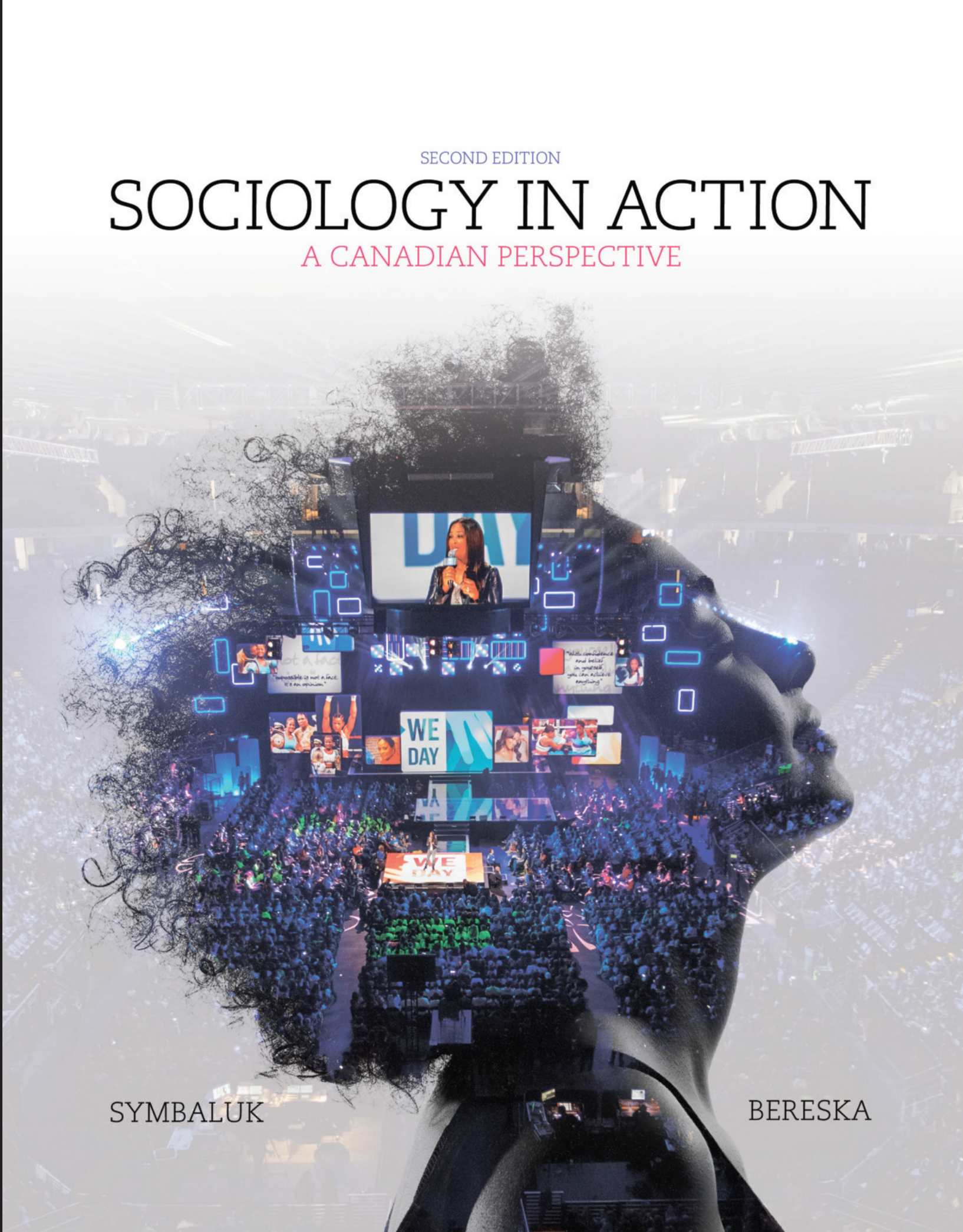
SECOND EDITION

SOCIOLOGY IN ACTION

A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE



SYMBALUK BERESKA

SOCIOLOGY IN ACTION

A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

SECOND EDITION

SOCIOLOGY IN ACTION

A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

SECOND EDITION

Diane G. Symbaluk, PhD
Sociology Department
Grant MacEwan University

Tami M. Bereska, PhD
Sociology Department
Grant MacEwan University

NELSON EDUCATION

Sociology in Action: A Canadian Perspective, Second Edition
by Diane G. Symbaluk and Tami M. Bereska

Vice President, Editorial Higher Education:
Anne Williams

Publishers:
Leanna MacLean and Maya Castle

Marketing Manager:
Terry Fedorkiw

Senior Developmental Editor:
Linda Sparks

Photo Researcher and Permissions Coordinator:
Melody Tolson

Production Project Manager:
Fiona Drego

Production Service:
Vipra Fauzdar, MPS Limited

Copy Editor:
Matthew Kudelka

Proofreader:
Mohammad Taiyab Khan

Indexer:
David Luljak

Design Director:
Ken Phipps

Managing Designer:
Franca Amore

Interior Design:
Sharon Lucas

Cover Design:
Sharon Lucas

Cover Image:
Photo by James Fanucchi and Courtesy of Free The Children

Compositor:
MPS Limited

Printed and bound in the United States
1 2 3 4 18 17 16 15

For more information contact Nelson Education Ltd., 1120 Birchmount Road, Toronto, Ontario, M1K 5G4. Or you can visit our Internet site at http://www.nelson.com

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data

Symbaluk, Diane, 1967-, author
Sociology in action : a Canadian perspective / Diane G. Symbaluk, PhD (Sociology Department, Grant MacEwan University), Tami M. Bereska, PhD (Sociology Department, Grant MacEwan University). — Second edition.

Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-17-653204-8 (pbk.)

1. Sociology—Canada—Textbooks. 2. Sociology—Textbooks. I. Bereska, Tami M. (Tami Marie), 1968-, author II. Title.

HM586.S95 2015
301.0971 C2014-906608-2

ISBN-13: 978-0-17-653204-8
ISBN-10: 0-17-653204-8

For those who have yet to discover sociology and
those who have already come to appreciate it.

Brief Contents

Detailed Contents

List of Figures, Boxes, and Tables

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF BOXES

Chapter 9: Canadian Families: Past, Present, and Future

Chapter 10: Learning What Is "True": Religion, Science, and Education

Chapter 11: Social Control, Deviance, and Crime

Chapter 12: Health and Illness: Is It "Lifestyle," or Something More?

Chapter 13: Social Change: Collective Behaviour and Social Movements

Chapter 14: "Going Green": Environmental Sociology

Chapter 15: Globalization: The Interconnected World

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 2: Applying Sociological Research Methods

Chapter 5: Social Inequality in Canadian Society

Chapter 7: Sex, Gender, and Sexualities: Deconstructing Dualisms

Chapter 13: Social Change: Collective Behaviour and Social Movements

Chapter 14: "Going Green": Environmental Sociology

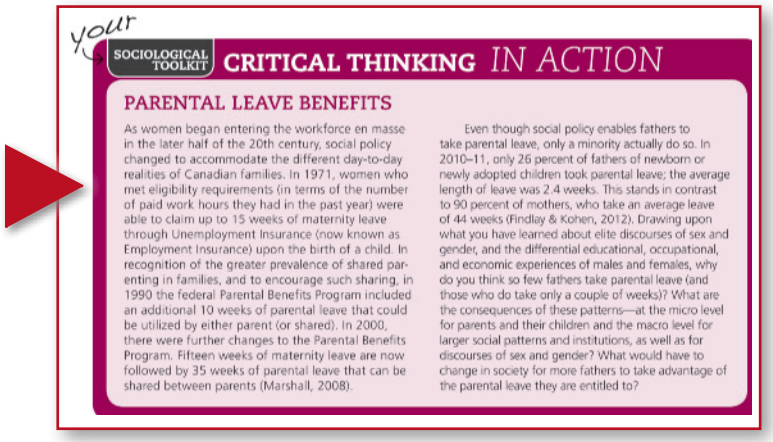
A Unique Learning System

THE SOCIOLOGICAL TOOLKIT

The essence of sociology lies in the sociological imagination, a cognitive skill that enables individuals to identify the links between the micro level of individual experiences and choices and the macro level of larger sociocultural forces. This textbook highlights the tools that are necessary to develop that skill: empirical research methods that create verifiable knowledge; sociological theories that explain that knowledge, and critical thinking that enables us to evaluate and to extrapolate from that knowledge.

