

soc

Jon Witt

Us versus Them

The Power of Perception

The Sociology of Love
Tinder's Sociologist Makes
Matches Happen

Getting Ahead

Is Education the Answer?

**THE POLITICS
OF EXCLUSION**

Who Rules and Why?

2018

**Mc
Graw
Hill**
Education

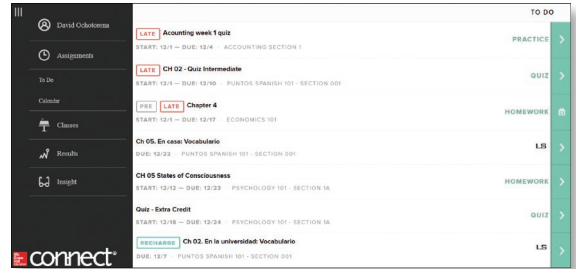


Robust Analytics and Reporting

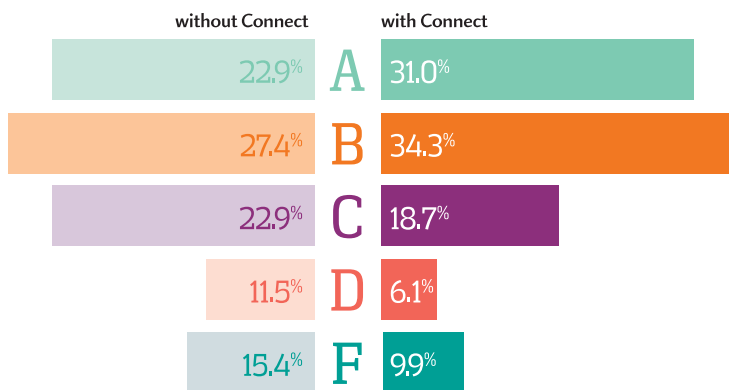
- Connect Insight® generates easy-to-read reports on individual students, the class as a whole, and on specific assignments.
- The Connect Insight dashboard delivers data on performance, study behavior, and effort. Instructors can quickly identify students who struggle and focus on material that the class has yet to master.
- Connect automatically grades assignments and quizzes, providing easy-to-read reports on individual and class performance.



©Hero Images/Getty Images



Impact on Final Course Grade Distribution



More students earn
As and **Bs** when they
use **Connect**.

Trusted Service and Support

- Connect integrates with your LMS to provide single sign-on and automatic syncing of grades. Integration with Blackboard®, D2L®, and Canvas also provides automatic syncing of the course calendar and assignment-level linking.
- Connect offers comprehensive service, support, and training throughout every phase of your implementation.
- If you're looking for some guidance on how to use Connect, or want to learn tips and tricks from super users, you can find tutorials as you work. Our Digital Faculty Consultants and Student Ambassadors offer insight into how to achieve the results you want with Connect.

SOC

2018

FIFTH EDITION

Jon Witt
Central College

**Mc
Graw
Hill**
Education



WITT: SOC 2018, FIFTH EDITION

Published by McGraw-Hill Education, 2 Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10121. Copyright © 2018 by McGraw-Hill Education. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Previous editions © 2016, 2015, and 2013. No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written consent of McGraw-Hill Education, including, but not limited to, in any network or other electronic storage or transmission, or broadcast for distance learning.

Some ancillaries, including electronic and print components, may not be available to customers outside the United States.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 LMN/LMN 21 20 19 18 17

ISBN 978-1-259-70272-3

MHID 1-259-70272-3

Author: *Jon Witt*

Field Correspondent: *Richard T. Schaefer*

Executive Portfolio Manager: *Claire Brantley*

Director, Product Development: *Meghan Campbell*

Lead Product Developer: *Dawn Groundwater*

Digital Product Developer: *Briana Porco*

Marketing Manager: *Will Walter*

Lead Content Project Manager, Core: *Susan Trentacosti*

Senior Content Project Manager, Assessment: *Katie Klochan*

Content Project Manager: *Sandy Schnee*

Senior Buyer: *Laura M. Fuller*

Design: *Matt Backhaus*

Content Licensing Specialist: *Melisa Seegmiller*

Cover Image: ©*Sam Edwards/Glow Images*

Compositor: *SPi Global*

All credits appearing on page or at the end of the book are considered to be an extension of the copyright page.

Photo Credits: *Popcorn box*: © *D. Hurst/Alamy RF*; *Earth*: © *BLOOMimage/Getty Images RF*; *Hands*: © *Jeff DeWeerd/Imagezoo/Getty Images RF*

ISSN: 2164-0696

The Internet addresses listed in the text were accurate at the time of publication. The inclusion of a website does not indicate an endorsement by the authors or McGraw-Hill Education, and McGraw-Hill Education does not guarantee the accuracy of the information presented at these sites.

In memory of Megan Sloss
Sociology, Class of 2014, Central College
Be Bold. Dive Deep. Converse.



©Jon Witt

Name: Jon Witt (though my mom always called me Jonathan)

Education: I got my BA from Trinity College in Deerfield, IL, and earned my PhD from Loyola University in Chicago.

Occupations: Sociologist, father, and dog-walker

Hobbies: I like reading, writing, and messing around on computers—and I'm addicted to my iPhone and iPad.

Childhood ambition: To be a printer like my dad until I decided to become a teacher like my mom.

Family: Lori and I have been married for 33 years, and we have two daughters, Emily, 23, and Eleanor, 21.

Last book read: Grand River and Joy by Susan Messer

Favorite film: My most recent favorite is Going in Style—mainly because Lori and I also saw the original on one of our first dates.

Favorite soundtrack: Hamilton: An American Musical (Lori and I will be co-teaching a course about it this year)

Quote: There may be fields of sociological science quite beyond the average mind, and rightly left to the learned specialist; but that is no reason why we should not learn enough of the nature and habits of society to insure a more profitable and pleasant life.
—Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Human Work, 1904

