JOAN FERRANTE

SEEING SOCIOLOGY:

3RD EDITION

AN INTRODUCTION

Edition
3

Seeing Sociology

AN INTRODUCTION

Joan Ferrante
Northern Kentucky University

With contributions from
Chris Caldeira
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About the Author

JOAN FERRANTE is a professor of sociology at Northern Kentucky University (NKU). She received her PhD from the University of Cincinnati in 1984. Joan decided early in her career that she wanted to focus her publishing efforts on introducing students to the discipline of sociology. She believes it is important for that introduction to cultivate an appreciation for the methods of social research and for sociological theory beyond the three major perspectives. As a professor, she teaches sociology from an applied perspective so that students come to understand the various career options that the serious student of sociology can pursue. Joan is the author of "Careers in Sociology" (a Wadsworth sociology module), a guide to making the most of an undergraduate degree in sociology. She also teaches sociology in a way that emphasizes the value and power of the sociological framework for making a difference in the world. With the support of the Mayerson Family Foundations, Joan designed the curriculum for a student philanthropy project at NKU in which students, as part of their course work, must decide how to use $4,000 in a way that addresses some community need. That curriculum has now been adopted by dozens of universities across the United States. For the past decade, she has also supported a study abroad scholarship called "Beyond the Classroom" for which any NKU student who has used her sociology texts (new or used) can apply. Joan's university has twice recognized her as an outstanding professor with the Frank Milburn Sinton Outstanding Professor Award and the Outstanding Junior Faculty Award.

Doug Hume

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To Dr. Horatio C Wood, IV, MD

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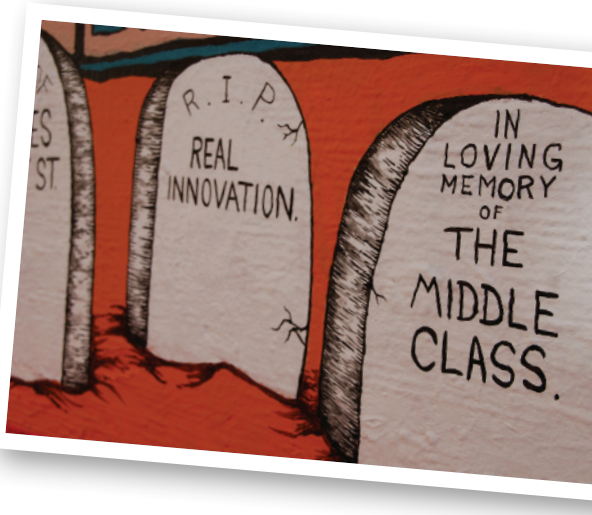

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Preface

This is the third edition of *Seeing Sociology*—my third attempt at writing a visually oriented introduction to the discipline. As I went about doing the work of this revision, I gave much thought to students who are new to sociology—the primary audience for this book. I thought about all the conversations over the course of my teaching career where I overheard students proclaiming they can get by without reading a textbook. And, of course, being an author, I don't want this to be my book's fate. But I also know reading is challenging; in fact, it is very hard work. As Professor Jeffrey Davis (2014) at Wheaton University describes it, "Reading takes effort: you have to be alert and force your eyes across a page, back and forth, back and forth, hundreds of times. It is tiring. It is brain-draining. It is tough on the eyes and neck. It requires concentration, recall, and synthesis. You can't zone out." Reading is made even more challenging because we live in an age where the discipline and dedication required to read seems out of place as digital technologies distract us and lure us to move on and forget what we have just read. Recognizing these pressures, I tried to write in a clear and concise way to support the challenges of reading. In addition, *Seeing Sociology* is structured to support the reading experience. Specifically, the book has two signature qualities:

- *Seeing Sociology* contains 13 chapters, each broken into about seven self-contained modules, four to eight pages in length. The modular format gives readers focused and manageable "chunks" of reading. It also gives instructors the flexibility to assign all or selected modules within a chapter. Each module begins by posing a question that prompts readers to recall an experience or that elicits a reaction priming them mentally for the material to come.
- *Seeing Sociology* capitalizes on the instructional value of photographs as a tool for provoking thought, clarifying abstract concepts, and conveying sociology's significance as a perspective. Photographs, seamlessly integrated into the flow of the surrounding text, are presented as objects of analysis to demonstrate how sociologists see, interpret, and analyze all that is going on in the world around them.