Empirical Research Methods and Sociological Theories. Representative of the discipline of sociology, academic research based on empirical research methods and sociological theories constitute the foundation for each chapter.

Your Sociological Toolkit: Critical Thinking in Action. Research has found that critical thinking does not automatically develop with a postsecondary education—it requires practice. In each chapter, a box titled **Your Sociological Toolkit: Critical Thinking in Action** provides students with specific opportunities to think critically about particular issues by evaluating, questioning, or deconstructing certain pieces of knowledge or claims to truth, or by extrapolating from the material addressed in the body of the chapter to a broader question or social problem. For example, in the chapter on sex, gender, and sexualities, students are presented with data showing that few fathers actually take advantage of the opportunities provided by parental leave policies (and those who do take parental leave do so for only a few weeks). Students are asked to draw upon the earlier chapter material on elite discourses of sex and gender, and on the differential educational, occupational, and economic experiences of males and females, to explain why this pattern exists. They are also asked to consider the consequences of these patterns—at the micro level for parents and their children, and at the macro level for social patterns and institutions, as well as for larger discourses of sex and gender. Finally, students are asked what would have to change in society for more fathers to take advantage of the parental leave they are entitled to.


your
SOCIOLOGICAL TOOLKIT
CRITICAL THINKING IN ACTION
PARENTAL LEAVE BENEFITS
As women began entering the workforce en masse in the later half of the 20th century, social policy changed to accommodate the different day-to-day realities of Canadian families. In 1971, women who met eligibility requirements (in terms of the number of paid work hours they had in the past year) were able to claim up to 15 weeks of maternity leave through Unemployment Insurance (now known as Employment Insurance) upon the birth of a child. In recognition of the greater prevalence of shared parenting in families, and to encourage such sharing, in 1990 the federal Parental Benefits Program included an additional 10 weeks of parental leave that could be utilized by either parent (or shared). In 2000, there were further changes to the Parental Benefits Program. Fifteen weeks of maternity leave are now followed by 35 weeks of parental leave that can be shared between parents (Marshall, 2008).
Even though social policy enables fathers to take parental leave, only a minority actually do so. In 2010–11, only 26 percent of fathers of newborn or newly adopted children took parental leave; the average length of leave was 2.4 weeks. This stands in contrast to 90 percent of mothers, who take an average leave of 44 weeks (Findlay & Kohen, 2012). Drawing upon what you have learned about elite discourses of sex and gender, and the differential educational, occupational, and economic experiences of males and females, why do you think so few fathers take parental leave (and those who do take only a couple of weeks)? What are the consequences of these patterns—at the micro level for parents and their children and the macro level for larger social patterns and institutions, as well as for discourses of sex and gender? What would have to change in society for more fathers to take advantage of the parental leave they are entitled to?

Four distinct but complementary ways of practising sociology. Unique to this textbook, four different settings within which the sociological toolkit can be used are highlighted: **in theory**, **in practice**, **in my community**, and **in my life.** This approach is especially effective for helping students understand how sociology relates to their everyday lives and how academic sociology (i.e., based in theoretical and empirical research) applies to real life. For example, students can more readily evaluate theoretical assumptions when they can see how they translate into actual policy recommendations on particular issues, or how they are communicated to the public in various forms. Students are especially able to understand the contributions of a sociological perspective when issues are discussed using personal examples they can consider in the context of their own lives.

Your Sociological Toolkit: Sociology in Theory sections highlight certain pieces of research by formally trained academics.


your SOCIOLOGICAL TOOLKIT

LO6 SOCIOLOGY IN THEORY

The study of families has always been more empirical than theoretical, focusing on narrow, specific topics


your SOCIOLOGICAL TOOLKIT

SOCIOLOGY IN PRACTICE

CHANGING VIEWS OF PROSTITUTION

In Canada, the act of prostitution (exchanging money for some type of sexual behaviour) is not illegal. However, it is difficult to engage in prostitution without violating a criminal law related to prostitution, such as communicating in public in order to obtain prostitution services, operating a bawdy house (a brothel), or living off the avails of prostitution (pimping). In 2013 the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously struck down Canada's prostitution laws, stating that they threatened the health and safety of sex trade workers and that the workers were entitled to the same level of occupational safety as employees in any other industry (CBC, 2013). Once these laws were struck down, sex trade workers were able to hire bodyguards, work in a common location (a bawdy house), hire drivers, and take other steps to improve their safety. Although many sex trade workers, as well as the Sex Professionals of Canada, applauded this ruling, others argued that the ruling would drive more prostitution indoors, where police officers and social workers would have more difficulty identifying those who might be in need of assistance (Bereska, 2014). The Supreme Court gave the federal government one year to develop a new prostitution law, if it so chose. In 2014, the government did introduce new legislation, emphasizing greater criminalization of johns (the customers) and pimps. Many sex trade workers, and the Sex Professionals of Canada, were outraged, arguing that the new legislation did not follow the intent of the Supreme Court's ruling—that in fact, they would now be at even greater risk of violence than under previous legislation. In June 2014, sex trade workers across the country held a national day of action to protest the new legislation (Campbell, 2014).

Your Sociological Toolkit: Sociology in Practice boxes consist of applications of sociological concepts for policy development.

Your Sociological Toolkit: Sociology in My Community boxes demonstrate how sociological principles can be transmitted to nonacademic audiences.

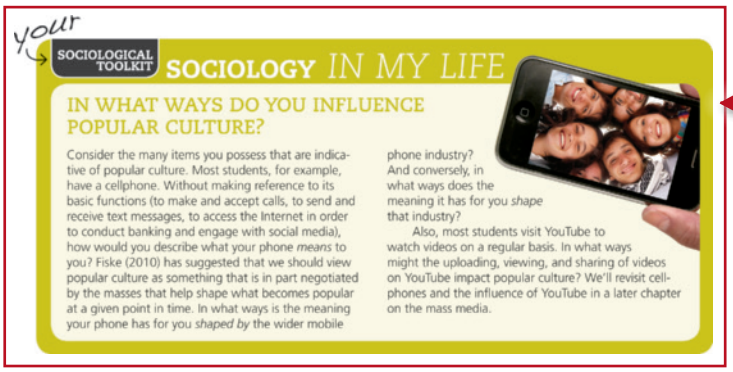

your SOCIOLOGICAL TOOLKIT

SOCIOLOGY IN MY COMMUNITY

DISCUSSING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Once a month, the Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation and Elephant Thoughts host a documentary film series in Collingwood, Ontario, where community members can learn more about environmental and social justice issues such as overfishing, sustainability, and overreliance on oil. Some of the recent documentaries shown are outstanding resources. They include the following:

- *Stand* (2014) showcases how the West Coast of British Columbia has been placed at risk by the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline. Visit www.standfilm.com.
- *Watershed* (2014) examines how population growth, climate change, and Indigenous rights are threatening the Colorado River. Visit www.watershedmovie.com.
- *Occupy Love* (2014) explores activist movements against corporate greed and discusses evolving social change based on more sustainable alternative economic systems. Visit www.occupylove.org.
- *Trashed* (2013) highlights how consumerism and global waste are polluting once beautiful destinations. Visit www.trashedfilm.com.


your SOCIOLOGICAL TOOLKIT

SOCIOLOGY IN MY LIFE

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU INFLUENCE POPULAR CULTURE?

