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SOCIOLOGY

SECOND EDITION

DAVID CROTEAU

WILLIAM HOYNES

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EXPERIENCE SOCIOLOGY, SECOND EDITION

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DEDICATION

To all the dedicated instructors of
 introductory sociology courses and
 to the students who inspire them.
 —DAVID CROTEAU

To Ben and Nick Hoynes, who have
 taught me more about sociology
 than they know.
 —WILLIAM HOYNES

About the AUTHORS



DAVID R. CROTEAU

earned a B.A. in sociology from Brandeis University and a Ph.D. in sociology from Boston College. Over the years he has taught a diverse range of students at Boston College, Clark University, Keene State

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In addition to various journal articles and book chapters, David Croteau is the author of *Politics and the Class Divide*, a finalist for both the C. Wright Mills Award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems and the Transformational Politics Book Award from the American Political Science Association.



WILLIAM HOYNES

earned a B.A. in history and political science from Tufts University and a Ph.D. in sociology from Boston College. He is Professor of Sociology at Vassar College, where he teaches Introductory

Sociology as well as courses on media, culture, research methods, and social theory. During his more than 20 years at Vassar, Professor Hoynes has served as chair of the Sociology Department and director of both the Media Studies Program and the American Studies Program.

In addition to various journal articles and book chapters on public broadcasting in the United States, Professor Hoynes is the author of *Public Television for Sale: Media, the Market, and the Public Sphere*, which was awarded the Goldsmith Book Prize from the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

CROTEAU and HOYNES are coauthors of *Media/Society: Images, Industries, and Audiences*, which was published in a revised fifth edition in 2014; *The Business of Media: Corporate Media and the Public Interest*, which won the Robert Picard Award for best new book in media economics by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication; and *By Invitation Only: How the Media Limit Political Debate*. They are also coeditors, with Charlotte Ryan, of *Rhyming Hope and History: Activists, Academics, and Social Movement Scholarship*.

Dear Colleagues

Like all of us who teach sociology, we want to help a diverse range of students grasp the basic concepts of the discipline, see the relevance of those concepts to their everyday lives, and apply what they learn to the world around them. We want students to experience that aha! moment when they see the familiar in a new way and realize that sociology's tools can help them better understand their rapidly changing social world. In other words, we want students to see the world from a sociological perspective and to actively use their sociological imagination. We want them to experience sociology.

What's unique about the second edition of *Experience Sociology*?

CULTURE. STRUCTURE. POWER. *Experience Sociology* engages students with a clear framework for understanding their world based on three familiar terms at the heart of sociology: culture, structure, and power. Through the lenses of these three concepts, students learn from their first class to see the world from a sociological perspective and to grasp the significance of sociology for their own lives. For every topic in the book—from the family to the economy to the environment—they learn to recognize the effects of the culture they have been taught, see the structures that constrain or empower them, and notice how power operates at every level of society.

How is theory covered?

Theory has a role in every chapter in *Experience Sociology*. We know how important it is for students not only to be able to apply concepts to their lives, but also to understand and be able to apply sociological theory. With its innovative organization around primary sociological concepts, *Experience Sociology* emphasizes the common ground that informs a basic sociological perspective. But every chapter also addresses the way differing theoretical perspectives illuminate various facets of these key sociological concepts, letting instructors and students go beyond conventional theoretical boundaries and the either-or framing of theoretical perspectives to see how each can contribute to our understanding of the social world.

What's the full Experience?

The second edition of *Experience Sociology* is much more than this textbook alone. Incorporating the work of many sociology instructors, it is instead a comprehensive instructional program that combines digital and print resources to promote student learning. Featuring Connect Sociology assessments tied to learning objectives, and the adaptive LearnSmart suite that generates a study plan specifically designed to address students' individual strengths and weaknesses, *Experience Sociology* helps you manage assignments and makes learning and studying more engaging and efficient for your students.

We wrote *Experience Sociology* because we want students to be able to do just that: experience their world differently through the insights of sociology. We hope these resources will help you in introducing your students to the excitement of sociology.

