health, has been broadened to include mental as well as physical health. The opener features new obesity research and data and highlights recent changes to the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT). The “Basic Concepts” section now includes coverage of the concept of medicalization as well as a discussion of Alan Horwitz’s *The Loss of Sadness*. The section on sexual orientation references changes to the new DSM-V, which published in 2013. New data on public attitudes toward sexual morality, specifically premarital and extramarital sex, are included. The section on current research includes new references to work by Horwitz and William Cokerham. Data on race- and gender-based differences in health have been updated, including life expectancy, infant mortality, cigarette smoking, and median wealth. A new discussion of race-based differences in mental health includes new research by Gary Oates and Jennifer Goode. The section on global health inequality includes a discussion of two recent cases of babies with HIV being cured with antiretroviral drugs. Data on the HIV/AIDS epidemic have been updated. Coverage of contemporary sexual behavior has been significantly updated and now includes a discussion of recent research by Laura Hamilton and Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Paula England on college hookup culture. Data on the harassment and assault of LGBT youth have been updated. The coming out of high-profile athletes such as Jason Collins and Michael Sam is highlighted. The unanswered question on alternative medicine now includes a new discussion of medical marijuana. New research into the use of steroids by young men is included in the section on eating disorders. A new “Globalization by the Numbers” infographic compares the average number of sexual partners and the percentage of respondents having sex weekly in twelve different countries.

Chapter 19 (Population, Urbanization, and the Environment): Data in the chapter opener on global population projections, birthrates, death rates, and life expectancy have been updated. The section on urbanization has been updated with the most current data on the global urban population and urbanization projections. Data related to suburbanization have been updated. The section on global warming and climate change has been updated to reflect the publication of the fifth IPCC assessment in 2015. Data on energy usage has been updated and

a new figure shows energy consumption in China, India, and the United States from 1990 to 2014. Another new figure looks at the global distribution of hunger, including the number and shares of undernourished people by region of the world in 2014. A revamped “Globalization by the Numbers” infographic (“Urbanization”) looks at both the current population and the projected population of the ten largest cities in the world as well as the growing percentage of the global population living in cities.

Chapter 20 (Globalization in a Changing World): The chapter opener on the global film industry has been updated with data from 2011. Data on transnational corporations have been updated. In the section on manufactured risk, data on GMOs have been updated. The section on globalization and inequality has been thoroughly updated to reflect recent research and data on global wealth.

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RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS

For Students

InQuizitive

The Tenth Edition of *Introduction to Sociology* is now accompanied by InQuizitive. Norton's formative, adaptive learning platform personalizes quiz questions and provides answer-specific feedback in an engaging, game-like environment. The software is easy to use and can be accessed on a wide range of mobile devices, including tablets and smartphones.

Everyday Sociology Blog

everydaysociologyblog.com

Designed for a general audience, the *Everyday Sociology* blog is an exciting and unique online forum that encourages *visitors* to actively explore sociology's relevance to popular culture, mass media, and everyday life. Moderated by Karen Sternheimer (University of Southern California), the blog features postings on topical subjects, video interviews with well-known sociologists, and contributions from special guests during the academic year. Contributors include Janis A. Prince, *University of South Florida*; Sally Raskoff, *Los Angeles Valley College*; Teresa Gonzales, *University of California at Berkeley*; and Peter Kaufman, *SUNY New Paltz*.

Ebooks

The Norton Ebook Reader provides students and instructors with an enhanced reading experience at a fraction of the cost of the print textbook. The Norton Ebook Reader works on all computers and mobile devices and includes intuitive highlighting, note-taking, and bookmarking features.

For Instructors

Coursepack

The Coursepack for the Tenth Edition of *Introduction to Sociology* offers a variety of activities and assessment and review materials for instructors who use Blackboard and other learning management systems such as Blackboard, Canvas, and Desire2Learn. Designed to support the learning objectives from the book, the Coursepack includes an optional ebook and many exclusive features:

- Integrated InQuizitive activities
- A "Writing about Sociology" section that includes practice activities and assessments
- Revised chapter-review quizzes
- *Sociology in Practice* DVD activities that include multiple-choice assessments that connect each clip to key sociological concepts (select clips only)
- Globalization by the Numbers interactive infographics that engage students with quizzes and additional data
- 34 streaming clips from our new *Sociology in Practice: Thinking about Race and Ethnicity* DVD
- Key-term flashcards and matching quizzes

***Sociology in Practice* DVDs**

These four DVDs contain more than 12 hours of video clips drawn from documentaries by independent filmmakers. The *Sociology in Practice* DVD series has been expanded to include a new DVD of documentary clips on race and ethnicity. The DVDs are ideal for initiating classroom discussion and encouraging students to apply sociological concepts to popular and real-world issues. The clips are also offered in streaming versions in the Coursepacks, and select clips are accompanied by a quiz, exercise, or activity.