Consider the many items you possess that are indicative of popular culture. Most students, for example, have a cellphone. Without making reference to its basic functions (to make and accept calls, to send and receive text messages, to access the Internet in order to conduct banking and engage with social media), how would you describe what your phone *means* to you? Fiske (2010) has suggested that we should view popular culture as something that is in part negotiated by the masses that help shape what becomes popular at a given point in time. In what ways is the meaning your phone has for you *shaped by* the wider mobile phone industry? And conversely, in what ways does the meaning it has for you *shape* that industry?

Also, most students visit YouTube to watch videos on a regular basis. In what ways might the uploading, viewing, and sharing of videos on YouTube impact popular culture? We'll revisit cellphones and the influence of YouTube in a later chapter on the mass media.

Your Sociological Toolkit: Sociology in My Life boxes are applications of sociological knowledge to one's own personal life experiences.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

The Sociological Toolkit is the organizing framework of the text. The following special features also characterize it:

- *Learning Objectives and Outcomes* are numbered statements about the intended knowledge and/or skills students should be able to demonstrate following a thorough reading of the chapter. The Learning Objectives and Outcomes run throughout the body of the chapter to encourage critical, focused reading.
- *Opening quotations* begin each chapter; they are well-known quotes intended to spark the reader's interest and set the tone for the chapter by highlighting a central concept, issue, or paradox that is pertinent to the topic covered in that chapter.
- *Sociology on Screen* discusses documentaries and/or fictional films that illustrate key concepts and processes.
- *Sociology in Music* includes lyrics from songs that illustrate the importance of sociological concepts in everyday practices.
- *Sociology Online* details various sources of information at particular websites that demonstrate key concepts and provide in-depth examples of topics discussed in the chapters.
- *Sociology in the News* contains media coverage illustrating how sociological concepts and processes are presented in statements made to the public.
- *Sociology in Words* includes either the testimony of people who experience sociological concepts first-hand or in-depth explanations by theorists who study sociological issues.
- *Sociology in Deeds* highlights actions of others that demonstrate sociological principles.
- *Chapter Summaries* are succinct examples of the kinds of responses students are expected to provide in relation to the learning objectives and outcomes.
- *Time to Review* questions at the end of each main section highlight key points and provide students with a built-in test of their mastery of the material before they proceed to the next section.
- *Margin Definitions* provide definitions conveniently located in the text margin beside the section where the term is first introduced. Students can practise their understanding by accessing the interactive flashcards online.
- *Recommended Readings* provide references for additional resources on specified aspects of the issues pertinent to a given chapter.
- *For Further Reflection* questions present opportunities to examine chapter content in more detail and to demonstrate a personal understanding of the key concepts and processes discussed in the chapter.
- A *Glossary* of all key terms is included at the end of the text.

Preface

INTRODUCTION

Sociology is about the real world. It can be thought of as the most comprehensive social science[1]—one that provides a systematic means for understanding the interconnectedness among people, among institutions, and between individuals and the society in which they live. A major objective of our textbook is to give you the tools to help you develop your sociological imagination[2] so that you can see how you (and other people) influence and are influenced by society; so that you can view social issues from a variety of different perspectives and critically evaluate those perspectives (including your own); and so that you can extrapolate from the empirical and theoretical research presented in this textbook to the real world issues you or that others experience every day. The sociological imagination is not merely an intellectual exercise; it is the foundation for social action. We hope that by the time you finish this textbook, you will be better equipped to engage in effective social action in the context of your own families, communities, and professions, as well as in the context of larger social problems such as social inequality and environmental degradation.

OVERALL GOAL OF THIS BOOK: HELPING STUDENTS ACQUIRE THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SOCIOLOGY

Persell, Pfeiffer, and Syed[3] surveyed 44 pre-eminent leaders in sociology (including ASA presidents, regional presidents, and national grant recipients in sociology), asking them what students need to know by the time they finish a course in introductory sociology. The following nine themes emerged as overall directives for what students should learn about in an introductory sociology course:

1. The "social" part of sociology, or learning to think sociologically
2. The scientific nature of sociology
3. Complex and critical thinking
4. The centrality of inequality
5. A sense of sociology as a field
6. The social construction of ideas
7. The difference between sociology and other social sciences
8. The importance of trying to improve the world
9. The important social institutions in society

Our goal as authors was to provide a foundation on which those objectives can be met by those teaching introductory sociology, whether in classrooms, online, or in other distance learning environments. The feedback of our reviewers was invaluable to our efforts.

ORGANIZATION

Part 1: Practising Sociology: Your Sociological Toolkit provides students with a framework for how to think sociologically. Beginning in Chapter 1, you will start to see the fundamental connection between individual choices and larger social forces, a connection that lies at the heart of the sociological imagination. Chapter 1 explains why the sociological imagination is important—in the 21st century, perhaps more important than ever before—and outlines the tools that will help you build your own sociological imagination (empirical research methods, sociological theories, critical thinking). Empirical research methods are presented in detail in Chapter 2. These methods help us move beyond commonsense ideas to appreciate the scientific nature of sociology as a discipline that provides answers to important questions.

Part 2: Society and the Self: The Foundations has four chapters that constitute a foundation of sociology as a discipline. Chapter 3 highlights the cultural context of our social experiences and outlines the basic components of culture. Chapter 4 addresses the role of socialization in the emergence of our own identities and the identities we ascribe to others, as

[1] G. Delanty, *Social Science: Philosophical and Methodological Foundations*, 2nd ed. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2005); G. Delanty, "Sociology," in *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. G. Ritzer (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), http:// www.blackwellreference.com.

[2] C.W. Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, 40th anniversary ed., ed. C.W. Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3–24.

[3] C.H. Persell, K.M. Pfeiffer, and A. Syed, "What Should Students Understand After Taking Introduction to Sociology?" *Teaching Sociology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 300–14.

well as the social structure within which socialization occurs. Chapter 5 discusses social inequality as a challenge for many people and as a stable feature of Canadian society. In the 21st century, the mass media are a key source of information and have come to play a central role in connecting members of society to one another. So this section of the textbook ends with a chapter about the mass media, including a critical look at how they shape our perceptions.

Part 3: The Micro and Macro of Our Everyday Experiences has six chapters that focus on various aspects of students' own experiences. Chapters 7 and 8 consider the implications of sex, gender, and sexualities, as well as ethnicity, for who we are and who others say we are, as well as for socioeconomic status, discrimination, and family life. Chapter 9 helps us appreciate the influence, diversity, and changing nature of Canadian families. Chapter 10 focuses on the various ways we come to know what is "true"—through religion, science, and the modern education system—and the ways in which all three are socially constructed. Chapter 11 explores the myriad ways that people (including ourselves) are subjected to measures of social control on a daily basis, such that we are identified as deviant—sometimes in noncriminal ways, other times in criminal ways. Chapter 12 describes patterns of health and illness, with an emphasis on "lifestyle" factors and social determinants of health, as well as the prevention and treatment of illness in the broader context of health care systems.

Part 4: Our Changing World, discusses the importance of collective action, social movements, and globalization for effecting widespread change. Chapter 13 discusses social change as brought about by various forms of collective behaviour and social movements. Chapter 14 focuses on environmental sociology as part of a global call to action on ecological issues. Chapter 15 describes historical precursors to globalization; outlines technological, economic, political, cultural, and social characteristics of globalization; and assesses the relative merits and drawbacks of globalization.