Social Media: Twitter @soc101

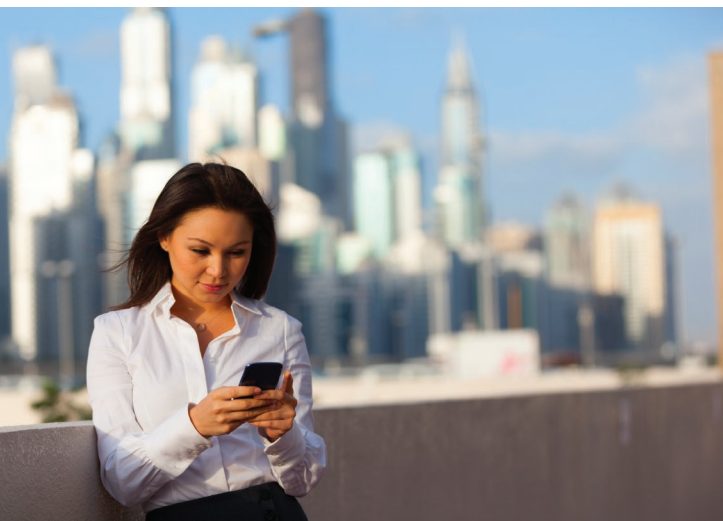
SOC

2018 Edition

BRIEF CONTENTS



©Duncan Walker/Getty Images RF



©Olivier Lantzendörffer/Getty Images RF

- 1 The Sociological Imagination**
 - 2 Sociological Research**
 - 3 Culture**
 - 4 Socialization**
 - 5 Social Structure and Interaction**
 - 6 Deviance**
 - 7 Families**
 - 8 Education and Religion**
 - 9 Economy and Politics**
 - 10 Social Class**
 - 11 Global Inequality**
 - 12 Gender and Sexuality**
 - 13 Race and Ethnicity**
 - 14 Population, Health, and Environment**
 - 15 Social Change**
- Glossary* 400
References 411
Name Index 448
Subject Index 450

WHAT'S NEW IN SOC

This edition includes new statistics and data throughout to reflect 2016 research. Also, the author has revised in response to student heat-map data that pinpointed the topics and concepts with which students struggled the most. This heat-map-directed revision is reflected primarily in Chapters 5 and 14. Other content changes include the following:

> **New/updated opening vignettes:**

- > Chapter 1: Pulitzer Prize-winning sociologist Matthew Desmond's research on evictions and homelessness in Milwaukee.
- > Chapter 3: Improv Everywhere, the "prank collective."
- > Chapter 6: The Orlando mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub, as well as more recent shootings and data.
- > Chapter 7: Online dating apps and sites with a focus on Jessica Carbino, Tinder's in-house sociologist.
- > Chapter 9: The 2016 election and the role of White working-class voters in Rust Belt states.
- > Chapter 10: Research on people in the United States living on less than \$2.00 per person per day.
- > Chapter 11: Inequality in Mumbai, India.
- > Chapter 13: Cases of police killings of African American males.
- > Chapter 14: The Dakota Access Pipeline protests.
- > Chapter 15: Recent examples of student activism.



> **New topics woven into the chapter narratives:**

- > Sociology as a science, including the limits of common sense as a way of knowing and the advantages of sociology's empirical approach to explaining why we think and act as we do.

- > A look at "us versus them," which connects ethnocentrism, group membership, patriotism, and prejudice.
 - > Henri Tajfel's work on social identity formation.
 - > Mass media as agents of socialization.
 - > The "broken window" hypothesis and its consequences for policing.
 - > The 1967 Supreme Court ruling in *Loving v. Virginia*.
 - > Research showing social and psychological benefits of remaining single.
 - > the index of dissimilarity, a measure of segregation.
 - > The "religiously unaffiliated," which includes atheists, agnostics, and those who choose "nothing in particular."
 - > Research on changes in global income distribution over time.
 - > The Bugis and their five genders as an example of cross-cultural variation in gender definitions.
 - > Cisgender, gender binary, and gender spectrum as new key terms.
 - > The likelihood of children doing better than their parents at age 30.
 - > The Paris Agreement regarding climate change.
 - > Possible impacts of technological innovation on future jobs.
- > **New Did You Know? topics:** Making things from scratch; concentration of the U.S. population into a relatively small number of counties; drug arrests in the United States; favorable/unfavorable ratings of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump leading up to the 2016 presidential election; President George Washington as a slave owner; the execution of 38 Dakota Sioux men on a single day in 1862; the amount of Brazilian rain forest lost each year.

©Kim Kim Foster/The State/MCT/Getty Images

> **New PopSOC topics:** The constructed language for the HBO series *Game of Thrones*; roles for African Americans and Hispanics in the top 100 films of the year.

> **New SocThink:** Implicit association tests.

> **New graphs:** U.S. Incarceration Rates, 1910–2014; Educational Attainment in the United States; College Majors by Gender, Percent Female; Net Price Cost of College; Where in the World the 767 Million People Below the international Poverty Line Live; Labor Force Participation Rates for Men and Women over Time; Gender Wage Gap by Education; Political Party Identification in the United States over Time; Income Distribution in the United States; Wealth Distribution in the United States; U.S. Uninsured Rate, 1997–2016; Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use.



©Trista Weibell/Getty Images RF

> **New/ revised Going Global topics:** Conducting research in difficult circumstances using the annual national survey of Afghanistan as an example; the region of origin of the world's living languages contrasted with the number of speakers; time spent in unpaid labor.

> **New and revised definitions for key terms to reflect current scholarship.**

> **New digital assets:**

> **Concept Clips:** Dynamic videos to help students break down key concepts and difficult themes in sociology. Assignable and assessable! Examples: Research Variables, Social Structure, Theories of Political Power.

> **Newsflash:** Exercises that tie current news stories to key sociological principles and learning objectives, and assess students on their ability to make the connection between real life and research findings. Examples: Mayor of Cannes Bans Burkinis on Resort's Beaches; Finding Good Pain Treatment Is Hard. If You're Not White, It's Even Harder.

Reviewers

George Bradley, *Montgomery Community College*

Stacey Callaway, *Rowan University*

Annette Chamberlin, *Virginia Western Community College*

Lyle Foster, *Missouri State University, Springfield*

Ashley Leschyshyn, *University of North Dakota*

Shannon Little, *Southwest Tennessee Community College, Macon Campus*

Jonathan Lopez, *Old Dominion University*

Cosandra McNeal, *Jackson State University*

Kurt Olson, *Modesto Junior College*

Sammy Rastagh, *Broward College South*



©Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.comk RF

Table of Contents

1 > The Sociological Imagination 1

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY? 2

- The Sociological Imagination 2
- The Significance of Place 4
- A Hamburger Is a Miracle 5
- Defining Sociology 6

SOCIOLOGY'S ROOTS 8

- A Science of Society 8
- Theory and Research 9

FIVE BIG QUESTIONS 12

- How Is Social Order Maintained? 12
- How Do Power and Inequality Shape Outcomes? 13
- How Does Interaction Shape Our Worlds? 14
- How Does Group Membership Influence Opportunity? 14
- How Should Sociologists Respond? 15

THREE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES 15

SOCIOLOGY IS A VERB 17

- Personal Sociology 17
- Academic Sociology 18
- Applied and Clinical Sociology 19