Sincerely,



David Croteau William Hoynes

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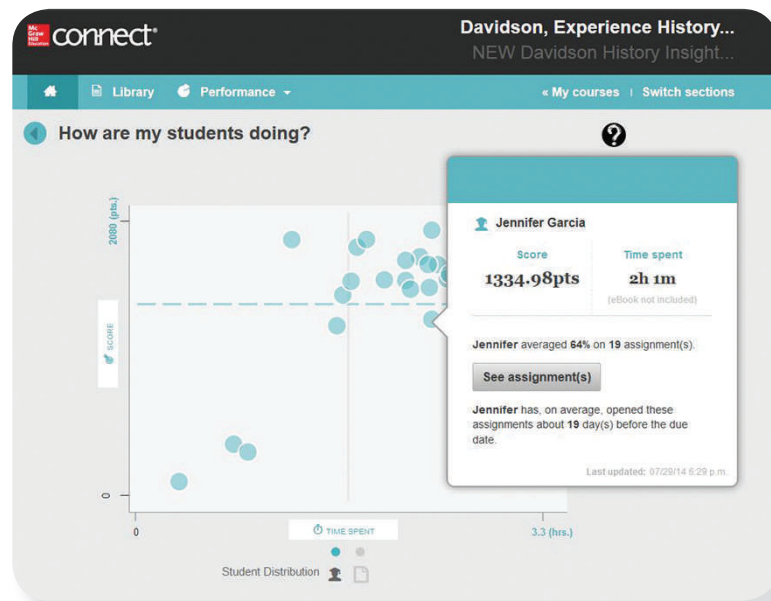
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THE HEAT MAP STORY

Over the past two years, data points showing concepts that caused students the most difficulty were anonymously collected from Connect Sociology's LearnSmart for *Experience Sociology*. The data from LearnSmart were provided to the authors in the form of a heat map, which illustrated troublesome "hot spots" in the text. The authors used this empirically based heat map data to refine the content and reinforce student comprehension in the second edition.

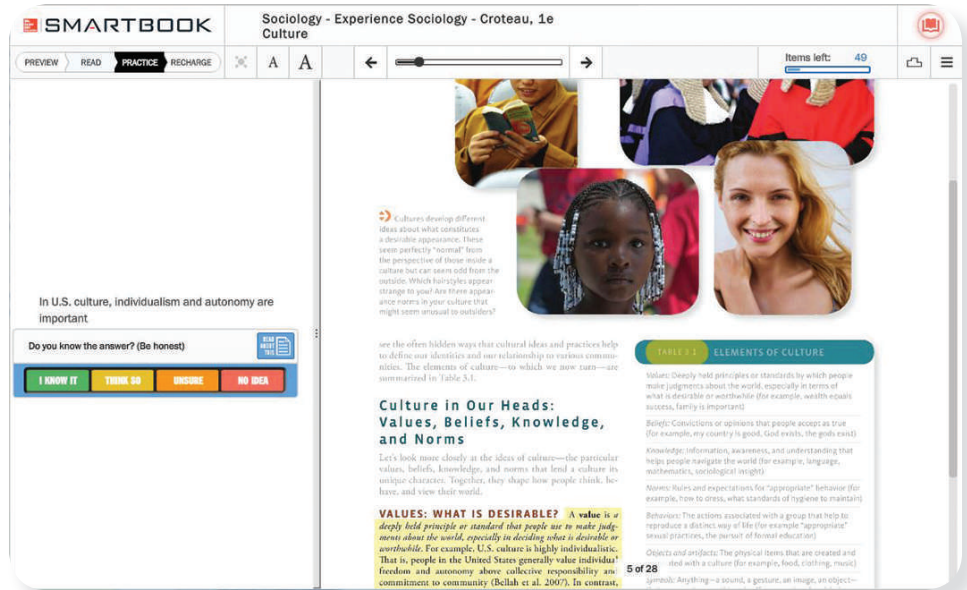
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WHY THE 3D GLASSES?

We want students to see their familiar world in a new way. *Experience Sociology*, Second Edition, uses the lenses of culture, structure, and power to empower students to move beyond an individual perspective to gain a sociological perspective.



How were you socialized into your society's **culture**?

How do agents of socialization reproduce social **structure**?

How does **power** shape your daily life and your sense of self?

Using the lenses of **CULTURE**, **STRUCTURE**, and **POWER**, *Experience Sociology* shows students the significance of sociology for their own lives.

CULTURE, **STRUCTURE**, and **POWER** help students explore sociological theory in ways that go beyond conventional theoretical boundaries.

SPOTLIGHT

on social theory

Symbolic interactionism stresses the role of interpersonal interactions in reproducing culture and social structure. Have you ever been in a situation in which you felt at a disadvantage because you lacked the cultural capital to know what behavior was expected of you?

EXPERIENCE SOCIOLOGY includes a variety of boxed features and in-text learning aids to help students appreciate the range of sociology's insights and their relevance to today's fast-changing social world, and to apply sociology's concepts and theories to their own lives.

BOXED FEATURES



Sociology in Action boxes highlight the contributions of sociological research to public policy and to the efforts of public interest organizations, social movements, and others to effect social change.