UNDERLYING THEMES

- *The impetus for social action.* All introductory sociology textbooks mention C. Wright Mills's concept of the *sociological imagination*. However, they tend to treat the sociological imagination as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end. When Mills spoke of the sociological imagination, he emphasized its centrality in creating informed and active citizens. By focusing on the sociological imagination and social action, this textbook provides the impetus for students to become more socially aware and more active as citizens in their communities, in society, and in the world. Whether they become parents, teachers, community league soccer coaches, entrepreneurs, or social activists trying to create meaningful social change, students will see the value in utilizing their own sociological imaginations.
- *The prevalence of social inequality.* From the stratification of Canadian society into distinct and unequal social classes, to the differential treatment of men and women based on socially constructed gender differences, this book teaches students about the centrality of social inequality. Throughout, we emphasize how social inequality is built into Canadian society and how various processes and structures lead to its reproduction in subsequent generations.
- *The socially constructed nature of society.* Whether we are debating how to define the family, how to describe deviance, how to measure poverty, or even how many sexes exist, this book highlights ways in which key concepts we tend to take for granted are actually social constructions contingent on specific historical contexts and the needs or interests of particular groups.
- *Ways to engage students and instructors.* Students need to see the relevance of sociology in their everyday lives as well as how this translates into related careers. Similarly, instructors need to find ways to embed sociological concepts in students' interests and course curriculum paths. We include particular pedagogical features to help bring sociology alive; we then translate social issues from theory into practice and finally into the public and personal domains. A variety of boxes are included to help students and instructors see the links between individuals and society and the overall applicability of the discipline of sociology as a means for facilitating social change.

These boxes highlight films, music lyrics, websites, media stories, the first-hand testimonies, and the actions of individuals or groups.
- *Built-in skill development tools for students.* In each chapter we begin with a set of learning objectives and outcomes and end with a chapter summary that refers back to those objectives and outcomes. Throughout the chapter, indicators draw students' attention to which learning objective is being addressed in any given section. We also provide Time to Review questions throughout each chapter so that students can see if they understand the main points before moving on to a new section. We end each chapter with a set of recommended readings and critical reflection questions.

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS AND WHAT'S NEW TO THIS EDITION

Listed below are some of the topics and issues covered in specific chapters along with descriptions of key changes integrated into the second edition.

Chapter 1 Seeing and Acting Through the Lens of Sociology

- What is sociology?
- What can I do with a degree in sociology?
- Comparing sociology and other disciplines
- The value of the sociological imagination
- The beginner's guide to critical thinking

New to the Second Edition . . .

This chapter introduces the idea of the sociological toolkit. Just as a hammer and a saw enable an individual to build a shed in the backyard, empirical research methods, sociological theories, and critical thinking enable students to develop their sociological imaginations. The section on critical thinking has been expanded to include research on critical thinking itself, which shows that most students enter university with lower order thinking skills and that a significant number graduate without having had sufficient opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills. Critical thinking skills require practice, and this chapter outlines for students how this textbook will give them opportunities for that practice.

Chapter 2: Applying Sociological Research Methods

- Goals of sociological research
- Steps for conducting sociological research
- Ethical conduct for research involving humans
- Distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative methods

New to the Second Edition . . .

This chapter has been expanded to include a wider array of approaches to research. It now includes discussions of evaluation research, empowerment research, decolonization research, participant action research, discourse analysis, and more. There is also a new section on establishing rigour in qualitative research through triangulation, credibility, and the use of audit trails.

Chapter 3: "I Am Canadian": What Is "Canadian" Culture?

- Language as a precursor to shared understandings
- Norms as regulators of shared behaviours
- Values as shared ideas
- Popular culture and high culture

New to the Second Edition . . .

The existing material on the social structure has been removed from this chapter (and placed in Chapter 4). This allows for greater discussion of some aspects of culture in this chapter, such gender neutral, gender inclusive, and non-prescriptive language. It also enables

new topics to be introduced, such as the controversial Charter of Values in Quebec.

Chapter 4: Socialization: The Self and Social Identity

- The self and its connection to socialization and social interaction
- Primary agents of socialization
- Master status and the looking-glass self
- Components of the social structure
- Social institutions and bureaucracy

New to the Second Edition . . .

At the request of reviewers, a new chapter on socialization has been included. It avoids the developmental psychology approach that permeates many introductory sociology textbooks—the approach that outlines stages of cognitive development, moral development, and so on. Instead, the chapter takes a distinctly sociological approach that focuses on how identity emerges (one's own, as well as the identities we attribute to other people) and is embedded in social interaction and the social structure.

Chapter 5: Social Inequality in Canadian Society

- Connections between social stratification and social inequality
- Slavery in the past and human trafficking in the present
- Blaming the poor for their plight
- Consequences of social inequality

New to the Second Edition . . .

Existing topics such as stratification systems, wealth, net worth, poverty, and poverty reduction remain; however, the chapter's overall structure has been modified. Its overarching frame is social stratification, and social inequality is pointed to as an outcome of stratification. Of particular note are new topics on slavery in Canada's past and human trafficking in Canada's present.

Chapter 6: Mass Media: Living in the Electronic Age

- "Being alone together" in public spaces
- Agenda setting: The media are not neutral
- Violence is the norm in the mass media
- Media literacy: Thinking critically about the media

New to the Second Edition . . .

In the 21st century, the media are in a constant state of evolution. So in the second edition, this chapter provides important updates regarding the nature of contemporary media. Several new topics have been introduced, such as simultaneous second screening, the virtual currency bitcoin, augmented reality, issues of privacy and regulation, and the changing face of "television" via the streaming company Netflix.

Chapter 7: Sex, Gender, and Sexualities: Deconstructing Dualisms

- Elite discourses of sex, gender, and sexuality
- Spectrums of sex, gender, and sexualities
- Hypermasculinity in the media
- The educational, occupational, economic, and familial consequences of being born male or female

New to the Second Edition . . .

This chapter includes expanded discussions of the spectrums of sex, gender, and sexualities, as well as the educational and occupational segregation of males and females. New topics include the stigmatization of LGBT persons in a heteronormative culture, Germain Greer's criticism of the feminist movement, and a critique of the concept of "transgendered" as reinforcing traditional dualisms of sex and gender.

Chapter 8: Race and Ethnicity: Defining Ourselves and Others

- Ethnicity, race, racialization, and visible minorities
- Contemporary ethnic patterns
- Bicultural adaptation patterns
- Media frames of ethnicity
- Prejudice and discrimination

New to the Second Edition . . .

There is an expanded discussion of the concept of race, demonstrating its origins in structures of power and social inequality. New concepts, such as racialization and racialized groups, are introduced. A distinction is made between voluntary assimilation (in the case of immigration) and involuntary assimilation (in the case of colonization). Discussed in some detail are policies that were intended to forcibly assimilate Aboriginal peoples, such as residential schooling. The section on theories of prejudice and racialization has been expanded to include critical race theory.

Chapter 9: Canadian Families: Past, Present, and Future

- Contemporary trends in Canadian families
- Is the family declining?
- The commodification of children arising from new reproductive technologies
- The effects of colonization on Aboriginal families

New to the Second Edition . . .

The most recent census data on families (2011) have been included. For the first time, the prevalence of stepfamilies (simple and complex) has been measured. For this edition, the material on residential schooling has been moved to Chapter 8, enabling an array of new topics to be introduced: challenges faced by stepfamilies; the effects of the baby boom; bioethical issues surrounding new reproductive technologies; and patterns of family violence.

Chapter 10: Learning What Is "True": Religion, Science, and Education

- The origins and meaning of "truth"
- Implications of religious affiliation
- The transition to scientific truth
- Scientific knowledge as constructed
- The role of education in modern society

New to the Second Edition . . .

The chapter now includes expanded discussions of Durkheim's notions of the collective conscience and collective effervescence, and the ways in which socialization within families of different classes may perpetuate class differences in the education system. New topics include the effects of current immigration patterns on religious affiliation in Canada.

Chapter 11: Social Control, Deviance, and Crime

- Are you socially controlled?
- Social control and deviance
- Cybercrime
- Racialization within the criminal justice system
- Strain and the pursuit of fame

New to the Second Edition . . .