2 > Sociological Research 23

SOCIOLOGY AS A SCIENCE 24

- Sociology and Common Sense 24
- Sociology and the Scientific Method 25

STEPS IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS 26

- Defining the Problem 26
- Reviewing the Literature 27
- Formulating the Hypothesis 28
- Collecting and Analyzing Data 29
- Developing the Conclusion 30
- In Summary: The Research Process 32

MAJOR RESEARCH DESIGNS 32

- Surveys 32
- Observation 35
- Experiments 36
- Use of Existing Sources 38

RESEARCH ETHICS 41

- Confidentiality 41
- Research Funding 41
- Value Neutrality 42
- Feminist Methodology 43

3 > Culture 47

CULTURE AND SOCIETY 48

CONSTRUCTING CULTURE 49

- Cultural Universals 49
- Innovation 50
- Diffusion 51

THREE ELEMENTS OF CULTURE 52

- Material Culture 53
- Cognitive Culture 54
- Normative Culture 59

CULTURAL VARIATION 62

- Aspects of Cultural Variation 62
- Dominant Ideology 64
- Attitudes Toward Cultural Variation 65



©Michael Zak/123RF



©Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock.com RF

4 > Socialization 70

THE ROLE OF SOCIALIZATION 71

- Internalizing Culture 71
- The Impact of Isolation 72

THE SELF AND SOCIALIZATION 74

- Sociological Approaches to the Self 74
- Us versus Them 77

AGENTS OF SOCIALIZATION 79

- Family 79
- School 80
- Peer Groups 81
- Mass Media 82
- The Workplace 85
- Religion and the State 86

SOCIALIZATION THROUGHOUT THE LIFE COURSE 86

- The Life Course 87
- Anticipatory Socialization and Resocialization 88
- Role Transitions During the Life Course 89

AGING AND SOCIETY 90

- Adjusting to Retirement 91

PERSPECTIVES ON AGING 91

- Disengagement Theory 92
- Activity Theory 92
- Ageism and Discrimination 93
- Death and Dying 94

5 > Social Structure and Interaction 98

SOCIAL INTERACTION 99

- Self and Society 99
- Social Construction of Reality 100

ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE 101

- Statuses and Roles 101
- Groups 105
- Social Networks 108
- Social Institutions 111

SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE 113

- Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* 113
- Mechanical and Organic Solidarity 114
- Technology and Society 115
- Postmodern Life 117

BUREAUCRACY 118

- Characteristics of a Bureaucracy 119
- Bureaucratization as a Way of Life 121
- Bureaucracy and Organizational Culture 123

6 > Deviance 127

SOCIAL CONTROL 128

- Conformity and Obedience 128
- Informal and Formal Social Control 130
- Law and Society 131

DEVIANCE 132

- What Behavior Is Deviant? 133
- Deviance and Social Stigma 134

CRIME 135

- Official Crime Reports 135
- White-Collar Crime 137
- Victimless Crimes 138



©Rick Rycroft/AP Images

Organized Crime 138
International Crime 139

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CRIME AND DEVIANCE 141

Functions of Crime and Deviance 141
Interpersonal Interaction and Defining Deviance 143
Conflict, Power, and Criminality 147



©Goodshoot/Alamy Stock Photo RF

7 > Families 152

GLOBAL VIEW OF THE FAMILY 153

Substance: What a Family Is 153
Functions: What Families Do 156
Conflict: Who Rules? 158

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY 159

Courtship and Mate Selection 160
Parenting Patterns and Practices 162

DIVERSE LIFESTYLES 167

Cohabitation 168
Remaining Single 168
Remaining Child-Free 169
Lesbian and Gay Relationships 169

DIVORCE 170

Statistical Trends in Divorce 170
Factors Associated with Divorce 171
Impact of Divorce on Children 172



©Creatas/Getty Images RF

8 > Education and Religion 176

EDUCATION IN SOCIETY 177

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION 179

Education and Social Order 179
Education and Inequality 181

SCHOOLS AS FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS 187

The Bureaucratization of Schools 187
Teaching as a Profession 188
Community Colleges 188
Homeschooling 189

DEFINING RELIGION 190

Substance: What Religion Is 190
Function: What Religions Do 191

COMPONENTS OF RELIGION 192

Beliefs 192
Rituals 193
Experience 194
Community 194

WORLD RELIGIONS 197

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGION 199

Integration 200
Social Change 200
Social Control 202

9 > Economy and Politics 207

ECONOMIC CHANGE 208

Economic Sectors 208
Deindustrialization 209
The Great Recession 210
The Changing Face of the Workforce 211

POWER AND AUTHORITY 212



©Chris Ryan/Getty Images RF

Power 212
Types of Authority 212

ECONOMIC SYSTEMS 214
Capitalism 214
Socialism 215
The Mixed Economy 216
The Informal Economy 217

POLITICAL SYSTEMS 218
Monarchy 218
Oligarchy 218
Dictatorship and Totalitarianism 219
Democracy 219

THE POWER STRUCTURE IN THE UNITED STATES 221
The Pluralist Model 221
Power Elite Models 222

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED STATES 224
Voter Participation 224
Race and Gender in Politics 225

WAR AND PEACE 227
War 227
Terrorism 229
Peace 230

10 > Social Class 234

LIFE CHANCES 235
Systems of Stratification 235
Social Mobility 238

SOCIAL CLASS IN THE UNITED STATES 239
Income and Wealth 240
Poverty 243
The American Dream 246

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON STRATIFICATION 250
Marx and Material Resources 250
Weber and Social Resources 252
Bourdieu and Cultural Resources 253
Material, Social, and Cultural Resources 254

11 > Global Inequality 258

THE GLOBAL DIVIDE 259

PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL STRATIFICATION 260
The Rise of Modernization 261
The Legacy of Colonialism 262
The Growth of Multinational Corporations 265

STRATIFICATION AROUND THE WORLD 268
Income and Wealth 268
Poverty 270
Social Mobility 271
Social Stratification in Mexico 273

UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS 276
Defining Human Rights 277
Principle and Practice 278
Human Rights Activism 279



©Pavel Filatov/Alamy Stock Photo RF



©The Asahi Shimbun via Getty Images

PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION 316

- Prejudice 316
- Discrimination 317

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RACE AND ETHNICITY 322

- Social Order and Inequality 322
- The Contact Hypothesis 323
- Patterns of Intergroup Relations 323
- Privilege 327

RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE UNITED STATES 328

- Racial Groups 328
- Ethnic Groups 334

IMMIGRATION 338

- Immigration Trends 338
- Immigration Policies 340

12 > Gender and Sexuality 283

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER 284

- Sex and Gender 284
- Gender-Role Socialization 286
- Gender Across Cultures 289
- Reimagining Sex and Gender 290