Sociology Works boxes profile people who studied sociology in college and are now using sociology's insights in diverse work settings. These high-interest stories feature people working in fields such as health care, criminal justice, social work, business, mass media, government, and the military.



Through a Sociological Lens boxes demonstrate how sociology can provide distinctive insights into contemporary social issues. Students can see how sociological research reveals information that can both surprise and empower them in their everyday lives.



Fast-Forward boxes illuminate the ever-evolving nature of our social world. These brief, engaging features—illustrated with photographs, advertisements, or other images—show students how change has been a constant feature of social life.



A Changing World sections conclude each chapter with a look at the influence of changing social conditions on some aspect of the chapter topic. Examples include culture and globalization, increasing inequality in the United States, social structure and privacy, and convergence in gender and sexuality.

IN-TEXT LEARNING AIDS



Thinking About notes help students connect chapter content to their own experience. These brief notes, found at the bottom of text pages, prompt students to consider how the three core concepts of **culture**, **structure**, and **power** apply to their own lives and views on issues, thus encouraging students to think sociologically.



Core Concepts Challenge questions encourage students to apply their sociological imagination to what they are learning. Appearing with selected figures, tables, and photographs, these questions prompt students to apply **culture**, **structure**, and **power** in thinking about an issue as well as to think critically about the graphic, table, or image.



Spotlight notes prompt students to consider social theories that are discussed within the text. These notes help students use the three concepts to apply theory to their own lives.

Highlights of the second edition

✓ Indicates revisions based on student heat map data.

CHAPTER 1

- New chapter-opening vignette using Nelson Mandela's life story to illustrate how, in a single lifetime, people working together can change the world in meaningful ways
- New figure to illustrate the dimensions of social theory
- Boxed features revised and updated

CHAPTER 2

- New chapter-opening vignette spotlighting the scientific method through analysis of a recent study on whether teenage troublemakers encourage friends to engage in criminal or delinquent behavior
- Updated data on voting patterns
- New Through a Sociological Lens box, "Correlation, Causation, and Spuriousness"
- New Fast-Forward selection, "Change Research"
- Significantly revised "A Changing World" section, "Technology and Social Research"

CHAPTER 3

- Updated data for maps and figures throughout
- New material explaining taboos
- New discussion on folk culture
- New "A Changing World" section, "Culture and Globalization," featuring the Nigerian film industry

CHAPTER 4

- New chapter-opening vignette showcasing the benefits to college students when there are constraints on the structure of academic programs
- Updated "Through a Sociological Lens" box integrating new material on school violence (Newtown, Connecticut)
- Updated "A Changing World" section, "The Evolving Structure of News Production"
- Updated data throughout

CHAPTER 5

- Comprehensively revised "A Changing World" section, "Money, Power, and Politics," featuring updated data and new discussion on electoral campaign spending
- New figures on campaign contributions and spending

CHAPTER 6

- New section, "Epigenetics: Genes and the Environment"
- Revised Ngram figure on use of the terms *teenage* and *adolescent*
- Updated data and figures throughout

CHAPTER 7

- New chapter-opening vignette looking at the recent change in Yahoo corporate policy regarding telecommuting, to illustrate the importance of social interaction
- Major reorganization of the text sections on networks, groups, and organizations for enhanced flow and clarity ✓
- New Table 7.1: Groups versus Networks: Some Differences
- New "A Changing World" section, "Social Structure and Privacy"
- Updated data throughout

CHAPTER 8

- Extensive new section: "Surveillance and Social Control in the Digital Age"
- Updated data, text, and examples throughout ✓

CHAPTER 9

- Addition on government regulation of corporations
- Addition on inherited wealth
- New/updated discussion of income and wealth inequality
- New and revised figures, tables, and maps on income, job growth, unemployment, poverty throughout
- Updated data on wages, unionization, and tax rates
- Updated discussion of public assistance, noting the 2008–2009 bank bailouts

CHAPTER 10

- Revised chapter-opening vignette related to ongoing debates in the United States over immigration policy and citizenship
- Updated material and data on racial and ethnic groups today
- Updated material on immigration and unauthorized immigration
- Substantially revised section, "Changing Population Trends"

- Revised and reorganized section, “Culture, Structure, and Power: The Nature of Racial and Ethnic Inequality Today” ✓
- New section, “The Death of ‘Old Racism’: Changing Practices and Attitudes”
- Revised section, “Enduring Inequality”
- Revised section, “The Legacy of Past Discrimination: The Black-White Wealth Gap” ✓
- Revised section on color-blind racism ✓
- Updated data and figures on inequality, racial demographics, and intermarriage