The concept of social control serves as the frame for this chapter, emphasizing the myriad ways in which we are all subjected to social control on a daily basis—and correspondingly, the ways in which we are all socially typed as deviant in some way. The socially constructed nature of deviance, which was highlighted in the first edition, is emphasized even more

strongly in this edition. Of particular note is a more critical approach to the discussion of criminalized forms of deviance. The definition of crime is tied more explicitly to subjective views of deviance. Racialization within the criminal justice system (and especially the prison system) is discussed in some detail, and the debates over the federal government's new prostitution legislation are highlighted. Other new topics include the application of Merton's strain theory to the pursuit of fame, the stigmatization of mental illness as an example of social control, and the use of performance-enhancing drugs by competitive cyclists.

Chapter 12: Health and Illness: Is It "Lifestyle," or Something More?

- Patterns of health and illness
- "Lifestyle" behaviours and health
- Social inequality and health
- Health care systems

New to the Second Edition . . .

Several sections of the chapter have been expanded, including the ones about patterns of health and illness in Aboriginal populations, the costs of mental illness, and changes in the health of immigrants over time. A number of new topics have been introduced, such as the nature of the epidemiological transition, the effects of images of smoking in movies on youth smoking behaviours, the role of alcohol in university culture, and food insecurity in Canada's North.

Chapter 13: Social Change: Collective Behaviour and Social Movements

- Crowd behaviour
- Fads and fashions
- Debunking urban legends
- Dimensions of social change
- Social media and social movements

New to the Second Edition . . .

This chapter has been extensively updated to provide recent examples of various forms of collective behaviour. The section on the "collective trauma" arising from natural disasters has been expanded. New topics include the role of framing processes in creating the collective identity necessary for successful social movements, and whether the Idle No More movement is best considered a revolutionary movement or a resistance movement.

Chapter 14: "Going Green": Environmental Sociology

- Social factors posing environmental challenges
- Growing awareness of environmental issues
- Strategies for better environmental choices

New to the Second Edition . . .

This chapter includes important updates to environmental issues and patterns of environmental degradation. A number of concepts are clarified and expanded on (e.g., the ecological footprint), and new topics are introduced, such as debates over global warming and climate change, and ecological overshoot.

Chapter 15: Globalization: The Interconnected World

- Neoliberalism and its implications
- The vision of globalization and its reality: the good, the bad, and the ugly
- Global justice movements

New to the Second Edition . . .

In this chapter, the material on neoliberalism and its implications for patterns of social inequality has been expanded. A number of new

topics have been introduced, including the progress made on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the post-MDG agenda, feminist theories of globalization, and postcolonial theories.

ANCILLARIES

Our textbook has several supplements for instructors and students.

About the Nelson Education Teaching Advantage

The **Nelson Education Teaching Advantage (NETA)** program delivers research-based instructor resources that promote student engagement and higher order thinking to enable the success of Canadian students and educators. Be sure to visit Nelson Education's **Inspired Instruction** website at http://www.nelson.com/inspired to find out more about NETA. Don't miss the testimonials of instructors who have used NETA supplements and seen student engagement increase!

Instructor Resources

Downloadable Instructor Supplements

All NETA and other key instructor ancillaries can be accessed through www.nelson.com/instructor, which give instructors the ultimate tools for customizing lectures and presentations.

NETA TEST BANK. This resource was written by Rita Hamoline of the University of Saskatchewan. It includes over 1,050 multiple-choice questions written according to NETA guidelines for effective construction and development of higher order questions. The Test Bank was copy edited by a NETA-trained editor. Also included are 300 true/false questions, 75 short-answer questions, and 75 essay questions.

The NETA Test Bank is available in a new, cloud-based platform. **Nelson Testing Powered by Cognero®** is a secure online testing system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content from any place you have Internet access. No special installations or downloads are needed, and the desktop-inspired interface, with its drop-down menus and familiar, intuitive tools, allows you to create and manage tests with ease. You can create multiple test versions in an instant and import or export content into other systems. Tests can be delivered from your learning management system, your classroom, or wherever you want. Nelson Testing Powered by Cognero for *Sociology in Action: A Canadian Perspective* can also be accessed through www.nelson.com/instructor. Printable versions of the Test Bank in Word and PDF versions are available by contacting your sales representative.

NETA POWERPOINT. Microsoft® PowerPoint® lecture slides for every chapter have been created by Tami Bereska of MacEwan University. There is an average of 25 slides per chapter; many of them feature key figures, tables, and photographs from *Sociology in Action: A Canadian Perspective*. NETA principles of clear design and engaging content have been incorporated throughout, making it simple for instructors to customize the deck for their courses.

IMAGE LIBRARY. This resource consists of digital copies of figures, short tables, and photographs used in the book. Instructors may use these jpegs to customize the NETA PowerPoint or to create their own PowerPoint presentations.

NETA INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL. This resource was written by Karen Taylor of NorQuest College. The Enriched Instructor's Manual provides strategies for engaging students actively and deeply in the study of sociology. Each chapter includes ideas for lesson plans and in-class activities. The manual culminates in a list of video clips, websites, and articles that can serve as lecture launchers. Our intention is to provide instructors with ideas they may select to include in their teaching toolkit, as it were.

The Enriched Instructor's Manual is organized according to the textbook chapters and includes the following:

- Introduction
- Learning Outcomes
- Why is this chapter important to sociologists?
- Why should students care?
- What are the common student misconceptions and stumbling blocks?
- What can I do in class?
- How will I know my students achieved the learning outcomes?
- How can I assess my own performance?

Instructors commonly suggest that they want their students to develop critical thinking skills. However, it can be challenging to develop exercises and methods of assessment that address higher levels of learning. The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (commonly called "Bloom's Taxonomy"), proposed by educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom decades ago, is a classification of the different learning objectives that educators set for students. Bloom's Taxonomy divides educational objectives into Affective, Psychomotor, and Cognitive domains, with the latter as the focus for most higher education classes. The taxonomy is hierarchical (i.e., learning at the higher levels is generally considered to require prerequisite knowledge and skills at lower levels). Considering these levels can be helpful to an instructor when planning classes, tutorials, assignments, and tests.

DAYONE. Day One—Prof InClass is a PowerPoint presentation that instructors can customize to orient students to the class and their text at the beginning of the course.

MINDTAP. MindTap for *Sociology in Action: A Canadian Perspective* is a personalized teaching experience with relevant assignments that guide students to analyze, apply, and elevate thinking, allowing instructors to measure skills and promote better outcomes with ease. Resources were created by Rita Hamoline of the University of Saskatchewan and Joanne Minaker of Grant MacEwan University. A fully online learning solution, MindTap combines all student learning tools—readings, multimedia, activities, and assessments—into a single Learning Path that guides the student through the curriculum. Instructors personalize the experience by customizing the presentation of these learning tools to their students, even seamlessly introducing their own content into the Learning Path.

Student Ancillaries

MindTap

Stay organized and efficient with ***MindTap***—a single destination with all the course material and study aids you need to succeed. Built-in apps leverage social media and the latest learning technology. For example:

- ReadSpeaker will read the text to you.
- Flashcards are pre-populated to provide you with a jump start for review—or you can create your own.
- You can highlight text and make notes in your MindTap Reader. Your notes will flow into Evernote, the electronic notebook app that you can access anywhere when it's time to study for the exam.
- Self-quizzing allows you to assess your understanding.

Visit www.nelson.com/student to start using MindTap. Enter the Online Access Code from the card included with your text. If a code card is not provided, you can purchase instant access at NELSONbrain.com.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We express our gratitude to the following reviewers, who offered candid opinions and suggestions on our early manuscript that helped shape this second edition of *Sociology in Action: A Canadian Perspective*:

Seema Ahluwalia, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Allison Dunwoody, University of Alberta

Thomas Groulx, St. Clair College

Benjamin Kelly, Nipissing University

Karen Taylor, NorQuest College

Deborah White, Trent University

Publishing a textbook is a team effort, and we also wish to acknowledge the support, feedback, and assistance provided by everyone we worked with at Nelson Education Ltd.: Maya Castle and Leanna MacLean, Publishers; Terry Fedorkiw, Marketing Manager; Fiona Drego, Production Project Manager; Melody Tolson, Photo and Permissions Researcher; and Matthew Kudelka, copy editor. We would especially like to acknowledge our Developmental Editor, Linda Sparks, who had the challenging assignment of keeping two academics on task and within the word limit. It brings to mind the movie *Wonder Boys*, starring Michael Douglas, in which Professor Tripp's manuscript is at 1,000 pages, and the book is still not finished—clearly, he needed a good developmental editor!

