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Introduction to

SOCIOLOGY

9E

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INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

NINTH EDITION

Anthony Giddens, Mitchell Duneier, Richard P. Appelbaum, and Deborah Carr

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

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SOCIOLOGY

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Contents

Preface

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

MAJOR THEMES

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

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

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

The book also focuses on the importance of **comparative study**. Sociology cannot be taught solely by understanding the institutions of any one particular society. Although we have focused our discussion primarily on the United States, we have balanced it with a

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

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

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

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

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

ORGANIZATION

We have completely reorganized the ninth edition to include only what students need to master the sociological concepts taught in introductory courses. Every chapter now follows the same structure, making it easier for students to study. Each chapter opens with an attention-grabbing question that challenges students' misconceptions about the topic.

Each chapter is broken down into four sections:

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

At the end of each section, students have the opportunity to test themselves with integrated "Concept Check" quizzes. Furthermore, the ninth edition features new "Big Picture" concept maps that integrate the learning objectives, key terms, "Concept Checks," and "Thinking Sociologically" activities into a handy one-stop review tool at the end of each chapter.

The chapters follow a sequence designed to help students achieve a progressive mastery of the different fields of sociology, but we have taken care to ensure that the book can be used flexibly and will be easy to adapt to the needs of individual courses. Chapters can be deleted or

studied in a different order without much loss. Each has been written as a fairly autonomous unit, with cross-referencing to other chapters at relevant points.

CHANGES IN THE NINTH EDITION

Chapter 1 begins with an opening question about the college admissions process and leads into a new discussion of colleges looking for "best graduates" instead of "best students," or those who will be successful after graduation. Such students include athletes who may not have the highest GPAs or SAT scores. We have also added a discussion of Alan Krueger and Stacey Dale's 2002 study showing that Ivy League–accepted students who decided on state-level colleges instead were still very successful, indicating that highly motivated individuals can do well even without an Ivy League diploma.

Chapter 2: The opening question asks students their view of sociology as a science. There is a new example about researchers who studied three groups of people: those who were able to move from high-poverty to low-poverty neighborhoods, those who wanted to but could not, and those who did not want to move and then stayed. We have added to the discussion of Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions*. There is a lengthy new discussion of Andreas Wimmer's book *Waves of War*, which goes against the grain of war history by focusing on hundreds of lesser-known wars in places such as Latin America instead of only focusing on a few major European wars. The chapter touches upon the uncomfortable question of social scientists benefiting at their subjects' expense. We have updated the statistics for the divorce rate in the United States.

Chapter 3: We begin the chapter by comparing the use of the Internet by teenagers in Silicon Valley and in Beijing. There are also new examples of change and conflict as a result of globalization, including the global manufacturing of the iPhone and the meaning of headscarves in the United States, France, and Muslim countries. We have included a discussion of Marx's, Weber's, and Durkheim's analyses of the emerging industrial society. We have updated explanation of colonialism, introducing the idea of settler colonialism and the distinction between the "global north" and the "global south." We have also added a discussion of the ways different groups use the Internet, ranging from Saudi Arabia's Internet censorship to the creation of digitally linked communities by various subcultures. There is also a new section on China's seismic cultural and economic changes in the past few decades.

Chapter 4: We have included Deborah Carr's research on women's changing roles in the past century, which illustrates the tension between older women, who were expected to embrace traditional gender roles, and their daughters, who are getting advanced degrees, delaying marriage, and having fewer children. Data on Americans who play video games have been updated. There is a new discussion of "violent video games" in the context of the confession by the perpetrator of the July 2011 massacre of 77 people in Norway.

Chapter 5: We have updated statistics on young people's use of social media for information, in particular noting that 48 percent of young people get news from Facebook.

Chapter 6: The opening story about West Point has been revised as has the discussion of Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler's 2007 obesity study. There are also updated data on the savings resulting from telecommuting.