CHAPTER 11

- New section, “Sexuality and the Internet”
- Updated discussion of same-sex marriage ✓
- Additional material on Engels regarding the economic roots of gender stratification
- New and updated data and figures on gender stratification, education, women in government, and same-sex marriage
- Updated data on the gender pay gap
- Updated material on women among executives at *Fortune* 500 companies and women among U.S. political leaders

CHAPTER 12

- Updated Through a Sociological Lens box, “Delaying Adulthood”
- Updated data and figures on marriage, cohabitation, divorce, families, and religious traditions
- Updated discussion of same-sex marriage ✓
- New Sociology in Action box, “Research, Public Policy, and the Law”
- Updated data on interracial and interethnic families, world religions, and religious adherence in the United States

CHAPTER 13

- New section, “Cyberbullying”
- New material on the Common Core Standards Initiative
- Updated “A Changing World” section, “Uncertainty in the Twenty-first-Century Workplace,” including a new discussion of precarious work
- Updates to Sociology in Action box, “Challenging the Structure of School Financing”
- Updated discussion of the gender wage gap
- New and revised figures and tables on wages, school enrollment, educational attainment, student debt, and unionization throughout

- Updated data on school segregation, charter schools, and global adult literacy

CHAPTER 14

- New chapter-opening vignette on the phenomenon of the selfie and how it embodies developments that are unique to contemporary media
- Revised section on new media ✓
- Updated discussion of trends in the media industries
- Updated data and figures on the digital divide and news corporations
- Revised discussion of consumer culture and credit card debt among college students
- Revised section on product placement ✓
- Revised Through a Sociological Lens box, “Examining the Commercialization of Childhood”

CHAPTER 15

- Revised discussion of suburban sprawl ✓
- Revised definition of environmental sociology and what makes it a distinctive approach ✓
- Additional discussion of the sociology of health and the social construction of illness
- Updated data on global urban population growth, commuting, and death rates due to poor sanitation

CHAPTER 16

- New chapter-opening vignette on economic insecurity in the contemporary United States, related to factors like military service, corporate actions, and continuing unemployment
- Revised section on the structure of politics ✓
- Fine-tuned definitions of the meaning of the terms *politics* and *government* ✓
- Updated section on the national security state
- New and revised figures, maps, and tables on political parties, campaign spending, voter turnout, lobbying, taxation, and government spending throughout

CHAPTER 17

- New chapter-opening vignette on China’s controversial one-child policy and abuses of state power that are connected to it
- Revised Sociology Works box, “Sociology Majors After Graduation”
- New and updated data and figures on globalization, demographics, social change, and same-sex marriage
- Revised Sociology in Action box, “The U.S. Census Bureau”

Teaching and Learning with *Experience Sociology*

TEACHING RESOURCES

Instructor's Manual. The instructor's manual incorporates tips for both new and experienced instructors and includes learning objectives, brief and detailed chapter outlines, chapter summaries, lecture outlines, lecture ideas, and topics for class discussion.

Test Bank. This resource offers 100 multiple-choice and true/false questions for each chapter. McGraw-Hill's computerized EZ Test allows instructors to create customized exams using the publisher-supplied test items or instructors' own questions.

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1

Sociology in a Changing World

Looking AHEAD

How can sociology and the sociological perspective help us understand society and our place in it?

How can three of sociology's core concepts—culture, structure, and power—and its diverse theories help us understand ourselves and our world?

How can sociology, which emerged in a period of revolutionary change, help us understand our own rapidly changing world?



The death of former South African president Nelson Mandela in December 2013 brought a staggering global response. More than 90 heads of state were among the tens of thousands who attended the memorial service in Soweto in the pouring rain. The service was a powerful commemoration of a courageous individual's life and also a testament to how much had changed during this one man's lifetime.

Millions of viewers worldwide watched Mandela's memorial service live on television. But when Mandela was born in 1918, television had not even been invented. When he died at age 95, Mandela's native country of South Africa had a democratically elected government and a black president. But Mandela had grown up in a society characterized by apartheid, or legalized racial segregation; blacks could not vote or hold skilled jobs, and they could live only in racially restricted neighborhoods. As a young man, Mandela joined the African National Congress, a movement that challenged the government and its apartheid policies, first through nonviolent protest and later through armed struggle. He was arrested in 1962, convicted of sabotage, and given a life sentence. Released from prison more than 27 years later, he was elected president of South Africa in 1994. Mandela, a vibrant symbol of perseverance and the possibility of social change, helped pave the way for a peaceful transition from a white-dominated apartheid regime to a multiracial government.