Lecture PowerPoints

Lecture PowerPoint slides with bulleted classroom lecture notes in the notes field are particularly helpful to first-time teachers. All PowerPoints include captions and alt-text so that they are accessible to all students.

Art PowerPoints and JPEGs

All the art from the book is available in JPEG and PPT format, sized for classroom display.

Test Bank

Test Bank for the Tenth Edition includes approximately 60–80 multiple-choice and 10–15 essay questions per chapter. In addition to Bloom's taxonomy, each question is tagged with difficulty level and metadata that places it in the context of the chapter, making it easy to construct tests. It is available online as a PDF or RTF and in ExamView.

Part I



THE STUDY OF SOCIOLOGY

We live in a world today that is increasingly complex. What makes this possible? Why are the conditions of our lives so different from those of earlier times? How will our lives change in the future? To what extent are things that seem natural actually socially constructed? Does the individual matter? These types of questions led to the study of sociology. As you read this text, you will encounter examples from different people's lives that will help answer these important questions.

In Chapter 1, we explore the scope of sociology and learn what insights the field can bring, such as the development of a global perspective and an understanding of social change. Sociology is not a body of theories everyone agrees on. As in any complex field, the questions we raise allow for different answers. In this chapter, we compare and contrast differing theoretical traditions.

Chapter 2 explores the tools of the trade and considers how sociologists do research. A number of basic methods of investigation are available to explore the social world. We must be sure that the information underlying sociological reasoning is as reliable and accurate as possible. The chapter examines the problems encountered when gathering such information and indicates how best to deal with them.



What Is Sociology?

1

The admissions process at major American universities has:

- a** always favored prettier or more handsome people.
- b** always favored minorities.
- c** always favored athletes.
- d** undergone serious revision over time.

Turn the page for the correct answer.

The correct answer is *d*, because the criteria for admission to universities have changed over time. In the early twentieth century, college admissions began to undergo a series of major transformations, for reasons that were kept discreetly out of the public eye (Karabel, 2005; Gladwell, 2005). In 1905 the SAT was instituted, and for the first time, people started getting into college on the basis of standardized tests. Within a few years, the Harvard class became 15 percent Jewish, as Jews (not unlike Asians today) excelled at the standardized test in disproportionate numbers. Sociologists to this day disagree about whether this success can be explained by cultural characteristics or economic advantages that even relatively poor ethnic and religious minorities experience in comparison with other minority groups that don't do as well.

Nevertheless, reflecting the wider anti-Semitism of the era, the people who were running Harvard looked at this as a very undesirable turn of events. The administrators drew an analogy between the university and hotels in upstate New York—first the Jews will arrive, then the Gentiles will leave, and then the Jews will leave and nobody will be here or want to come here anymore (Zimmerman, 2010). So Harvard determined that it needed to come up with another way of conducting admissions. Rather than putting quotas on Jews, they decided to change to a system of admissions very much like the one we know today. They would start to look at “the whole person,” rather than give advantages to people simply because they'd done well on a standardized test. In recent years, these institutions have generally transitioned to looking for “best graduates” rather than “best students”; that is, not students who will excel academically in college, but who, instead, will become successful after college (Gladwell, 2005). Excellent high school students compete for a limited number of spots at elite American colleges, with many able candidates being rejected

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1 BASIC CONCEPTS

Learn what sociology covers as a field and how everyday topics are shaped by social and historical forces. Recognize that sociology involves not only acquiring knowledge but also developing a sociological imagination.

2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL THINKING

Learn how sociology originated and understand the significance of the intellectual contributions of early sociologists.

3 MODERN THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Be able to identify some of the leading theorists and the concepts they contributed to sociology. Learn the different theoretical approaches modern sociologists bring to the field.