Major Changes to This Edition

In revising *Seeing Sociology*, my strategy was simple: I tried to make the third edition better than the second. As I revised, I read each word, sentence, paragraph, module, and chapter. I imagined the eyes of the first-year student looking at the text. I think back to a time when I was a first-year student reading my textbooks and simply lost about what I should take away from the reading. I also remember being overwhelmed with so much to know and wondering why I should know it. I became sidetracked and frustrated when I could not

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understand exactly what the author was seeking to convey. Often, instead of reading on, I stopped. While some may argue that writing with the first-year student in mind means dumbing down the discipline, that is not how I see it. I believe writing guided by these kinds of remembered experiences actually helped strengthen the way I present the discipline and convey its conceptual power. These remembered experiences motivated me to carefully choose words, to evaluate the effectiveness of each sentence, and to pay close attention to flow. At first glance, someone comparing this third edition to the second or first may conclude that large sections are "the same." A close reading shows that my revisions are aimed not simply at updating—adding new and removing outdated examples and concepts. My revisions involve revising words so they say what I need them to convey. For those readers who make the effort to concentrate on my words, I want to deliver a polished product.

I also reviewed every photograph used in the second edition, asking: "Can I find a more effective photograph to represent a given sociological idea?" In the end, I replaced 439 of 711 photos with new, hopefully more effective ones. The adage "a picture is worth a thousand words" helps to explain the photograph's pedagogical value. Let me be clear about that value: while pictures offer a subject for analysis and a tool to illustrate social dynamics, we must also realize that a photograph by itself does not convey some fixed meaning. Meaning changes depending on the point of view of the person viewing it. The point of view this book cultivates is sociological and the accompanying captions explain how sociologists "see" the freeze-frames of activity. Placing such high pedagogical value on photographs is especially appropriate given that we live in an age in which photographs have assumed a tsunami-like force as billions of photographs (most notably selfies) travel the Internet. Sociology offers tools for thinking about what photographs capture about the society in which we live; how they shape our sense of self, our interactions and relationships; and the ways an event occurring locally is shared on a potentially global scale.

In addition to revising my writing and photographic choices, I made a number of other major changes. Earlier editions of *Seeing Sociology* included an Applying Theory module at the close of each chapter. Initially, those modules were written with the purpose of highlighting and applying a variety of micro-, meso-, and macro-level theories in sociology including, but also going beyond, the big three—functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interaction. Applying Theory modules in the first and second editions focused on global society theories, phenomenology, post-structural theories, critical theory, world system theory, and more. For this edition I took seriously reviewer suggestions that this was too much for new sociology students to absorb. Thus, for the third edition I limited the Applying Theory modules to the big three plus one. That one is the feminist perspective.

The Applying Theory modules focus on comparing how sociologists inspired by each of the four perspectives might think about targeted issues related to each chapter topic. As a result, the target of the comparative analysis is something very specific. To illustrate further, instead of addressing how sociologists inspired by each of the four perspectives present an impossibly large and abstract force (e.g., culture, social structure, race, or socialization), I address how each perspective describes the sociological significance of something very specific such as blue jeans as an item of material culture, the social structure of Vietnamese nail salons, race categories as identity-building tools, and interactive games as agents of socialization. I believe this kind of focused and

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comparative analysis sends the message that the four perspectives are powerful conceptual tools that can be used to think about any area of life and not just the most abstract forces in our lives, important as they are.

The Write a Caption feature that was at the end of each module in the first and second editions has been dropped and replaced with a new feature: What Do Sociologists See? As the reviewers noted, the Write a Caption features seemed too difficult for students to do and too difficult for professors to implement and assess. Now each module still ends with a photo, but there is an accompanying description detailing what sociologists might see when they gaze at the photograph. This new feature serves to further demonstrate and reinforce the sociological perspective as an interpretive guide to routine, and sometimes extraordinary, happenings in our lives and world around us.

Of course, there are also other changes. Those that I consider most significant are listed below by chapter and module.

Chapter 1: The Sociological Perspective

Module 1.1 (What Is Sociology?)—the module that opens the book—is for all practical purposes new. I revised this critical module thinking about the power of first impressions and that these first pages have the potential to set the tone for the class and the reading to come. Module 1.5 (Sociological Perspectives) and Module 1.6 (Methods of Research) are now organized around social robotics, or robots programmed to interact with humans. Most of us have encountered social robots when we have tried to carry on a conversation with a robotic telemarketer or phone tree operator. This topic is used as a vehicle to demonstrate how sociologists inspired by each of the four perspectives think about social robots (Module 1.5) and also to demonstrate how sociologists design a research study, in this case a research study about a cutting-edge societal transformation integrating robots in into the workplace.