Chapter 7: An opening question about homeless people, drug addicts, and gang members immediately challenges students about the stereotypes of these groups as deviant. We also expand on Chapter 2's discussion of Alice Goffman's "On the Run" article about the effects of police officers' use of homes, hospitals, and family members to catch suspected criminals. We have also updated statistics on the death penalty in the United States, as well as discussing Americans' opinions toward capital punishment.

Chapter 8: This chapter has been extensively edited to incorporate the Great Recession of 2008, starting with the opening question. Statistics have been added or updated on household assets by race, Americans' net worth, class, consumer debt, student debt, intergenerational mobility, education, job prospects, and other socioeconomic factors that were affected by the Great Recession. We have expanded the section on homelessness to include data on veterans. Annette Lareau's 2003 book, *Unequal Childhoods,* is also examined in this chapter.

Chapter 9: This chapter includes a new section on global poverty statistics, including a discussion of how China's economic boom has lifted so many Chinese out of poverty that China is now considered a middle-income country. We also discuss newly industrializing economies in East Asia that are a significant part of shaping what Fareed Zakaria calls a "post-American world." There are updated statistics throughout this chapter—on GNI, poverty, manufacturing, transnational companies, and more.

Chapter 10: We have added new statistics on women in national legislatures around the world. We have also included updated discussions of issues such as the pay gap, sex segregation in the workforce, female executives, sexual harassment, and global violence against women.

Chapter 11: Reflecting the rapidly shifting racial dynamics in the United States today, several statistics in this chapter have been updated, including immigration rates to the United States by race and ethnicity, poverty data by race, the education level of immigrants, Asian American rates of intermarriage, and the effects of immigration on the U.S. economy.

Chapter 12 has been significantly updated to reflect how the Great Recession has affected seniors' finances and well-being. We have incorporated several studies on quality of life: Rebecca Levy's 2002 study of how positive and negative attitudes affect lifespan; Luo et al.'s 2011 research into discriminatory treatment and its effects on physical and mental health; and Findsen and Formosa's 2011 study on the importance of older adults engaging in lifelong educational activities. We have included new data on Social Security and Medicare, as well as discussing Americans' opinions toward the two programs. We have also expanded the analysis of the global experience of aging and how traditional bonds of caring for the elderly are fraying under globalization and the recession.

Chapter 13 begins by asking students how many countries are "free," as determined by their citizens enjoying rights and liberties Americans may take for granted. We have incorporated several recent current events into this chapter, such as Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, and *Kony 2012*. There are updated statistics for the percentage of female voters and heads of state around the world, and for global Internet usage by race, age, education, and wealth.

Chapter 14 contains several updates about employment issues and the future of work, including the opening question about the Taiwanese firm Pou Chen, which is a company that makes several popular brands of athletic shoes. We have also presented recent data about housework, volunteering, financial firms, the rise of Chinese corporations on the global stage, and how unions are responding to outsourcing by focusing on occupations that cannot be exported. We have included a discussion of how Chinese companies are turning to automation in response to rising labor costs and bad publicity concerning labor conditions in that country. There are new issues throughout the chapter as a result of the Great Recession, such as questions about part-time work, longer unemployment, and more flexible (and more insecure) jobs and working conditions.

Chapter 15: We have significantly expanded the sections on two highly debated issues: the well-being of children raised by parents of the same sex, and people who live alone. We have also updated several statistics throughout the chapter, including rates for marriage, childbirth, and cohabitation by race and ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation.

Chapter 16: This chapter contains updated references—for example, on high school dropout rates and international college students. We have included recent developments in the section

on No Child Left Behind, including President Obama's NCLB waivers to certain states and the administration's program Race to the Top. There is a new section on homeschooling and how wealth, single- or two-parent households, and race influence which families choose to homeschool their children.