4 HOW CAN SOCIOLOGY HELP US?

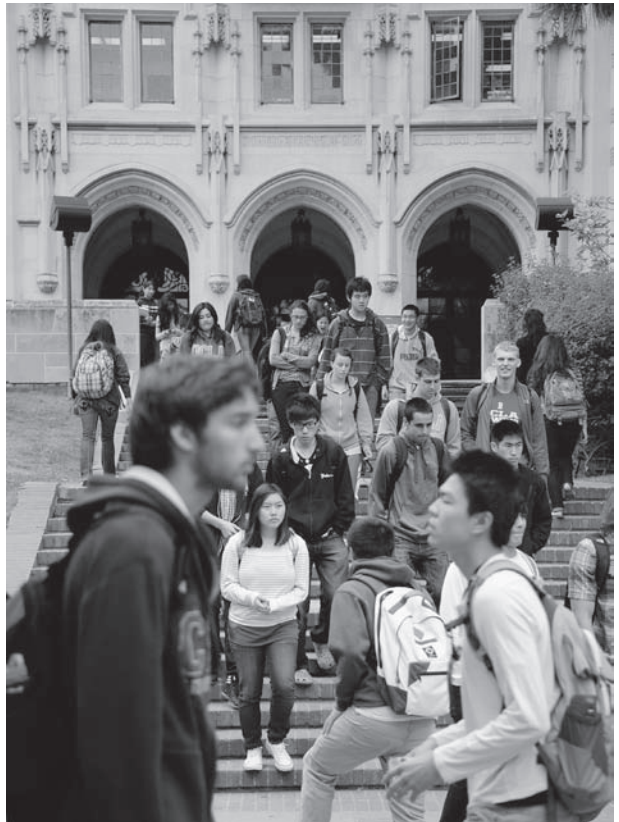
Understand how adopting a sociological perspective allows us to develop a richer understanding of ourselves and the world.

in favor of athletes or student leaders in lower academic standing.

Today, it seems natural that a college would want to get to know a student as a whole person. In your college application, you had to write an essay that helped define you as a total human being. You may have tried to show what an interesting person you are by discussing the clubs you were a part of and the sports you participated in. While answer *c* is not entirely correct, athletes experience a growing advantage in admissions over their peers, despite on average lower GPAs and SAT scores. Part of the reason for this may be that athletes are still able (and more likely) to pursue careers in high-paying professions (Bowen and Shulman, 2001a). When Ivy League schools switched to the new system, they would also send representatives to various schools around the country to interview prospective students. They didn't want too many "nerds." They wanted well-rounded, good-looking people—future leaders who would have an impact on the country and who would make these schools look good in return. And so they would conduct interviews and keep notes on whether an applicant was tall, handsome, or pretty (by whatever standard that was determined).

There were things the admissions office simply didn't like: people with big ears, for example. Short people were also undesirable, as recommendation files from that time indicate. In the mid-1950s, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale were actually keeping records on the number of men who entered the freshman class who were over six feet tall. Today, all schools release records about their incoming freshman classes, but they are more likely to keep track of race, class, and gender variables than height or ear size. Thus, answer choice *a* is incorrect if we are considering the present day; though physical appearance was at one time a salient aspect of college admissions criteria, it is generally no longer a consideration. Indeed, when people hear statistics about incoming college freshman classes, they more frequently ask about affirmative action. Some whites might wonder, "Is it true that I can't get into some competitive schools because so many of the spaces now go to minorities?"

It's interesting how frequently this question is asked. The average person who wants to know is actually using what C. Wright Mills called the **sociological imagination**, a phrase he coined in 1959 in a now-classic book (Mills, 2000;



How does the sociological imagination help you understand college admissions policies?

sociological imagination • The application of imaginative thought to the asking and answering of sociological questions. Someone using the sociological imagination “thinks himself away” from the familiar routines of daily life.

social structure • The underlying regularities or patterns in how people behave in their relationships with one another.

orig. 1959). Mills tried to understand how the average person in the United States understood his or her everyday life. According to Mills, each of us lives in a very small orbit, and our worldview is limited by the social situations we encounter

on a daily basis. These include the family and the small groups we are a part of, the school we attend, and even the dorm in which we live. All these things give rise to a certain limited perspective and point of view.

The average person, according to Mills, doesn't really understand his or her personal problems as part of any kind of larger framework or series of goings-on. Mills argued that we all need to overcome our limited perspective. What is necessary is a certain quality of mind that makes it possible to understand the larger meaning of our experiences. This quality of mind is the sociological imagination.