Chapter 2: Culture

Module 2.6 (Applying Theory: Blue Jeans as Material Culture) focuses on how sociologists inspired by each of the four perspectives analyze what is arguably the most popular item of clothing on the planet.

Chapter 3: Socialization

Module 3.6 (Applying Sociology: Interactive Technologies as Agents of Socialization) considers what sociologists from each of the four perspectives would make of interactive digital technologies designed to allow children to imitate animated characters, to role play, and to engage in games. What lessons do these digital technologies convey about the self, its relationships to others, and its place in the world?

Chapter 4: Social Structures

Social structure is arguably sociology's signature concept. The concept directs sociologists to think about the largely invisible system that coordinates human activity. This chapter has been revised to showcase the power of social structure

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to shape and constrain interactions, relationships, and experiences but also to showcase the power of human agency to change social structures. Module 4.1 (Institutions and Social Structures), Module 4.2 (Levels of Social Structure), and Module 4.3 (Social Structure and Human Agency) seek to present this invisible system in all its levels and complexity and to showcase the analytic power of this concept to assess and change how human activity is organized. Module 4.9 (Applying Theory: The Social Structure of Nail Salons) applies the four perspectives to an analysis of the social structure of nail salons in the United States and how Vietnamese immigrants came to dominate this industry and shape the experience of going to a nail salon.

Chapter 5: The Social Construction of Reality

Module 5.1 (Definition of the Situation) has been revised to systematically describe the social dynamics that influence how people see and make sense of what is going on around them. This module places emphasis on the shared and learned "knowledge" people draw upon to create a reality upon which they act. Module 5.6 (Applying Theory: Language and Reality Construction) compares how each of the four perspectives presents the power of language to both constrain and empower thinking about our selves, others, and the larger society.

Chapter 6: Deviance

Module 6.8 (Applying Theory: Laws) reminds us that people who violate laws are not always "criminals." Each of the four perspectives alerts us to situations in which laws are enacted to control behavior that by any definition cannot be called criminal (at least in the popular way we think of criminals). As one example, feminists direct our attention toward laws that maintain and perpetuate gender ideals and inequalities and that regulate behavior and opportunities based on gender.

Chapter 7: Social Inequalities

Module 7.1 (Assigning Social Worth) and Module 7.4 (Unearned "Failures") now include discussions on unearned failures and unearned successes, both of which are derived from sources unrelated to individual merit or effort. Taken together these modules examine how people can become unemployed and earn poverty-level wages through no fault of their own (e.g., economic restructuring, a capitalist system that destroys as it creates, and an economy that depends on poverty-wage labor). Module 7.6 (Applying Theory: The World's Billionaires) asks: What does it mean to be one of the world's billionaires—one of 1,645 people in the world with this vast amount of wealth? We consider the answers sociologists from each of the four perspectives offer as explanations.

Chapter 8: Race and Ethnicity

Module 8.8 (Applying Theory: Racial Classification) examines how each of the four theoretical perspectives helps us think about the meaning and purpose of racial classification.

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Chapter 9: Gender and Sexualities

Module 9.7 (Applying Theory: Sex Testing) gives attention to sex testing *in utero* and presents how sociologists from each of the theoretical perspectives see the purpose of sex testing.

Chapter 10: Economics and Politics

Chapter 10 places greater emphasis on how the economy and politics intertwine to shape job opportunities and income. Simply consider that governments enact tens of thousands of laws that affect income and wealth. Module 10.2 (The U.S. Economy and Jobs) includes a heavily revised analysis of the two-tier labor market, broadly polarized into privileged and disadvantaged workers. This module is organized around the long-standing forces supporting the two-tier system. Module 10.7 (Applying Theory: The Power and Reach of the U.S. Military) considers the U.S. military—the largest military in the world—from the point of view of each of the four perspectives.

Chapter 11: Families

Every module of the family chapter was revised with a focus on understanding why new forms of family and intimate relationships once thought of as odd, dysfunctional, or deviant are now experiencing some acceptance and even becoming accepted as "normal." In particular, it places new emphasis on social movements and demographic changes as vehicles of change ushering in the rise and increased visibility of new family forms. These social movements and demographic changes are responses to the challenges of our time (e.g., increased life expectancy, lower fertility, female empowerment, economic restructuring). From a sociological perspective, family is not unchanging or "static"; it is a dynamic response to shifting relational contexts.