Mandela's contemporaries in the United States—your grandparents or great-grandparents—similarly experienced dramatic social change during a single lifetime. Women born before 1920 came into a world that did not permit them to vote. But for decades now, women not only have voted but have done so at a higher rate than men. Many African Americans of Mandela's generation grew up with their own version of apartheid in the South's legal racial segregation that mandated separate schools and separate seating on public transportation until the 1960s. The civil rights movement helped abolish legal segregation, and the idea of separate black and white seats on a bus is hard to imagine today. When Mandela was born, the American labor movement was working to outlaw child labor and establish basic rights such as a minimum wage. Today, the minimum wage and the abolition of child labor are well-established norms.

Mandela's story has a powerful message. It reminds us that in a single lifetime, people working together can help change the world in countless ways.

Social change has long been a topic of interest to sociologists. Sociology originated in the late 1800s, a time of breathtaking change, when Europe and the United States were shifting from a rural agricultural economy to an urban industrial economy. Early sociologists were trying to understand the impact of this and other social changes on how people lived, how they earned a living, and how families were organized.

Today's sociologists are doing much the same thing, except that now they are grappling with contemporary changes related to our global economy, the expansion of media and technology, a rapidly changing population, and enduring cultural conflicts, to name just a few focal points. *Experience Sociology* introduces you to a sociological perspective on these sorts of contemporary developments. Amid continuing shifts in the social landscape, the sociological perspective provides valuable tools for helping you navigate our changing world.

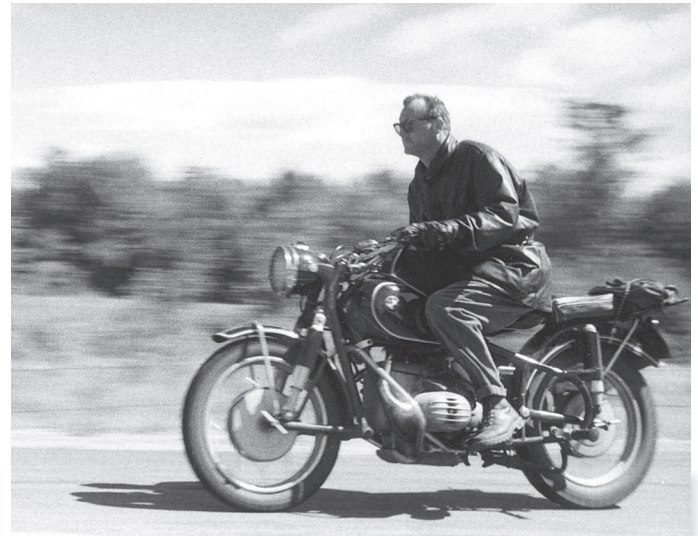
This chapter introduces sociology, its unique perspective, and its early development as a discipline. It examines some of sociology's diverse theories and the core concepts that unite the field, along with a number of key concerns of sociology—indeed, of all of us today. We will see how sociology offers insight into the forces that are shaping our lives and, at the same time, how it helps us recognize our own capacity to bring about change.

What Is Sociology?

Sociology is *the systematic study of the relationship between individuals and society*. The approach used in sociology can be thought of as a perspective, a way of looking at the world. To take a **sociological perspective** is to *see and understand the connections between individuals and the broader social contexts in which they live*. You can understand your own life—including the forces that have shaped your current daily routines and the options you have in your future—only by considering the broader social contexts within which you live. Your identity (including your race, ethnicity, class, gender, and nationality) as well as the social environment in which you live (including your family, neighborhood, country, culture, and historical period) influence who you are and who you can be. Understanding those connections is at the heart of a sociological perspective.

The Sociological Perspective

Writing in 1959, U.S. sociologist C. Wright Mills provided the best-known description of the sociological perspective (or, as he called it, the *sociological imagination*). According to Mills, “The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within a society” (p. 6). In other words, our individual condition (what Mills calls “biography”) depends, in part, upon larger forces in society (“history”).



A motorcycle-riding Texan, C. Wright Mills wrote a classic description of the sociological perspective called *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) and a series of books focused on social class and power in the United States (1948, 1952, 1956). He taught at Columbia University from 1946 until 1962, when he died of a heart attack at age 45. Mills's critique of the concentration of power in the United States inspired a generation of activists in the 1960s to promote a more inclusive and democratic society, themes that continue to resonate today.