When some white college applicants wonder if they are not getting into competitive schools because so many of the spaces go to minorities, they are connecting their individual experience to a conception of the larger **social structure**. This conception about college admissions is perpetuated as a valid idea by cable television news; by certain newspapers, magazines, and websites; and by everyday conversation.

But is it true? One thing that Mills did not mention is that having a sociological imagination requires more than making connections between individual lives and ideas about social structure. Since Mills's time, sociologists have come to focus more strongly than ever on the careful assessment of evidence. When you look at the data, you will realize that it is absolutely impossible for most college rejections to be due to affirmative action. In a current entering class at an Ivy League school, for example, out of 1,000 students there may be 100 blacks and 75 Latinos. The 1,000 students were selected from about 20,000 applicants. A significant portion of the 19,000 who were rejected may think that they didn't get in because a black or a Latino applicant got in instead of them. But we know from the data that this is impossible: There is no way that 175 people could be keeping 19,000 people out of any school. For this reason, answer choice *b* is also incorrect.

As you can see, it's not enough to have a sociological imagination in the way that Mills intended it. We want you to learn how to sort through the evidence in a way that begins with imagination but insists on the kind of methods that can give us firmer and better answers to important sociological questions. How to do this in a rigorous way will be the subject of Chapter 2.

THE ANSWER IS D.

1 BASIC CONCEPTS

The scope of sociological study is extremely wide, but in general, sociologists ask themselves certain questions that help to focus the sociological imagination and provide them with the concepts that motivate research. These questions that orient the discipline include, how are the things that we take to be natural actually socially constructed? How is social order possible? Does the individual matter? How are the times in which we are living different from the times that came before?

Social Construction

There is a basic flaw in human reasoning that goes something like this: The things that we see before us are inevitable. They are natural and cannot be changed. What sociology teaches

us is that in many ways we are freer than we think—that the things we think are natural are actually created by human beings. We might consider the question we started this chapter with as an example: The college admissions system is a **social construction** located in a specific place and time. Criteria for admission to American colleges have shifted according to historical and demographic trends and changes in university leadership (Gladwell, 2005).

Another example comes from everyday experiences with sex and gender. A baby is usually born with either a penis or a vagina. By way of that characteristic, the baby begins a process of being assigned to the category of “boy” or “girl.” This distinction is extremely important because the baby’s sex is almost always the first thing you want to know before you interact with him or her. If you can’t figure it out, you may ask the parents.

Is this true of any other characteristic? You usually don’t need to know the race of a baby before interacting with him or her. You don’t need to know the economic class of a baby. Most babies today, regardless of their economic standing, are dressed in mass-produced clothes from stores such as Baby Gap or Old Navy. In general, most parents do not try to signal the class of their baby with his or her garments. The same principle applies to race and ethnicity. Some parents will dress their baby in order to affiliate with a certain race or ethnic group, but—except on holidays—this practice is less commonplace. Not as many people feel they need to know the race of a baby in order to interact with the infant.

Sex is different. If you are a parent, you do not want someone coming up to your baby boy and asking, “Is it a boy or a girl?” So what do you do to avoid this scenario? You dress your baby in blue if he is a boy or in pink if she is a girl. Some parents do not do this at the beginning—until they start getting asked that question. Then they start dressing their baby in a certain way so that people will stop asking. Of

social construction • An idea or practice that a group of people agree exists. It is maintained over time by people taking its existence for granted.

People interact differently with babies based on the babies’ gender. How do sociologists analyze these interactions?



course, even if you do dress your baby in the traditional blue or pink, there may still be people who come up and ask, “Is it a boy or a girl?” But it is not something that will happen often, because most people are pretty good at reading social cues—such as a blue or pink cap.

Now, the fact that many people need to know the sex of a baby suggests that we interact differently depending on whether we think the baby is a boy or a girl. If a baby is a boy, a person might walk up and say something in a traditional masculine style, such as “Hey, bud! How you doin’?” If it’s a girl, the person might say something that is more appropriate for a little girl or more in keeping with the norms of traditional femininity. Eventually, we get to the point where these interactions start to mold the kind of person the baby becomes. Children come to see themselves as being either a boy or a girl. They start to move their bodies like a little boy or a little girl. They know that this is how they are seen by others and they know that when they go out onto the street, they occupy the role of boy or girl. This happens through a process of interaction.