WORKING FOR CHANGE: WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS 292

- The First Wave 292
- The Second Wave 292
- The Third Wave 294

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SEXUALITY 295

- Sexuality and Identity 295
- Sexuality in Action 298

GENDER AND INEQUALITY 301

- Sexism and Discrimination 301
- Women in the United States 301
- Women Around the World 306

13 > Race and Ethnicity 310

RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS 311

- Race 312
- Ethnicity 314

14 > Population, Health, and Environment 345

POPULATION 346

- Birth 347
- Death 348
- Migration 348
- Demographic Transition 350



©Gavriel Jecan/The Image Bank/Getty Images

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON HEALTH AND ILLNESS 353

- Culture, Society, and Health 353
- Illness and Social Order 355
- Power, Resources, and Health 356
- Negotiating Cures 358

SOCIAL EPIDEMIOLOGY 359

- Social Class 360
- Race and Ethnicity 361
- Gender 362
- Age 363

HEALTH CARE IN THE UNITED STATES 364

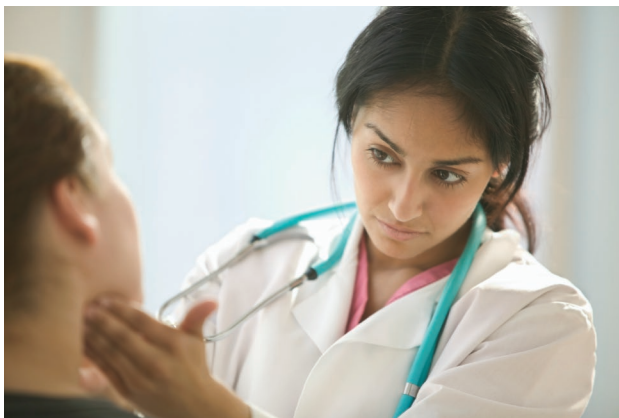
- A Historical View 364
- The Role of Government 365
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine 366

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE ENVIRONMENT 367

- Human Ecology 367
- Power, Resources, and the Environment 368
- Environmental Justice 369

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS 370

- Air Pollution 370
- Water Pollution 371
- Global Climate Change 371
- The Global Response 373



©Blend Images LLC/Getty Images RF



©David Crigger, Bristol Herald Courier/AP Images

15 > Social Change 377

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL CHANGE 378

- The Evolution of Societies 379
- Equilibrium and Social Order 380
- Resources, Power, and Change 381

TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE 382

- Computer Technology 383
- Privacy and Censorship in a Global Village 384
- Biotechnology and the Gene Pool 386
- Resistance to Technology 387

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS 389

- Relative Deprivation 389
- Resource Mobilization Approach 390
- Gender and Social Movements 391
- New Social Movements 392

SOCIOLOGY IS A VERB 393

- Personal Sociology 394
- Public Sociology: Tools for Change 394
- Practicing Sociology 395

Glossary 400

References 411

Name Index 448

Subject Index 450



The Sociological Imagination

©Diecra Laird, The Charlotte Observer/AP Images

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

On a January day, with wind chills threatening to reach 40 below, Arleen Belle found herself out on the streets of Milwaukee.

She and her two boys had just been evicted from their apartment due to a snowball-throwing incident that spiraled out of control, and now they had nowhere to go. They ended up staying the night at the local Salvation Army homeless shelter. Despite repeated efforts, it took until April for Arleen to find a place for her family to live. Their new rental, a four-bedroom house, had peeling paint and frequently lacked running water. They were there only a few weeks when the house was ruled “unfit for human habitation.” They finally settled into an apartment in one of the worst neighborhoods in Milwaukee. The \$550 they owed for rent each month took 88 percent of their monthly cash income. Even though she tried to live by the creed that, when it comes to paying the bills, “the rent eats first” (Desmond

2016:302), sometimes other expenses won out, as happened when she helped pay for the funeral of a friend who was as close as a sister. In a few months, as a result of their economic vulnerability, Arleen and her boys found themselves out on the street again.

Evictions used to be rare. Now they are commonplace. Yet relatively little is known about who gets evicted and why. Sociologist Matthew Desmond (2016) set out to learn more. To do so, he moved into low-income neighborhoods in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, first spending 5 months in a mobile home park on the city’s mostly White south side, and then 10 months in a rooming house in a predominantly Black inner-city neighborhood. He joined his neighbors in their everyday activities: playing cards with neighbors and attending eviction hearings, funerals, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and more. To gather additional data, he also spent time with landlords, conducted a citywide survey of renters, reviewed court eviction records, and analyzed 911 calls. He learned that Arleen’s story was not at all uncommon.

Desmond also uncovered the stories of those who profited from the people who lived in these communities. Tobin Charney, the owner of the 131-unit mobile home park where Desmond lived—which the city tried to shut down as a hub for drugs, prostitution, and violence—took home \$447,000 per year after expenses. Sherrera Tarver, a landlord in the neighborhood where Desmond stayed in the rooming house, drove a red Camaro (though not when she was visiting her tenants), took vacations in Jamaica,

and earned approximately \$120,000 per year on 36 rental properties. As Sherrera put it, “The ‘hood is good. There’s a lot of money there” (p. 152).

Through his research, Desmond demonstrated a fundamental sociological truth. The positions we occupy—landlord or tenant, rich or poor—shape how we think, act, and feel. In this chapter, we explore how we can use the sociological imagination in order to better understand ourselves and others.

As You READ

- What is sociology?
- How do sociologists look at the world?
- How might someone practice sociology?

>> What Is Sociology?

We need one another. We may like to think that we can make it on our own, but our individualism is made possible by our interdependence. We praise the Olympic gold medalist for her impressive skill, dedicated training, and single-minded determination. Yet, if it hadn’t been for her mom driving her to the pool every day, for the building manager waking up at 4:00 a.m. to make sure the pool is open, for the women working overnight to make sure the locker room is clean and safe, and so many others who fade into the background in such moments of glory, she would never have had that chance to shine.

The people upon whom we depend are often unknown and invisible to us. Even though we may never meet them, we rely on farmers, truck drivers, secretaries, store clerks, custodians, software engineers, scientists, assembly-line workers, teachers, police officers, inventors, politicians, CEOs, and a whole host of others. Yet we mostly take their contributions for granted without fully appreciating the degree to which they make our lives possible. Sociologists seek to reveal the full extent of our interdependence. They explore the intimate connection between self and society, placing that relationship at the heart of sociology’s definition. **Sociology** is the systematic study of the relationship between the

Sociology The systematic study of the relationship between the individual and society and of the consequences of difference.