Do you live in a prosperous, peaceful society with democratic freedoms or in one where survival is a challenge, violence is a constant threat, and people's basic civil rights are suppressed? Is your mother or father a retail clerk, an auto worker, a school teacher, an engineer, in the military, a business executive, or unemployed? Are you African American, Latino, Asian, white? Are you male, female, or transgendered? Are you gay or straight? Are you from a rural community, the suburbs, or a major city? Were you raised as a Christian, a Jew, a Muslim, a Hindu, or a nonbeliever? Although we often like to think of ourselves as rugged individuals responsible for our own lives, characteristics and circumstances like these influence who we are and the options we have. And as Mills (1959) points out (using the gendered language of his day), as social conditions change, so do the lives of individuals:

When a society is industrialized, a peasant becomes a worker; a feudal lord is liquidated or becomes a businessman. When classes rise or fall a man is employed or unemployed; when the rate of investment goes up or down, a man takes new heart or goes broke. When wars happen, an insurance salesman becomes a rocket launcher; a store clerk, a radar man; a wife lives alone; a child grows up without a father. Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both. (p. 3)

We need only consider the economic recession of recent years, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the rapid growth of



Personal choices—especially deciding to volunteer for the armed forces—contributed to this Iraq war veteran’s current situation. But those decisions were made in the context of broader social conditions, including economic pressures to earn a living, a culture of popular patriotism, key decisions made by those with political power, and events that transformed international relations. The connections between individual lives and larger social processes are rarely so explicit or so poignant.

technology, and accompanying social developments to see that Mills’s observations are as relevant today as they were more than half a century ago.

However, Mills and other sociologists do not argue that people are simply the passive victims of their social circumstances. Rather, as the sociological perspective reveals, interplay exists between the social conditions that shape our lives and the actions we take as individuals. We don’t get to choose the conditions under which we live, the opportunities we enjoy, or the barriers we face, but we do have choices about how we respond to those circumstances, both individually and collectively. Deciding to join the military, have children, attend college, or move to another city are among the many individual decisions a person can make that have a major impact on his or her future. Mills himself was a strong advocate for collective action to strengthen democracy and help change the difficult and often unequal conditions that face people in society. That idea, too, is as relevant today as ever.

Sociology and Common Sense

You do not have to be a professional sociologist to look at the world from a sociological perspective. Indeed, many popular expressions reflect a kind of commonsense folk wisdom that assumes a sociological perspective. You have probably heard some version of the expression, “You’ve got

to play the cards you’re dealt in life.” The card game metaphor makes the point that from the beginning, our options in life have been shaped by social conditions that we did not get to pick ourselves. Such factors can heavily influence the opportunity people have for good health, education, material comfort, and overall well-being.

You don’t get to choose the cards you are dealt, but you do get to decide how you will play them. For example, you no doubt decided to go to college with the hope that doing so could positively influence your future. Others may have had the option of attending college but chose not to exercise it. Many more people, of course, never had the option of attending college in the first place; they were dealt a very different hand in life.

The idea that people must play the cards they are dealt in life is consistent with a sociological perspective. But the problem with relying on commonsense folk wisdom to understand the world is that, however insightful it may sometimes be, it can produce a bewildering array of contradictory claims. The maxim about playing the cards you are dealt in life would seem to contradict another popular saying, “Life is what you make of it,” which suggests that individuals have total control over their fate. Or perhaps you agree with the maxim, “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree,” suggesting that our social origins largely predetermine our character. Without some way of gauging their accuracy, such wildly contradictory claims provide no insight at all.

In addition, an understanding of the world based only on our own individual experience may not be helpful in unfamiliar circumstances. This is especially true in a world in which communications, media, immigration, and international travel are bringing together people of vastly different backgrounds as never before. To operate in such a diverse society we need to understand not only how *we* make sense of the world, but how other people do so as well.

If we are to understand our connection to the social world beyond our own limited experience and be able to sort through competing claims about that world, we need a more systematic way to comprehend the patterns of behavior and the processes that make up social life. We need the discipline of sociology.

Sociology as a Discipline

Sociologists combine the sociological perspective with a variety of research methods (discussed in Chapter 2) to study in a systematic way how our actions shape, and are shaped by, broader social forces. Because the sociological perspective can apply to any aspect of people’s lives and any social issue,



These children's life chances—their opportunities for good health, education, material comfort, and overall well-being—are significantly influenced by the social environment into which they were born. What differences are evident from these photographs? What elements of your social environment influenced your development?

the discipline of sociology addresses an especially broad array of topics, as we will see throughout this book.

Sociology is one of the *social sciences*, a group of research-based disciplines that gather and evaluate evidence in order to study human society. This focus on human society distinguishes the social sciences from the *natural sciences*, which focus on the physical aspects of nature. In addition to sociology, the social sciences include political science, economics, psychology, and anthropology. Each of these disciplines highlights different aspects of social life.