Even though it is not simply a natural occurrence that a person starts to behave as a boy or a girl, many of us are raised to believe that the differences between men and women are purely biological. Sociologists disagree. Does this mean that sociologists want to dismiss the role of biology? No. The goal of sociology is not to try to teach you that the biological realm is a residual category with a minor role in explaining human behavior. One purpose of sociology is to disentangle what is biological from what is socially constructed. It is in part to try to determine how social phenomena relate to biological phenomena. Most sociologists admit that there is a place for the biological. However, many studies show that the things that the average human being thinks are biological, and thus natural, are actually socially constructed.

The more you start to think about disentangling what is natural from what is socially constructed, the more rigorously you will begin to think like a sociologist.

Social Order

A professor looks out onto a lecture hall and sees a roomful of silent students taking notes and exhibiting self-control and discipline. There must be somebody in the room who wishes that he or she were doing yoga instead, or who would like to turn around and say something to a friend in the back. But the fact of the matter is that almost everyone appears to be doing the same thing: sitting quietly, listening, taking notes (or at least pretending to). How can we explain this orderly behavior? How can we explain the existence of social order in a lecture hall or in a society? We certainly need social order to get through the day, but how can we understand it?

Sociologists have offered up many different explanations to try to answer such questions. One explanation is that it is rational for individuals to act this way. Students know it is in their self-interest to sit quietly and pay, or pretend to pay, attention. Perhaps a student hopes to apply to graduate school and wants to get a letter of recommendation from the professor. This goal motivates the student to respond to the classroom environment: The professor’s willingness to write a letter is an incentive for good behavior. The recommendation acts as an incentive, stimulating the response of the student who wants it. The student tries to make a good impression, all the while keeping in mind that if he or she turns around and talks to the friend week after week instead of listening, the professor might write an unflattering letter or refuse to write one at all. This

explanation based on self-interest and incentives is what economists would use to explain most things. While some sociologists adopt such theories, most find such explanations to be based on an all-too-narrow conception of human nature. They appeal to a different set of theories.

Thus, another explanation for social order is the existence of norms. It is a norm of social life that when students come into a classroom they sit and take notes and pay attention. We learn and internalize norms as young people through a process called **socialization**. Once a norm has been internalized, we tend to follow through with the expectations of the norm in most of our interactions. Norms are important to sociologists because they explain some of the ways in which we are inside society and, simultaneously, society is inside us.

Yet another explanation for social order focuses on beliefs and values. Perhaps students place a value on the classroom, on the university, or on higher education. If this is the case, then the social order upheld in classrooms is more than a norm. The lecture hall is a symbol of a greater whole, a sacred place that is part of a larger moral universe. Students sit quietly because they believe professors in this ceremonial order deserve respect, maybe even deference.

It is important to keep in mind that we do not need to choose among these theories. Multiple factors can operate together. All these explanations address the question of social order from a sociological perspective. As such, the existence of social order is not taken for granted. For the average person, the question of social order arises in response to disruptions or breaks in that order. The average person who sees an event such as the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, or the Sandy Hook school shooting may ask, “How could this event have happened?” The sociologist reverses that question and instead asks, “How is it that disruptions in the social order do not happen more frequently?”

Agency and Structure

A long-standing debate in the social sciences revolves around questions of free will and determinism. For example, a deterministic framework would predict that where an individual ends up in life is significantly if not entirely influenced by the position into which he or she is born. The sociological imagination can be quite deterministic in that it pushes us to see that, in many ways, the lives of individuals are quite determined by their social roles, gender, race, and class. Yet we would not want you to take away the lesson that individuals are trapped, or controlled like puppets.

Let us return to our example of college admissions. It is true that Ivy League graduates have a significantly higher average income than graduates of state-level schools. This difference in income would suggest that the place at which one attends college is a crucial determinant of one’s success in later life. However, conventional studies looked only at students who had the same SAT scores and grades; they did not factor in other, personal characteristics that may have had an effect on later success in life.

socialization • The social processes through which children develop an awareness of social norms and values and achieve a distinct sense of self. Although socialization processes are particularly significant in infancy and childhood, they continue to some degree throughout life. No individuals are immune from the reactions of others around them, which influence and modify their behavior at all phases of the life course.