Chapter 12: Education and Religion

Module 12.3 (Education in a Knowledge Economy) examines education in the context of revolutionary changes to the U.S. economy and the global economy of which it is a part. The new economy is knowledge-dominated and symbolized by smart technologies. This transformation raises questions about which school systems are best at preparing their students to compete in a knowledge economy. Module 12.7 (Applying Theory: Private Schools) considers how sociologists inspired by each of the four perspectives view private school education, specifically in what ways, if any, this educational experience advantages or disadvantages its students.

Chapter 13: Social Change and the Pressing Issues of Our Time

This chapter covers a variety of interrelated issues that are among the most compelling of our time, shaping the lives of every individual on the planet. Those issues relate to technology (Module 13.2), globalization (Module 13.3), social movements (Module 13.4), aging societies (Modules 13.5 and 13.6), the changing

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environment (Module 13.7), and health care (module 13.8). The Applying Theory module focuses attention on the criteria sociologists from each the four perspectives employ to evaluate a major change.

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- Automatically grade homework and quizzes.

Ancillary Materials

I believe that a textbook is only as good as its supplements. For this reason, I have written the Test Bank, PowerPoint Slides, and Instructor's Manual, with assistance from Kristie Vise, my colleague at NKU, to accompany *Seeing Sociology*. We have tried to create ancillary materials that support the vision of this textbook.

Instructor's Manual

The Instructor's Manual includes standard offerings such as Learning Objectives video recommendations and activity suggestions a Key Terms glossary. It also includes sample answers to Critical Thinking questions: each module ends with a Critical Thinking question, the purpose of which is to get students to reflect on key ideas, concepts, and theories covered. Typically, the questions can be answered in 250 to 400 words. The Instructor's Manual includes a sample answer from an actual sociology student to each Critical Thinking question.The sample answer can serve as an example to share with the students as a way of

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stimulating thoughts about how to answer these questions. Instructors may also want to read sample answers as a way to prepare for questions students may have about them.

Test Bank

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

PowerPoint® Lecture Slides

These slides highlight key ideas and points covered in each module. They are useful if instructors want to give students a quick overview of material covered or post online as a review.

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero®

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero is a flexible online system that allows instructors to write, edit, and manage Test Bank content and quickly create multiple test versions. You can deliver tests from your LMS, your classroom—or wherever you want.

Acknowledgments

The acknowledgment section—the place to recognize and give credit to those who have influenced the ideas in this book and its creation—is the most difficult part of the book to write. I have always struggled to find the words to capture the essence and depth of the various relationships that are special to my intellectual and, by extension, personal life. I find myself using clichés like "This book could not have been written without . . . ," "I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to . . . ," "I acknowledge the profound influence of . . . ," and so on. I am never satisfied with the words I use to convey the colloboration I value so highly. Here I will simply state the names and collaborations for which I am most thankful and leave it at that.

Chris Caldeira, my former editor and now a graduate student at the University of California–Davis, conceived the book's structure and approach. She is the lead photographer, contributing 120 photographs to this edition, and she is the person with whom I talk most about this book. Her role is so large that her intellectual and photographic contributions are acknowledged on the title page of this text.

Phillip (deceased) and Annalee Ferrante, my parents, whom I most admire for their work ethic, their optimism and perseverance in the face of difficulties, and their belief that the best effort matters.

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Behind the scenes there is a team of people who worked to make this book a reality. You can find their names listed in an unassuming manner on the copyright page of this book. As one measure of the human effort expended, consider that there were dozens of people reading, copyediting, designing, and proofing the pages of the book for at least six months before it reached the market. All of this human effort was coordinated by Jill Traut, the project manager, who I have had the pleasure of working with on this and other editions of my text. I stand in awe of the seeming ease by which she manages all the details to guide a book through production to press.

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Seeing Sociology

AN INTRODUCTION

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Chapter

1

The Sociological Perspective

NKU Philosophy, Rudy Garns

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1.1 What Is Sociology?
1.2 The Emergence of Sociology
1.3 Standing on the Shoulders of Giants
1.4 The Sociological Imagination
1.5 Sociological Perspectives
1.6 Research Methods
Summary Putting It All Together

Sociology is a field of study that invites you to see the world around you in new ways, to be open to new experiences, to be curious about what is taking place around you, and to wonder and care about those who live nearby and beyond. The sociological perspective allows you to see how the time you are born in history, the place you live, and how countless numbers of people known and unknown, living and dead, profoundly shape what you think and do. As a student of sociology, you will come to understand that "things are not what they seem" (Berger 1963, 21).