A question often asked at interviews for academic positions is about the links between research and teaching. It seems that all candidates easily refer to how their research influences their teaching by providing a body of knowledge they can bring to the classroom. Less common are responses that emphasize how teaching influences their research—how much they, as academics, are able to learn from their students. We have learned more from our students than can be easily expressed. Our students, past and present, are the most important part of the team that has created this book. They have inspired us, given us profound ideas at times when our own ideas are in short supply, and shown us how students today *really* learn. The students at Grant MacEwan University, in particular, have shown us the amazing things that can happen when people use their sociological imaginations in their own lives, in their communities, and in the world. Above all, this book is for the students.

About the Authors

Diane G. Symbaluk

Like many students, I found sociology quite by accident. While trying to find a course that would fulfill a Canadian content requirement for a B.Ed. degree en route to a teaching career, I stumbled across an introduction to sociology course advertised with descriptive words like "people," "society," "families," and "deviance" that sounded interesting. I could never have known then that my tendency to say "don't assume" and "don't take people for granted" underscored the beginnings of the development of my sociological imagination. After completing an introduction to sociology, my interest was piqued; I switched to the sociology program, where I earned a B.A., followed by an M.A. and Ph.D. I went on to teach sociology full-time at Grant MacEwan University, where I continue to teach a range of courses: introductory sociology, social psychology, criminology, and social research methods. I love teaching, and I appreciate my students even more. They have inspired me to write resources that will contribute to their success, including study guides, manuals, Web-based course tools, and especially this textbook. I am also interested in student ratings of instruction and student assessments of instructors' character strengths—the focus of my current research interests. I constantly re-evaluate my initial assumptions of people and social situations while maintaining allegiance to the Chinese proverb: He who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person who is doing it.

Tami M. Bereska

I began university as a psychology major. I had never even heard of sociology. But then I made my discovery. A discipline in which you could study families, teenagers, television shows, popular music, crime, and white supremacists—wow! Who could have ever believed that learning could be so interesting? Sociology grabbed me and has never let me go. Since obtaining my M.A. and Ph.D. in sociology, I've studied all sorts of interesting topics—adult and adolescent series romance novels (e.g., *Harlequin, Sweet Valley High*), what being a "real man" means in young adult novels for boys, and representations of Scientology in movies and on TV. Popular culture, deviance, and youth fascinate me. Along with my love of sociology is a love for teaching undergraduate students. I had my first opportunity to give a university lecture as a teaching assistant while working on my M.A. My supervisor had to be away, and he asked me to lecture in his Social Organization class, with 180 students. As someone who had always hated giving presentations in class, I was terrified. But 10 minutes into my lecture, I knew this was what I wanted to do with my life. I've since taught courses ranging from deviance to social psychology, with class sizes as small as 4 and as large as 400. The pleasure I derive from connecting with students has also led me to write textbooks—first, a book on deviance and social control, and now this book, one that will bring the fascinating world of sociology to those students who, like me, may have never even heard of sociology.

PART 1

Practising Sociology: Your Sociological Toolkit

Rawpixel/Shutterstock

CHAPTER

1

Seeing and Acting Through the Lens of Sociology

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

After completing this chapter, students should be able to do the following:

LO1 Describe the bidirectional relationship between individual choices and larger social forces.

LO2 Define "sociology" and identify the role of the sociological imagination.

LO3 Elaborate on the similarities and differences between sociology and other related disciplines.

LO4 List and describe the tools that are used to develop the sociological imagination.

LO5 Contrast positivist, interpretive, and critical approaches to theorizing, and outline the core assumptions of the functionalist, conflict, symbolic interactionist, feminist, and post-modern perspectives.

LO6 Identify what critical thinking is and explain its importance.

LO7 Describe the four different ways that sociology can be practised.

It can be said that the first wisdom of sociology is this—things are not what they seem.

(Berger, 2008, p. 9)

THINGS ARE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM

"I'll believe it when I see it!" How many times have you heard someone say this or used that phrase yourself? Although we often come to trust in what we can see for ourselves, sociology asks us to *not* automatically trust what we see. Consider, for example, a television screen like the one in the photo below. If you were asked what you see when you look at that screen, your initial response would likely be, "I see a fish." But if you took a closer look—presuming that there is more than meets the eye—you might see something very different. Walk right up to a television screen and look at it from an inch or two away, and now you'll realize that what first looked like a fish is really rows and columns of pixels, tiny squares of coloured light. If you looked even more closely, you would see that what first appeared to be the colour yellow is really a combination of red, green, and blue pixels. *Things are not what they seem.*

Veer Royalty Free

There is more than first meets the eye in this image.

LO1 Now shift your attention to yourself and to the clothes you wore to class today. Initially, you might say personal choice led you to wear those particular clothes. But if you now look at your classmates, you can see that many of them are wearing clothes that are very similar to yours (e.g., jeans and a T-shirt). You and many other people have made a similar choice today, suggesting that there is something more than just individual preference operating here. If I were to go on to ask you why you are a university or college student, you might give me a similar answer—personal choice. And indeed, unless someone registered you as a student against your will, physically dragged you to class this morning, and tied you into your chair in the classroom, it most certainly *is* your choice. But remember, there is more than first meets the eye. If you examine these circumstances more closely, you will start to realize that just as pixels of coloured light underlie the televised image of a fish, an array of social factors and experiences has contributed to your choice to become a university or college student. When you begin to consider the various factors that influenced your personal choices, or the similar decisions reached by others, that is the point at which you are starting to practise sociology.

When examining your choice to become a student, you might first consider specific people who influenced your decision, such as the family members and friends who supported, encouraged, or demanded that option. You could then go on to look at some of the more personal social and economic resources that enabled you to become a university or college student—a student loan, a Registered Education Saving Plan (RESP), or parents who support you. The personal resources you have available are important factors that underlie your ability to pursue a postsecondary education. Using a sociological perspective requires you to analyze even beyond your own family, friends, and resources. In much the same way that many of your classmates chose to wear similar clothing to you, many others have elected to attend university or college alongside you. In the 2011–12 academic year, there were almost one million students registered in undergraduate programs in Canadian universities and colleges (Statistics Canada, 2013). That means that almost one million people—with different families, sets of friends, and personal resources—all made the same personal choice that year! Explaining this fact requires you to extend your sociological gaze beyond your own life to larger sociocultural and socioeconomic forces affecting many people simultaneously.

Norms: Society's expectations for how we are supposed to act, think, and look.

Normative: Behaviours, appearances, and thoughts that correspond to society's norms.

Micro level: The level of individual experiences and choices.

Macro level: The level of broader social forces.

For instance, after the worldwide economic recession in 2008 that limited job opportunities, undergraduate enrollments increased by 4.1 percent in 2009 and by another 3.6 percent in 2010 over the previous year; economic downturns motivate people to improve their educational qualifications and skills (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2009). The impact of the economy on postsecondary enrollment is readily apparent. But more subtle influences on the decisions we make come from society's expectations, or **norms**. By virtue of growing up in a specific family in a particular society at a certain time in history, we learn how we are supposed to act. Whether or not we actually behave in accordance with those norms, we are still aware of what those expectations are.