Sociological imagination Our recognition of the interdependent relationship between who we are as individuals and the social forces that shape our lives.

individual and society and of the consequences of difference. We examine the various components of that definition below, in the “Defining Sociology” section, after first considering ways in which the sociological imagination shapes how we see the world.

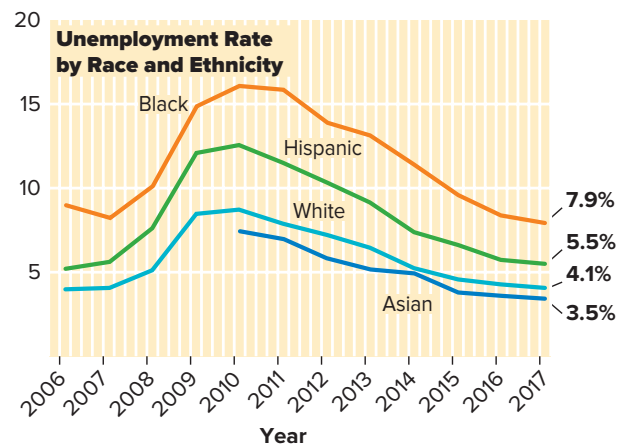
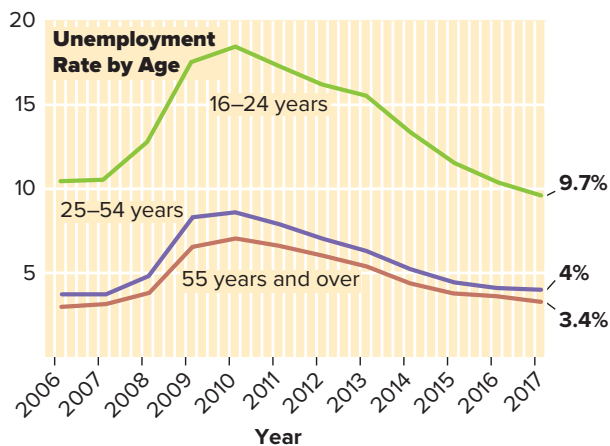
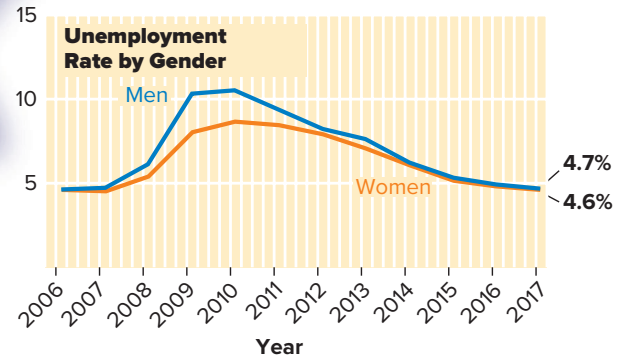
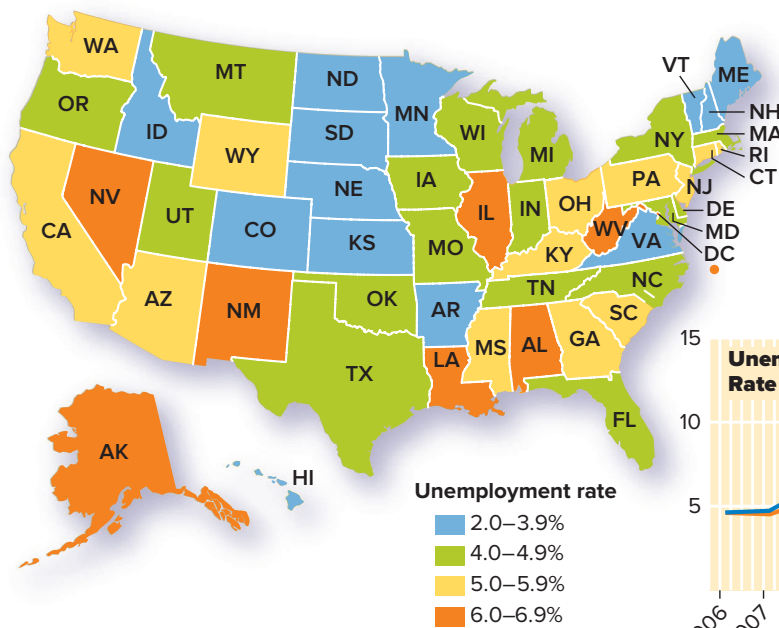
THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

American sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) proposed that we think of sociology as a tool that enables us to better understand why we think the way we think and act the way we act. He proposed we use our **sociological imagination** to explore the interdependent relationship between who we are as individuals and the social forces that shape our lives. To put it another way, practicing sociology involves recognizing the powerful intersection between history and biography. We are products of our times and places. Our thoughts, actions, even our feelings are shaped by our social contexts. For example, you chose to go to college, but you didn’t do so in isolation. Factors such as your age, family background, geographical location, friendship networks, and available income played a role in your decision to go and what school you chose.

In addition to more immediate influences on our choices, the sociological imagination calls us to also consider the role larger social forces may play. Take unemployment as an example. A person might lose his job for a variety of reasons. A worker who is foolish, selfish, and careless may get fired because he makes a lousy employee. But it’s also possible for a worker to lose her job due to factors beyond her control, regardless of how effective she may be as a worker. Unemployment levels rise and fall depending on what is happening in the larger economy. For example, when the economy nosedived in the late 2000s, unemployment rose from 4.8 percent in February 2008 to a peak of 10.1 percent in October 2010. Many wise, generous, and careful workers lost their jobs in the process.

Analyzing how rates change over time allows us to see patterns we might miss when focusing only

U.S. Employment Trends



Note: The unemployment rate includes people 16 years and older who are available for work but do not have a job and who have actively looked for work within the previous four weeks.

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016a and 2016b.

on individuals. Using the sociological imagination enables us to better recognize ways in which people in similar positions experience similar outcomes. Sticking with the unemployment example, as the accompanying “U.S. Employment Trends” map and graphs demonstrate, a person’s likelihood of experiencing unemployment varies by the person’s social location, which includes geographic location, age, gender, race, and ethnicity. So, as you can see, unemployment was more likely in the Southeast and West than in the Midwest. The level for young people was, and continues to be, substantially higher than for those who are older. Men experienced a more significant jump in joblessness than did women. Rates for African Americans and Latinos were, and are, significantly higher than those for Whites. Sociology teaches us that our social location matters. Understanding how different groups are affected helps policy makers decide which actions to take to address the crisis.