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Module 1.1 What Is Sociology?

Objective

You will learn that sociologists focus their attention on the social forces that shape the way people think, interact, and organize activities.

Do you ever wonder what kind of person you would be if you grew up in another place or at another time? If you answered yes to this question, then you will most certainly appreciate the sociological perspective.

Chris Caldeira

Lisa Southwick

Sociology: A Definition

Sociology is the systematic and scientific study of society. To put it another way, sociologists work to understand how human activities, including social interactions and relationships, are organized, with a goal of analyzing how that organization affects people's lives, thinking, and responses to others and to the world around them. Simply consider the two photos above. Each depicts one of many ways children's play can be organized. The little boy on the water buffalo lives in rural Vietnam and the little girl in the motorized car lives in a suburb in North Carolina. There is no doubt that each child's sense of self, thought, and behavior is profoundly shaped in different ways by the way each is playing.

As a second example, consider that the way people organize food production affects what people eat, the way they eat, how they think about food, and the ways they relate to others to secure meals.

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Imagine a small island society of 400 people where as a rule people eat fish daily and most know how to catch (often by hand), kill, and prepare it. Compare that island society to the United States, where most people put much less, even no effort, into finding and preparing food. In the island society people have built a way of life around catching the fish that will make each day's meal. When it comes time to eat, these islanders do not have the option to place an order at a drive-thru and have it handed to them within 60 seconds.

NKU Anthropology, Sharyn Jones

Chris Caldeira

Sociologists are especially interested in identifying and understanding the social forces that shape the ways people organize activities, whether it be to secure food, engage in play, form friendships, earn a livelihood, or anything else. For example, in explaining how an island lifestyle is organized around catching fish, sociologists would certainly consider as critical forces the geographic remoteness of the island, the surrounding waters where fish are plentiful, and small islands' marginalized status in the world economy.

This textbook introduces readers to some of the social forces that shape our lives and relationships to people around us and beyond. Those forces relate to culture, socialization, family, technology, religion, education, race, gender, class, the economy, and much more.

The culture of which we are a part gives us a language that acts as a social force broadly shaping what we think and how we convey meaning. Most English-speaking people living in the United States tend to think of this bird as singing, whereas most Korean-speaking people living in Korea think of it as weeping. For those who are Korean, the language elicits feelings of sadness; for English-speaking Americans, the feeling elicited is joy.

NKU Philosophy, Rudy Gams

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As a final example, when sociologists consider how the forces of gender shape human activity, they look for any established pattern where men and women are segregated into distinct occupations such as engineers or child care workers, or they look to see if one gender disproportionately occupies positions of power or influence relative to another gender. Consider something as commonplace as team mascots.

NKU Philosophy, Rudy Gams

Sociologists maintain it is no accident that these little girls are posing with a mascot considered male. Virtually every high school, college, and professional team in the United States employs a male-appearing mascot to represent its teams, even the women's teams. Some schools may refer to their female athletes as "Lady . . ." followed by the team name (e.g., Lady Norse), but the team mascot remains male. Consider that there is only one college whose men's and women's teams are represented by a mascot considered female (the Fightin' Blue Hens of Delaware).

Why Study Sociology

In time you will learn that sociology offers a framework for analyzing the social forces that shape the way life around us is organized. That framework allows sociologists to think about that organization in terms of (1) the shared, often competing, meanings held by those involved; (2) anticipated and unanticipated consequences on thought, interaction, and relationships; and (3) patterns of inequality. This sociological framework is especially relevant today, if only because the most pressing issues we face are rooted in the ways in which activities have been organized. Change agents understand that there are many ways to organize human activities and that each way has advantages and disadvantages. Change agents also recognize when the way something is organized needs to change and they take the necessary steps to make change.

Chris Caldeira

One might see the owners of this Laundromat as change agents because they have created a solar-powered, instead of a fossil fuel-powered service. No doubt those millions of people worldwide who earn a living extracting, refining, delivering, selling, and profiting from fossil fuels will find fault with solar power. Regardless, the owners recognize that the current way we use energy is unsustainable and has to change, and they have chosen to be part of that change.