In Canada today, a postsecondary education is **normative** in that it corresponds to norms about the kind of education people need before entering the workforce. In contrast, had you been a young Canadian woman in the 1950s, a university education would *not* have been normative; instead, society's expectations were that you should get married young, have children, and be a full-time homemaker. Sometimes society's norms are so powerful that they influence formalized rules, such as policies and even the law. For example, if you were a Jewish Canadian before the end of the Second World War, or a black Canadian before the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the doors of many universities would have been closed to you, regardless of your academic ability and desire to pursue a university education. Similarly, if you were of Aboriginal origin in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the residential school that you would have been forced to attend by law would not have given you the education necessary to gain entrance to a university. And while the opportunity for a university education is available to everyone in the 21st century, sociologists point out that the ability to take advantage of that opportunity is not equally available to all (see *Sociology in My Life*).

The essence of sociology is this connection between individual experiences and larger social forces that exist outside the individual (see Figure 1.1). This is also known as the relationship between the **micro level** and the **macro level**. Thus far, we have examined

your SOCIOLOGICAL TOOLKIT

SOCIOLOGY *IN MY LIFE*

THE IMPACT OF LIFE CHANCES

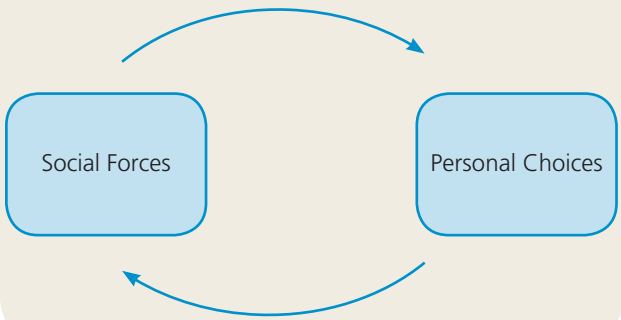
Think about your own background for a moment—the neighbourhood you lived in, your parents' jobs, your lifestyle. If the two photos below represent the extreme ends of a continuum, where would you locate your own childhood background—closer to the photo on the left, or to the photo on the right? Do individuals who grow up in these very different types of neighbourhoods have the same freedom to go to university? Is that opportunity equally available to both of them? Think about the resources it takes to go to university or college and the obstacles that can prevent it. Perhaps you enjoyed similar resources or encountered similar obstacles in your path. Max Weber (1864–1920), one of the founders of the social sciences as a distinct area of study, referred to these varying opportunities that people face as **life chances** (1978). Social stratification, inequality, race, ethnicity, and gender are just some of the factors that affect one's life chances. You will learn more about all of these factors in later chapters.

karamysh/Shutterstock

Civdis/Shutterstock

Does everyone in Canada have an equal opportunity to pursue a university or college education?

FIGURE 1.1
Personal Choices and Social Forces



ways that larger social forces (the macro level) influence individual experiences (the micro level). However, the relationship is bidirectional, in that your personal choices also have an impact on the people around you, your community, and your workplace—what sociologists refer to as **agency**. When enough people make similar choices or acquire support for particular decisions, the macro level is affected—either the status quo is supported or social change occurs.

Life chances: The opportunities an individual has in life, based on various factors including stratification, inequality, race, ethnicity, and gender.

Agency: People's capacity to make choices, which then have an impact on other people and on the society in which they live.

Social movements can occur, and school practices and policies, workplace culture and policies, social programming, legislation, and larger cultural norms can all be affected.

For instance, when the authors of this book were in elementary school in the mid-1970s, it was rare for children to eat lunch at school; children either had to go home for lunch (regardless of whether there was an adult there to supervise them), or they walked to a nearby care provider's place. If there was an unusual circumstance (e.g., the caregiver had to be at an appointment), then the parent would write a note to the teacher explaining the circumstance and request that the child be permitted to eat lunch at school that day in the classroom under the teacher's supervision, or be sent to a classmate's home. Less than a decade later, this was no longer the case. Processes and procedures had been developed around the need for lunch-hour supervision. Why did such a dramatic change occur in such a relatively short time? Because economic and social factors changed the lives of parents, and then the changing lives of parents made changes in school practices necessary.

The assumption that mothers were at home to make lunch for their children was based on family patterns that existed in previous decades, and particularly the 1950s, when most middle-class married women were full-time homemakers. This began to change in the 1960s and 1970s. More mothers were entering the workforce, parents were concerned about their children being at home alone, and care providers living near the school could not solely be relied upon to meet the needs of families. The changing choices of parents elicited changes in the environment outside the family. But at the same time, larger sociocultural factors were contributing to parental choices. More mothers were entering the workforce because of changes in the Canadian economy that necessitated dual incomes for many families, as well as the influence of the women's movement, which emphasized the importance of female equality. The media also played a role in the evolution of a "risk society," through their coverage of missing children cases, which contributed to growing concerns about children being sent home unsupervised.

Sociology: The systematic study of society, using the sociological imagination.

Sociological imagination: The ability to perceive the interconnections between individual experiences and larger sociocultural forces.

Thus, when we look at people's experiences, the micro level and the macro level are intertwined. Recognizing the myriad ways in which they are intertwined requires using something sociologists distinctively call the "sociological imagination."

TIME TO REVIEW

- What do sociologists mean when they say that "things are not what they seem," and what are some examples?
- What type of relationship exists between the micro level and the macro level? Provide some examples of this relationship.

LO2 WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

Sociology is the systematic study of society, using the sociological imagination. The connection between the micro level and the macro level is the essence of the sociological perspective. C. Wright Mills (1916–1962) defined the discipline of sociology on the basis of the **sociological imagination,** which involved looking for the "intersections of biography and history" (1959/2000, p. 7), tracing the linkages between individual experiences and larger sociocultural forces. For example, we can use the sociological imagination to explore body modification. If we consider why a particular person gets a tattoo or a piercing, the answer may tell us something specific about that one individual, such as that he or she is a risk taker. But when we consider the nature of body modification in general, we learn about larger social relationships. We learn about workplace norms, in that many people hide their body art while at work to maintain an image or because workplace policies require it (Newman et al., 2005; Atkinson, 2003a). We also learn about family relationships, in that the location, size, and design of body art can be influenced by parental attitudes (Atkinson, 2003a). Similarly, we learn about norms governing gender since women with tattoos are perceived as promiscuous, less attractive, and heavier drinkers (Swami & Furnham, 2007). We identify allegiances to certain subcultures, since tattoos can indicate membership in particular gangs. We even learn about the ideologies of subcultures—for example, a "Poison-Free" tattoo on a member of the Straightedge subculture signifies commitment to a substance-free lifestyle (Atkinson, 2003b).

Mills (1959/2000) did not see the sociological imagination as an intellectual tool to be used solely by sociologists (or even by students in sociology

Snapshots

© Love, Jason, jlvn685, CartoonStock.com

"I love our lunches out here, but I always get the feeling that we're being watched."

classes); he proposed that society as a whole *needed* its citizens to look for the links between the macro and micro levels. In fact, Mills criticized many of his fellow sociologists for spending their time intellectualizing in the ivory towers of academia and for not assuming any personal responsibility for improving society. The sociological imagination is not just about *thinking;* it is also about *action*. That action might be at the level of your everyday life, where paying attention to the relationship between individual choices and larger social forces will make you a more informed parent, voter, teacher, office manager, or team member. But it might also be at a more macro level of social action, trying to improve some aspect of your community or even society as a whole. Sociology is of "central importance in and for our time" (Fletcher, 1971, p. 5), locally, nationally, and globally:

> We would like to eliminate from society war, poverty, crime and delinquency . . . We would like to improve matters; to remove these obstacles to social justice; and would therefore like to know the underlying *causes* of these social facts. Then, on the basis of this knowledge, if we could get it, we would like to formulate effective social policies and institute political reforms . . . [We must] establish reliable knowledge *on the basis of which to act*. For we quickly learn that we can only effectively change the nature of society . . . *if we know what that nature is*. (36)*

In pursuit of building knowledge and facilitating social action, within the discipline of sociology the sociological imagination is used to study just about anything that is related to people. Berger (2008) describes sociologists as professional people watchers who are gripped by curiosity whenever they find themselves "in front of a closed door behind which are human voices" (p. 7). Individual sociologists specialize in different topic areas; for instance, one of the authors of this book specializes in deviance, youth, and popular culture, while the other specializes in social psychology, criminology, and research methods.