Take crime, for example. *Political scientists* might study how politicians use the issue of crime in their campaigns. *Economists* might examine the financial impact of crime on society. *Psychologists* might look at the individual features of criminals, perhaps suggesting personality traits associated with certain types of criminal behavior. *Anthropologists* might compare how different societies define crime and respond to it. *Sociologists* emphasize the interrelationship between individuals and larger social forces, as well as the interactions

between various social institutions such as government, economy, media, schools, and family. They explore why crime rates vary over time and are often linked to social trends such as changes in the age of the population (since younger people commit crimes at a higher rate than older ones). They examine the role of media in helping shape people's perception of crime and the criminal justice system through both news coverage and entertainment dramas. They examine the effectiveness of government efforts to reduce crime. Such topics illustrate the broad range of sociological research.

Sociologists have many interests, and the discipline as a whole has many areas of specialization, including medical sociology, sociology of the family, sociology of religion, political sociology, the sociology of race and ethnicity, the sociology of work, the sociology of gender, the sociology of media, and the sociology of social movements. As a result, sociology courses can provide a foundation for further study in any of these fields. As the Sociology Works box suggests,

SOCIOLOGY WORKS

The Sociology Major and the Job Market

People, culture, social problems, social change—these fascinating topics help explain why students often enjoy sociology. However, practical concern about the future might lead some to ask, “What can I *do* with a degree in sociology?”

The answer is, “Plenty.” By majoring in sociology you not only learn to better understand yourself and your world, but you also develop important skills that can prepare you for entry-level positions in a variety of employment settings, including business, education, social services, health care, government, media, and criminal justice. Sociology can also be an excellent choice for students who plan to go on to graduate school.

Here are four key advantages of majoring in sociology:

1. A sociology degree is flexible.

Because sociology can be applied to virtually any aspect of social life, you can major in sociology with an eye toward your own particular interests. For example, if you are interested in health and medicine, you can take a course in medical sociology; if you are interested in social work, you can take courses related to the social problems you wish to address or the populations you wish to serve. Sociology can help you understand the issues related to your field of interest.

2. Sociology focuses on the critical use of information. As part of a liberal arts education, a sociology degree prepares you to find, understand, analyze, use, and communicate information. These fundamental critical-thinking skills apply to an array of work settings and will not become obsolete; they are highly valuable in today’s rapidly changing, information-based job market. Since most people change jobs—and even careers—during their lives, mastering such information-based skills is crucial for success. The ability to work with social science data found in government

Majoring in sociology allows you to study a subject area that interests you and helps you prepare for your future.

reports, marketing surveys, and other information sources is particularly important.

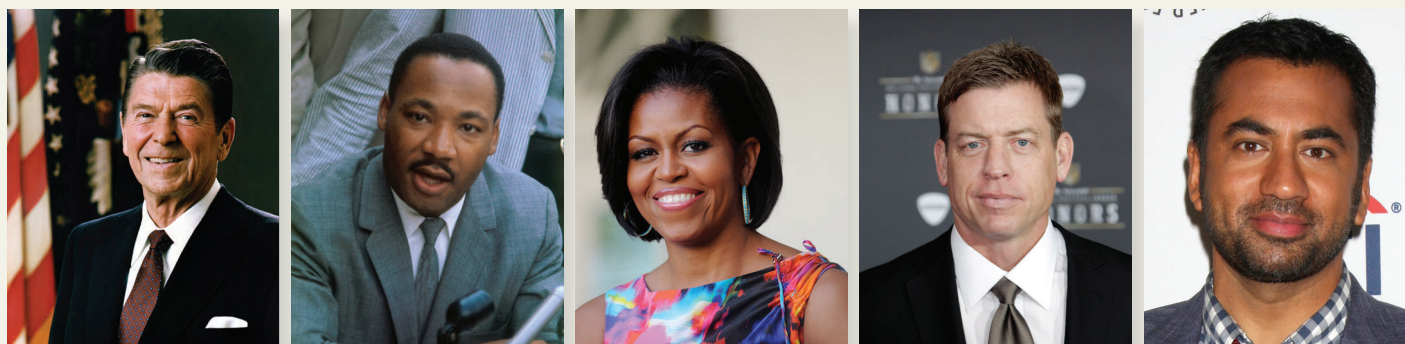
3. Sociology provides insights into diversity. Success in many fields of employment requires understanding people from different backgrounds. Sociology majors have an advantage in understanding diversity. As a result, they are more likely to work effectively in multicultural workplaces such as schools, hospitals, and businesses as well as in any field in which the players may be from diverse social backgrounds.