A singular or universal solution to such a problem is unlikely to be effective in addressing the differing needs of the various groups.

To assist us in understanding the role social forces can play, Mills distinguished between private troubles and public issues. **Private troubles** are problems we face in our immediate relationships with particular individuals in our personal lives. Explanations for such troubles are particular to the individuals involved. For example, you lose your job because you failed to show up for work, disobeyed direct orders from your boss, took money from the cash register, and so forth. **Public issues** are problems we face as a consequence of the positions we occupy within the larger social structure. Private troubles are personal

Private troubles Problems we face in our immediate relationships with particular individuals in our personal lives.

Public issues Problems we face as a consequence of the positions we occupy within the larger social structure.

problems, but public issues are social problems. Analyzing data—such as unemployment rates, divorce rates, and poverty rates—enables us to see influences that might otherwise be invisible to us.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE

To put it simply, place matters. Our position relative to others shapes our access to resources and influences the options available to us. As individuals, we do have the power to make our own choices, but we cannot separate our individual preferences from the influence of parents, teachers, friends, coworkers, politicians, the media, and even total strangers whose decisions enable or constrain opportunities for us. Where and when we were born; our parents' educational attainment, occupation, and income; our nationality; and other such factors all play major roles in shaping who we become.

The sociological imagination enables us to see the influence of social class, gender, and race, three positional categories of particular interest to sociologists due to the significance each has in our lives. Our social class position, for example, shapes our access to material resources. Researchers asked people how much they thought a chief executive officer (CEO) and an unskilled factory worker *should* earn and how much they thought they *actually* earned and then compared these numbers. In the United States, respondents said CEOs should earn about 7 times more than an unskilled worker, but they guessed that the real gap was 30 to 1. It turns out that the average yearly compensation for a CEO at a Standard & Poor's (S&P) 500 company was \$12 million, approximately 354 times the \$35,000 an average worker receives (Kiatpongsan and Norton 2014). This suggests that social class differences, such as that between a CEO and an unskilled worker, are even greater than we think.

Turning to gender, sociologists find a persistent wage gap between men and women. For example, when hackers attacked Sony Pictures and posted thousands of company documents and emails, it turned out that both Jennifer Lawrence (who had already won an Academy Award for her role in *Silver Linings Playbook* and had just starred in the blockbuster film *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*) and Amy Adams (who had previously been nominated for four Academy Awards) were being paid significantly less for their roles in *American Hustle* than their three male counterparts, Christian Bale, Jeremy Renner, and Bradley Cooper, whose record of accomplishment was not as great (Kohn 2014). This pattern of unequal pay mirrors the overall wage gap in the United States. When comparing average earnings for full-time, year-round workers, women earn 80¢ for every \$1 men earn (Proctor, Semega, and Kollar 2016:6). Race and ethnicity also



12 Years a Slave

An 1840s African American man is kidnapped and sold into slavery.

Children of Men

A dystopian vision of society where humans can no longer reproduce.

Zootopia

A struggle against intolerance and discrimination in an animated animal kingdom.

Philomena

A mother's search for the child she gave up for adoption.

The Pursuit of Happiness

An unemployed father who becomes homeless seeks to do right by his son.

Movies

on THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

5



Actresses, such as Jennifer Lawrence, regularly receive less pay than do their male counterparts. Francois Duhamel/©Columbia Pictures/courtesy Everett Collection

shape likely outcomes. Being born into a White family in the United States significantly increases your odds of having access to money. In a study on the distribution of wealth, researchers found that median wealth of \$141,900 for White households was 13 times greater than the \$11,000 for African American households and 10 times greater than the \$13,700 for Hispanic households (Kochhar and Fry 2014).

Place is important because it shapes how we think, act, and even feel. For example, when computer giant Hewlett-Packard was trying to figure out ways to get more women into upper-level management positions, it found that women applied for promotion only when they thought they met 100 percent of the qualifications for the position, whereas men applied when they believed they met 60 percent (Kay and Shipman 2014). When asked, at the end of his presidency, how Barack Obama would go down in history, 75 percent of African Americans said Obama would be remembered as outstanding or above average, compared to 38 percent among Whites (Pew Research Center 2016f). When it comes to analyzing such patterns, our tendency is to take sides, but the interesting sociological question is why such significant differences form in the first place.

A HAMBURGER IS A MIRACLE

To more fully appreciate how dependent we are on others, imagine that you have to make something completely from scratch but that you must do so without relying on any knowledge, skills, tools, or resources obtained from anyone else. How hard could that possibly be? Let's take a hamburger for example. First, you'll need beef to make the burger, which means you'll need to find a cow. But buying one from a farmer is off limits because doing so means relying on the efforts and abilities of others. So a wild cow it is. Assuming you can find one roaming around somewhere, you need to kill it, perhaps by bashing it over the head with a large rock or running it off a cliff.

Once you've got yourself a dead cow, you need to butcher it, but cowhide is tough. Imagine what it takes to produce a metal knife (finding ore, smelting, forging, tempering, and so on). Perhaps a sharp rock will do. Assuming you come up with a cutting tool, you can carve out a chunk of raw meat. Given that it's hamburger you're after (though you might be ready to settle for steak at this point), you'll need to grind up the meat. You might use a couple of those rocks to pulverize it into something of a meat mash. A meat grinder would work better, if only it weren't so hard to make one. In any event, at last you have a raw hamburger patty.

To cook your burger, you will need fire. But where does fire come from? Perhaps you could strike two rocks together or rub two sticks together. After

trying this for a while, you may decide it would be easier to wait around for lightning to strike a nearby tree. However you accomplish it, after you get fire, you still have to cook the meat. No frying pans are available, so either you make one or perhaps cook it on that handy rock you used to kill the cow.

Assuming you are successful, you now have a cooked hamburger patty. But you aren't close to done. You still need to complete many other steps. You need to bake a bun, which involves figuring out how to come up with flour, water, salt, oil, sugar, yeast, and an oven. What about condiments such as ketchup, mustard, pickles, and onions? What if at the end of all that you decide to make it a cheeseburger? You killed the cow! Did you remember to milk her first?

Making something that seems so simple—that we can get for a dollar at McDonald's—turns out to be quite complicated. The resourcefulness necessary to acquire and prepare all the ingredients in a hamburger are beyond the capacity of most of us. Yet if we eat a burger, we seldom consider its complexity. If, instead,

Did You Know?