The topics studied in sociology translate into a considerable breadth of potential careers for students who graduate with a degree in it. Unlike some university programs that train students for specific jobs upon graduation (teacher, accountant, dentist), an education in sociology provides its graduates with a knowledge base and a set of skills that apply to a variety of careers (beyond sociology professor) (see Figure 1.2).

LO3 COMPARING SOCIOLOGY AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

As you may have already noticed in some of your classes, similar topics are covered in different disciplines. For example, you may have studied families in a psychology, anthropology, or even political science course—and you will also learn about families in your sociology course. Many of the topics studied by sociologists are also analyzed by researchers in other social science disciplines—culture and cultural variations (anthropology, cultural studies), political forces (political science, development studies), occupational and economic forces (economics, political economy), families (family studies, social work), and mass media (psychology, cultural studies, communications, media studies). What are the differences, then, between sociology and the other social science disciplines?

Scholars within the discipline of sociology were not the first to study society. Arab scholar Ibn Khaldun's work (1332–1406) is recognized as a significant forerunner to sociology. He studied structures and processes of power in different societies (ranging from desert tribes to nations). He proposed that as societies grew in size, labour was no longer

*R. Fletcher, *The making of sociology: A study of sociological theory,* Vol. 1. London, UK: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Pg. 36, 1971.

FIGURE 1.2

What Can I Do with a Degree in Sociology?

Sociology graduates are often employed in the following areas:

- *Community and social service workers:* Community and social service workers administer and implement social assistance programs and community services and help clients deal with personal and social problems. They are employed by social service and government agencies, mental health agencies, group homes, school boards, and correctional facilities. Job titles include welfare and compensation officer, addictions worker, youth worker, women's shelter supervisor, and life skills instructor.
- *Health policy researchers, consultants, and program officers:* Employees in this area conduct research, produce reports, and administer health policies and programs. They are employed by government departments and agencies, consulting establishments, universities, research institutes, hospitals, community agencies, educational institutions, professional associations, nongovernmental organizations, and international organizations. Job titles include health promotion program officer, consultant in drug and alcohol abuse, policy development officer, and research assistant.
- *Probation and parole officers and related occupations:* People employed in this area monitor the reintegration of criminal offenders into the community, assess offenders and develop rehabilitation programs, and advise/counsel offenders. They are employed by federal and provincial governments and work in the community and in correctional facilities. Job titles include community case manager, probation officer, parole officer, and classification officer.
- *Social policy researchers, consultants, and program officers:* Individuals in these types of occupations conduct research, develop policy, and implement or administer programs in areas such as consumer affairs, employment, home economics, immigration, law enforcement, corrections, human rights, housing, labour, family services, foreign aid, and international development. They are employed by government departments and agencies, industry, hospitals, educational institutions, consulting establishments, professional associations, nongovernmental organizations, and international organizations. Job titles include Aboriginal issues lobbyist, housing policy analyst, consumer adviser, community policing project consultant, and international aid and development project officer.
- *Government managers—health and social policy development and program administration:* Government managers in this group plan, organize, direct, control, and evaluate the development and administration of health care policies, social policies, and programs related to the health and social welfare of individuals and communities. These managers are employed by government departments and agencies. Job titles include survey research manager, manager of immigration appeals, community planning director, and community rehabilitation manager.

Adapted from Human Resources and Development Canada (2006). National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2006.

used for survival, but rather for the pursuit of luxury for society's wealthy and powerful (Weiss, 1995). The origins of sociology as a discipline can be traced to a historical period that includes the French Revolution (1789–1799) and the accompanying Enlightenment. This was a time of rapid social, political, and economic change—cities increased in size, there was the transition to a wage economy, absolute monarchies were threatened, the power of religion declined, and the power of science grew. For some more politically and socially active scholars, these social, political, and ideological changes illustrated that ordinary citizens could create large-scale transformations in society. For other scholars, the question was one of how it was possible for society to not crumble in the midst of these massive changes. Intellectuals sought to understand and explain social change as well its consequences.

Auguste Comte (1798–1857) first suggested that empirical research and theory should be used in pursuit of this goal. The sociological perspective developed out of philosophy, economics, history, psychology, and law. Many of the well-known scholars who are referred to as "sociologists" because their work is central to sociology (and whose work will be presented at various points in this textbook) were, in fact, not "sociologists" by training. For example, Max Weber's training was in economic history, Karl Marx's in philosophy, and Emile Durkheim's in educational thought and philosophy. With that knowledge, they sought to understand social change and what made "society" possible in the face of change.

The sociological perspective emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries; the formation of distinct disciplines is a more recent phenomenon. In the 20th century, distinct boundaries were constructed around bodies of knowledge and the subject matter of specific disciplines (Delanty, 2005, 2007). Thus, while historians studied the past, anthropologists studied premodern societies, political scientists analyzed structures of governance, and economists studied the production and consumption of goods and services. The attention of scholars within each of these disciplines was focused on a certain part of society. In contrast, sociologists studied *all* of these parts of society, while using a wider range of research methodologies and theories (Delanty, 2005, 2007). Hence, sociology can be thought of as the most *comprehensive* of the social sciences.

However, sociology goes a step further, and proposes that society is more than a compilation of history plus government plus the economy (and so on). There is a web of interconnectedness *among* its parts—they interact in particular ways, and the nature of that interaction contributes to any social phenomenon, such as tattooing. What governs a sociological approach is an analysis of these interactions and an emphasis on tracing the linkages between individual experiences and larger sociocultural forces.

Although distinct disciplines were formed in the early 20th century, the 21st century is characterized by what some scholars call *postdisciplinarity* (e.g., Urry, 2000). This means that the differences among disciplines are less apparent today. For example, traditionally the discipline of anthropology focused on premodern societies; now, anthropologists also study modern societies, which were traditionally in the realm of sociology (Delanty, 2005, 2007).

In addition to blurred boundaries between disciplines, the 21st century is also characterized by greater *interdisciplinarity* (Delanty, 2005, 2007), where scholars in a variety of disciplines work together to better understand particular social phenomena. For instance, globalization is not associated with a specific discipline, but rather brings together diverse groups of scholars, including sociologists, economists, and political scientists (you will learn more about globalization in a later chapter). Interdisciplinarity has created new disciplines as well, such as women's studies, cultural studies, and family studies; university departments that are affiliated with these areas of study will often include faculty members who are sociologists, economists, political scientists, historians, social psychologists, and philosophers.

TIME TO REVIEW

- What is sociology, and what is the role of the sociological imagination?
- Who should be using the sociological imagination, and for what purpose?
- How is sociology related to other disciplines?

LO4 BUILDING YOUR SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION: YOUR SOCIOLOGICAL TOOLKIT

If the sociological imagination is the foundation of sociology, and if it is necessary for effective social action from your own personal micro level to society's (or the world's) macro level, where does it come from? The sociological imagination is not merely a "vocabulary term" (Massengill, 2011) that you need to memorize for your exams; rather, it is an important cognitive skill. And in the same way that you need a variety of tools to build a shed in your backyard (e.g. hammer, saw), several tools, when used in an array of settings, will enable you to develop your sociological imagination: empirical research methods; sociological theories; and critical thinking.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODS

As was pointed out earlier, "reliable knowledge" (Fletcher, 1971, p. 36) must serve as the basis of social action. **Empirical methods** are used to create that knowledge. Sociological research methods are empirical because, through direct observation of the social world, they generate findings that can be verified by other members of the academic community. In Chapter 2, you will learn more about the steps in the sociological research process and the systematic procedures that comprise its empirical methods.

LO5 SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIZING

The data gathered using empirical methods are explained using sociological theories. Sociological theorizing was central to explaining changes during the French Revolution, and it continues to be crucial to understanding and explaining society.

Empirical methods: Data collection that produces verifiable findings and is carried out using systematic procedures.