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The sociological perspective supports social innovation. To be a social innovator one must (1) grasp how current ways of organizing our lives are problematic, (2) recognize barriers to change, (3) think carefully about how to make change, and (4) be ready for change by anticipating the advantages and disadvantages change can bring. Two examples of how social innovators address organizational shortcomings follow.

- Many high-skilled women who care for children, elderly, and disabled need to work but only have time to work part-time. Part-time work, however, tends to be low-skilled and low-paying, with few benefits. As a result, many high-skilled women accept employment below their ability and worth. In doing so they unwittingly fill the only kinds of jobs low-skilled applicants are qualified for. A nonprofit, Women Like Us, partners with employers and recruiting agencies to match this hidden pool of high-skilled talent with employers who need employees to fill higher-paying and skilled part-time positions. Each day, Women Like Us posts 180 such jobs for women to review (European Social Innovation Competition 2014).
- At least 22 cities in the United States have instituted innovation in transportation by offering fare-free public transportation. The key to successful fare-free transportation is to offer high-quality service to attract riders of all social classes. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, did just that. In the 10 years following a decision to make public transportation fare-free for all, ridership increased from 3 million to 7 million passengers a year. As a result, the city's highways are less crowded, pollution was reduced, and all workers (but especially low-income workers) have reliable transportation to work (Jaffe 2013).

What Do Sociologists See?

Sociologists see this advertisement as one business owner's effort to respond to, even resist, the social forces ushering a dramatic change in how people share information. As the percentage of the population using digital forms of communication increases, a corresponding decrease in customers who print copies of photos and other documents is inevitable. This sign represents a desperate effort to preserve paper in an increasingly paperless environment.

Chris Calderia

Critical Thinking

Write about some social force that shapes your life and relationships to people around you and beyond.

Key Term

sociology

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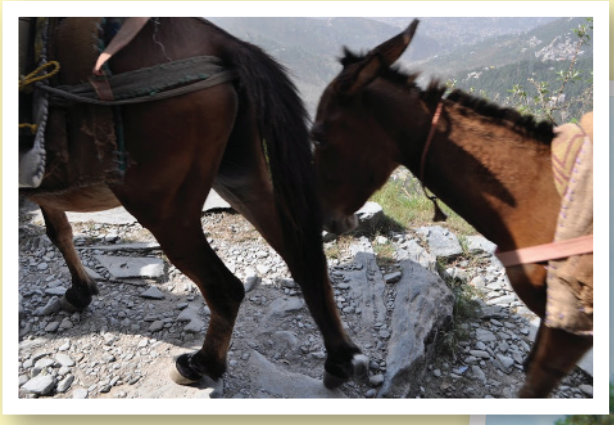
Module 1.2 The Emergence of Sociology

Objective

You will learn about a major historical event that triggered the birth of sociology.



NKU Anthropology, Sharyn Jones

Chris Caldeira

What would it be like to live in a society where there are no machines to carry loads or power boats and other vehicles?

Throughout much of history, human and animal muscle were the key sources of power. The key source of power changed to fossil fuels with the Industrial Revolution, the name given to the dramatic changes in manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, and mining that transformed virtually every aspect of society from the 1300s on. The defining feature of the Industrial Revolution was mechanization, the process of replacing human and animal muscle with machines powered by burning wood and fossil fuels (e.g., coal, oil, and natural gas). The new energy sources eventually replaced hand tools with power tools, sailboats with steamships and then freighters, and horse-drawn carriages with trains. Mechanization changed how goods were produced and how people worked. It turned workshops into factories, skilled workers into machine operators, and handmade goods into machine-made products.

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

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

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With mechanization, the effort workers once exerted to make bread was largely eliminated. Moreover, bakers no longer spent seven or more years in apprenticeships. Now people with little or no skill could do the skilled baker's work, but at a faster pace. Before mechanization, customers knew the person who baked their bread. With mechanization, they came to depend on "strangers" to sustain them.

Changes to Society

Bread baking eventually moved out of the home and small bakery shops, and by the 1940s commercial bakeries were stocking grocery shelves. While this may seem unimportant, it is just one example of the way the Industrial Revolution weakened people's ties to others in their community, their workplace, and their home. Other innovations (social forces) that changed the ways people related to each other included the railroad, the steamship, running water, central heating, electricity, and the telegraph. Month-long trips by stagecoach, for example, became daylong

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