... Andy George explores the intricacies of the production process in his YouTube series "How to Make Things" (www.makeeverything.tv/). For example, he set out to make a grilled chicken sandwich completely from scratch. He grew his own wheat, milked a cow, evaporated ocean water for salt, slaughtered a chicken, and much more. It took him 6 months and cost him \$1,500. The taste-testing verdict? Meh. Other products he makes using the raw ingredients he tracks down include chocolate bars, coffee, glass bottles, and a suit.



©G.K. & Vikki Hart/
Getty Images RF

we exercise the sociological imagination, we may come to see that a hamburger is a miracle. Not literally, of course, because nothing supernatural is happening, but figuratively, as a symbolic representation of all the knowledge and skill that come together in this one meal. And it's not just hamburgers. All the products we make and use—veggie burgers, books, backpacks, shirts, cars, houses, smartphones—point toward a hidden infrastructure comprising our collective wisdom and ability.

The irony of modern society is that we depend on one another now more than ever, but we realize it less. We embrace individualism, and think we are masters of our own fates. Yet we lack the basic skills necessary for self-sufficiency. Sociology provides us with tools that enable us to more fully understand and appreciate our interdependence.

DEFINING SOCIOLOGY

Sociologists are committed to investigating, describing, and explaining such interrelationships. A more detailed breakdown of the four components of the definition of sociology helps reveal how they go about doing so.

Systematic Study Sociologists are engaged with the world, collecting empirical data through systematic research. Relying on such data means that sociologists

Agency Our freedom as individuals to think and act as we choose.

draw their conclusions about society based on experiences or observations rather than beliefs or the authority of others. If they want

to understand why the average age for first marriage keeps rising or why people commit crimes, they must gather data from those involved in these activities and base their conclusions on that information.

SOC THINK

What do you see as your biggest accomplishment in life so far? What people in your life were most directly responsible for helping make it happen? Given that we rely on others who are often unknown and invisible to us, what other people made indirect but essential contributions to your success?

Sociological research historically has involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection. Quantitative approaches emphasize counting things and analyzing them mathematically or statistically to uncover relationships between variables. The most common way to collect this type of data is through surveys. In contrast, qualitative approaches focus on listening to and observing people and allow-

ing them to interpret what is happening in their own lives. The most common way to collect this type of data is through participant observation, in which the researcher interacts with those she or he studies. In practice, sociologists often draw

on both techniques in conducting their research. We investigate these research techniques, along with others, in more detail in Chapter 2.

The Individual Although sociology is most commonly associated with the study of groups, there is no such thing as a group apart from the individuals who compose it. As individuals we are constantly choosing what to do next. Most of the time, we follow guidelines for behavior we have learned from others, but we have the ability to reject those guidelines at any time. A term sociologists use to describe this capacity is **agency**, meaning our freedom as individuals to think and act as we choose. In professional sports, for example, we use the term *free agent* to describe a player who has the power to negotiate with whatever team he or she wishes. We, too, have such freedom. We could choose not to go to class, not to go to work, not to get out of bed in the morning, not to obey traffic signals, not to respond when spoken to, not to read the next sentence in this book, and on and on.

As we saw with the significance of place, the positions we occupy relative to others shape the choices we make. In the NBA, LeBron James chose to leave the Miami Heat, where he'd won back-to-back championships, to return to his home-state Cleveland Cavaliers where he'd started his career. Signing with the NFL's Green Bay Packers or Major League Baseball's Chicago Cubs was not really an option because he lacked the kinds of skills those organizations reward. Our choices are constrained both by our abilities and by the opportunities available to us. We may have been born with amazing basketball skills, but if we live in a time and place where basketball doesn't exist, they are of limited value. We usually follow "paths of least resistance"—the accepted and expected actions and beliefs—but the choice of whether to continue to follow them is ours every second of our lives (A. Johnson 1997).

The function of sociology, as of every science, is to reveal that which is hidden.

Pierre Bourdieu



As an NBA free agent, LeBron James moved from the Cleveland Cavaliers to the Miami Heat and back again. ©Christian Petersen/Getty Images

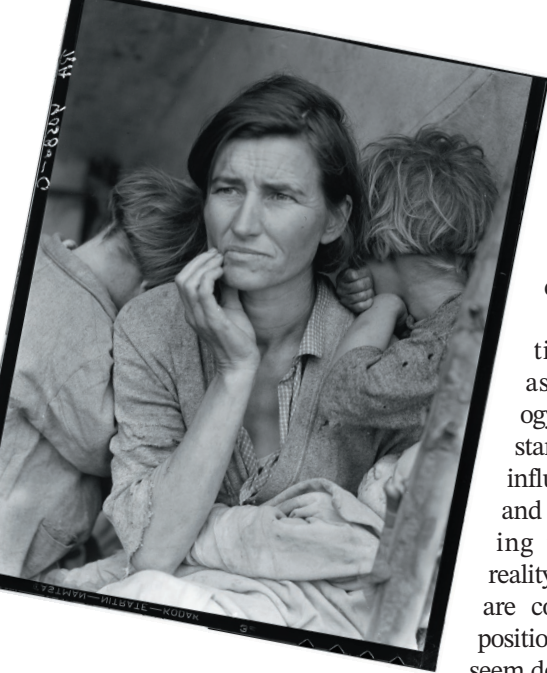
Society The study of society is at the heart of sociology. Although we will spend most of this book describing various aspects of society, we can begin by thinking of it as our social environment. **Society** consists of the structure of relationships within which culture is created and shared through regularized patterns of social interaction. The framework it provides is analogous to a building: The structure of a building both encourages and discourages different activities in different rooms (such as kitchens, bedrooms, and bathrooms), and many of the most essential operations of a building (such as heating and air conditioning) are mostly invisible to us. In the same way, the structure of our *institutions*—a term sociologists use to describe some of the major components of social structure, including economy, family, education, government, and religion—shapes what is expected of us. For example, the choices that are available to us in the context of the modern family, such as to go off and pursue our own education and career, are much different from the obligations we would face in more traditional family contexts. Nested within institutions are the groups, subgroups, and statuses that we occupy. We look at the details of these institutions in coming chapters, but it is helpful to remember that, in order to provide clear pathways for action, we construct culture and inhabit society.

The Consequences of Difference The final part of the definition of sociology involves the consequences of difference. Sociology does more than just describe our structure, culture, and interaction; it also analyzes how economic, social, and cultural resources are allocated and at the implications of these patterns in terms of the opportunities and obstacles they create for individuals and groups. Since the founding of sociology, sociologists have been concerned with the impact our social location has on our opportunities or lack thereof. As noted earlier, differential outcomes that result from class, gender, and race have been of particular interest to sociologists.