4. Sociology explores the source of social problems. Are you interested in a field that addresses social problems, such as social work, criminal justice, or health care? Do you plan to work with community organizations, international aid agencies, or social movements to bring about social change? If so, studying sociology can be particularly relevant. By focusing on the relationship between individuals and their social context, sociology helps you understand the roots of social problems.

The Sociology Works boxes throughout this book highlight how former sociology students are using the insights of sociology in a variety of fields. If you are considering majoring in sociology, talk with your instructor, who can tell you about the programs available at your school.

think about it

1. Do you have any tentative ideas about the kind of work you’d like to do when you complete school? What kinds of classes do you think will help you prepare for the future? Why?
2. Take a look at your school’s course listings. Do you see any sociology courses that you think you may want to take? What interests you about the topics covered in these courses?



Sociology majors in many occupations have made contributions to their professional fields. A few well-known majors have had an impact across society. Pictured here, from left to right, are former U.S. president Ronald Reagan, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., First Lady Michelle Obama, Hall of Fame quarterback and broadcaster Troy Aikman, and actor Kal Penn.

the study of sociology can also provide valuable skills for many careers, including some that may seem completely unrelated to sociology itself.

Sociology's Historical and Social Context

Imagine a society in which scientific discoveries reveal more and more about the world, political unrest sparks calls for social change, and economic crises and new technologies transform daily life. You might suspect this was a description of today's United States, but similar upheavals disturbed Europe in the 1800s, which is where and when the formal discipline of sociology first emerged. To better understand the origins of the discipline, we need to consider that historical and social context.

The Rise of Modernity

In the 1700s, European society entered a new historical era, **modernity**, *characterized by the growth of democracy and personal freedom, increased reliance on reason and science to explain the natural and social worlds, and a shift toward an urban industrial economy.* Earlier, during the Middle Ages (roughly 400–1400), religious explanations of the natural and social worlds dominated intellectual life, the land-owning aristocracy and clerical elite dominated political life, and the economy rested on a rural, agricultural base. (Our romanticized images of kings in castles and knights in battle come from this period.) During the transitional Renaissance and Early Modern periods (from roughly the 1400s to the 1600s), scholars laid the foundation of modern science with pioneering works in astronomy, anatomy, and other fields of knowledge; uprisings challenged traditional political authority; and technological advances improved agricultural production.

The rise of modernity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was marked by revolutionary change (Table 1.1). Early sociologists sought to understand the dramatic shifts they were witnessing and to suggest what might be done to deal with the social problems that resulted from them.

Cultural Revolution: Science and the Enlightenment

During the Middle Ages the Church and its clergy dominated European intellectual life, controlling the era's limited number of books, libraries, and schools. Because religious doctrine formed the basis for acceptable social thought, heretics—those who held beliefs contrary to Church teaching—were often persecuted and even killed for questioning the accepted order. This intellectual climate was not hospitable to the open and free inquiry required for **science**, which *uses logic and the systematic collection of evidence to support knowledge claims.*

The dominance of the Church slowly eroded, however, as scientific research exposed the shortcomings of religious explanations of the natural world. For example, proof that the earth orbited the sun contradicted Church doctrine that the earth was at the center of the universe. Writers and philosophers seized on these advances in the natural sciences to promote the *Enlightenment*, an eighteenth-century intellectual movement that combined a belief in individual freedom and respect for individual rights with the calculated logic of the natural sciences. These Enlightenment thinkers, who were among the first intellectuals independent of the Church, argued that neither the physical nor the social world should be taken on faith. Instead, both should be open to questioning and examined through reason; claims to knowledge should be subject to testing through the collection of evidence, and explanations should be based in natural causes and events. German philosopher Immanuel Kant summed up this revolutionary way of thinking in the motto “Dare to know” ([1784] 1999). This new emphasis on reason and science created the cultural conditions needed for the emergence of sociology.

Political Revolution: The Rise of Democracy

Enlightenment thinkers believed that the open debate of ideas would promote tolerance, individual rights, equality, and democracy. They suggested that applying reason and science to questions of social significance would inevitably advance individual rights and freedom. Enlightenment

TABLE 1.1 SOCIOLOGY AND REVOLUTION

SOCIOLOGY AROSE IN THE CONTEXT OF REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

Cultural Revolution	Political Revolution	Economic and Social Revolution
The declining influence of religion	Declining power of monarchies; American and French revolutions	Decline of agricultural life; industrialization and rise of consumer society
The rise of scientific thought	Uprisings of 1848	Capitalism
The Age of Enlightenment	Growth in democracy and individual rights	Urbanization