The analysis of social power deserves particular attention because it shapes how and why we think and act as we do. The simple fact is that those who have access to and control over valued material, social, and cultural resources have different options available to them than do those without such access and control. One of the main tasks of sociology is to investigate and reveal levels of **social inequality**—a condition in which members of society have differing amounts of wealth, prestige, or power. That is

Society The structure of relationships within which culture is created and shared through regularized patterns of social interaction.

Social inequality A condition in which members of society have different amounts of wealth, prestige, or power.



Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division [LC-DIG-fsa-8b29516]

why the definition of sociology draws particular attention to the consequences of difference.

In combination, these four aspects of sociology help us understand the things that influence our beliefs and actions. Coming to terms with the reality that our choices are constrained by the positions we occupy can seem depressing, but sociology actually empowers us by providing a more complete picture of the worlds within which we

live. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1998a) put it this way: “Sociology teaches how groups function and how to make use of the laws governing the way they function so as to try to circumvent them” (p. 57). In other words, understanding the ways in which our thoughts and actions are determined enhances our freedom to make more effective and informed choices.

>> Sociology’s Roots

Sociology, as a discipline, grew up in the midst of significant social upheaval. The advent of the Industrial Revolution and urbanization in the early 19th century led to changes in patterns of government, thought, work, and everyday life. Aristocracy was on the decline while democracy was spreading; people were moving from a primarily religious view of the world and its phenomena to a more scientific one; and life in the village and on the farm was rapidly giving way to life in the city and factory. The old rules that provided for social order no longer applied. The world seemed to be falling apart. Sociology arose as a means to understand and control the social forces that shaped our lives.

A SCIENCE OF SOCIETY

Science provided the foundation upon which sociology was built. Early scientists, such as Francis Bacon, Robert Boyle, and Isaac Newton, challenged conventional ideas about how the world worked. They didn’t accept something as fact simply because others said so,

choosing to reject the authority of politicians, priests, and philosophers, viewing them as insufficient sources of truth. This sometimes got them in trouble, as Galileo learned in the 1600s. He claimed that observations he’d made using his telescope, a recent invention, supported Copernicus’s heliocentric theory that the earth revolved around the sun. However, because this theory contradicted the Catholic Church’s geocentric teaching that the earth was the center of the universe, he was charged with heresy and kept under house arrest until his death.

Through meticulous observation and experimentation, these and other early scientists uncovered fundamental truths about the natural world. The scientific method they developed follows what we might now call the Missouri principle: don’t just tell me, show me (after Missouri’s nickname as the “show-me state”). In previous eras, it may have been sufficient to rely on the authority of priests or philosophers who argued that things happen due to other-worldly forces such as God’s will or fate. The scientific method insists on this-worldly, empirical investigation that can be measured using our senses. If we can’t see it, touch it, smell it, or in some way measure it, we shouldn’t accept it as a fact. And even then we should engage in repeated experiments to protect against the possibility that our senses are fooling us. The laws of nature that resulted from these early scientific experiments, such as Newton’s $F = ma$, held firm across time and place, thus providing universally true explanations about how nature operates.



©Jon Witt

The explanatory power of these laws of nature led others to explore the possibility of uncovering equally powerful laws of society. It was in this context that French sociologist and philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857) set out to discover laws guiding what he saw as the two most important societal forces: social stability and social change. He used the expressions “social statics” to refer to the principles by which societies hold together and order is maintained and “social dynamics” to describe the factors that bring about change and shape the nature and direction of that change. Knowledge produced by these laws could



POPSOC

Harriet Martineau ([1838] 1989) argued that we could learn a lot about a culture by analyzing the ideas, images, and themes reflected in its popular songs. She wrote, “The Songs of every nation must always be the most familiar and truly popular part of its poetry. . . . They present also the most prevalent feelings on subjects of the highest popular interest. If it were not so, they would not have been popular songs.” What might we learn about American culture based on analysis of the lyrics of the current top-10 songs? What themes, ideas, images, and expectations are prevalent? (Lists are available at “The Billboard Hot 100” or www.top10songs.com.)

Photo: ©Kevin Mazur/WireImage/Getty Images

guide decisions that would enhance social stability while also working toward positive social change. To give this new discipline a name, Comte coined the term *sociology*—which literally means “the study of the processes of companionship” (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 2006:367).

English-speaking scholars learned of Comte’s work largely through translations by the English sociologist Harriet Martineau (1802–1876). Seeking to systematize the research essential to conducting a science of society, Martineau ([1838] 1989) wrote the first book on sociological methods. She was also a path-breaking theorist, introducing the significance of inequality and power into the discipline. Martineau’s book *Society in America* ([1837] 1962) examined religion, politics, child rearing, and immigration in the young nation. It gave special attention to social class distinctions and to such factors as gender and race. In Martineau’s ([1837] 1962) view, intellectuals and scholars should not simply offer observations of social conditions;

they should act on their convictions in a manner that would benefit society. Martineau spoke out in favor of the rights of women, the emancipation of slaves, and religious tolerance.

These two themes—social order and social inequality—have shaped the theoretical and research paths sociologists have pursued since this beginning. In early sociological theory, they find their fullest development in the works of Émile Durkheim and Karl Marx, respectively. As we will see throughout this book, they continue to be primary concerns for sociologists.

THEORY AND RESEARCH

French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) was strongly influenced by Comte’s dream of establishing sociology as a science. They both envisioned sociology as a conversation between theory and research. Unlike Comte, however, Durkheim gathered data to test basic sociological theories about social order. A **theory** is a set of statements that seeks to explain problems, actions, or behavior. Theories represent our attempts to make the best possible sense of the world around us. They often start out general and vague, but over time and informed by research, theories provide richer, more complete interpretations of the worlds in which we live. Durkheim provided an early model of the interplay between theory and research with his work on the impact our social connectedness has on the choices we make.

Theory In sociology a set of statements that seeks to explain problems, actions, or behavior.

Social facts Manners of acting, thinking, and feeling external to the individual with coercive power to shape how we act, think, and feel.

Formulating Sociological Theories We can better understand how theories develop in sociology by following the logic Émile Durkheim employed more than a century ago when sociology was just emerging as a social science. At the time, there were no sociology departments in universities and no academic positions for sociologists. Durkheim wanted to establish sociology’s legitimacy as a distinct discipline. His theory was that social forces shape individual action. This contradicted the dominant theories of the time that biology, the individual’s psyche, or God were the primary causes for our behaviors. In an attempt to create space for sociology as a discipline, he argued that factors above the level of the individual but within the domain of human society shape our actions.

Durkheim set out to prove that social facts exist and affect what we do. He defined **social facts** as manners of acting, thinking, and feeling external to the individual that have coercive power to shape how we