Chapter 17: There is new or updated information on religious believers worldwide, Americans unaffiliated with any religion, and the religion of immigrants to the United States. We have expanded the section on the rise of evangelicalism in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and parts of Asia. The chapter concludes with a new section "Is Religious Violence on the Rise?," which discusses Mark Juergensmeyer's analysis of the reasons for religious violence, the religious fanaticism of Timothy McVeigh and Osama bin Laden, and the attitudes of people in Muslim countries toward foreign technology and culture, which make their lives better but also lead to loss of traditional ways of life.

Chapter 18: We have updated statistics on Americans who are overweight and obese by race and age, the most hazardous and fatal jobs in the United States, and race-based inequalities in health and crime. We have included new references to Hui Zheng's 2012 study on whether income inequality in the United States affects poor health and mortality.

Chapter 19: There are updated statistics for global population projections, what countries will experience increases in urban dwellers, the rural-urban trends of the United States, urban poverty, and food and water shortages. We mention recent concerns over nuclear power plants, such as Japan's Fukushima plant and Germany's decision to phase out nuclear power by 2020, and update our discussion of Paul Ehrlich's Malthusian predictions.

Chapter 20: This chapter includes new discussions of globalization, including the phenomenal success of *Avatar,* and Erik Olin Wright's 2012 American Sociologist Association address focusing on egalitarian reforms. There are also updated statistics for genetically modified foods, the global film industry, free trade, and the extreme concentration of wealth and resources.

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RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS

For Students

Everyday Sociology Blog
everydaysociologyblog.com

Designed for a general audience, the *Everyday Sociology* blog is an exciting and unique online forum that encourages visitors to actively explore sociology's relevance to popular culture, mass media, and everyday life. Moderated by Karen Sternheimer (University of Southern

California), the blog features postings on topical subjects, video interviews with well-known sociologists, and contributions from special guests during the academic year.

Contributors include: Sally Raskoff (Los Angeles Valley College), Peter Kaufman (SUNY New Paltz), and Jon Wynn (University of Massachusetts Amherst).

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An affordable and convenient alternative, Norton eBooks retain the content and design of the print book and allow students to highlight and take notes with ease, print out chapters as needed, and search the text. Norton eBooks are available online and as downloadable PDFs. They can be purchased directly from the Norton website or with a registration folder that can be sold in bookstores.

For Instructors

Sociology in Practice DVDs

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

Instructor Resource Disc

Available in downloadable file and CD-ROM formats, this helpful classroom presentation tool includes:

- **Enhanced Lecture PowerPoints** featuring a suggested classroom lecture script in the notes field that will be particularly helpful to first-time teachers. While the slides are easy to customize, they are also a "lecture-ready" solution for instructors who have limited preparation time.
- **"Clicker" questions** for each PowerPoint chapter, which enable instructors to incorporate classroom response systems into their lectures.
- **Art PowerPoints** featuring photographs and drawn figures from the text.

Testbank

Written by Sara Raley (McDaniel), Marion Hughes (Towson), Whitney Garcia (Towson), and Stephanie Arnett (Tulane), the testbank for the ninth edition is designed to help instructors prepare exams. It has been extensively revised to reflect the new edition's updates and to conform to Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives. Each chapter includes approximately 100 questions. In addition to Bloom's taxonomy, each question is tagged with metadata placing it in the context of the chapter and a difficulty level, making it easy to construct tests that are meaningful and diagnostic. It is available online, in paperback, on CD-ROM, and in ExamView format.

Interactive Instructor's Guide

We are proud to introduce with the ninth edition the Interactive Instructor's Guide, which was written by Kathleen Doherty. This guide makes lecture development easy with an array of teaching resources that can be searched and browsed according to a number of criteria. Resources include chapter outlines and summaries; lecture ideas; discussion questions; recommended readings, videos, and website; DVD and YouTube exercises with streaming video; and new Service Learning Exercises. It is available at no cost to instructors only, who can also subscribe to a mailing list to be notified of periodic updates and new content.

Coursepacks

(available for free download at wwnorton.com/instructors; BB/WebCT, Angel, Desire2Learn, Moodle, and other Learning Management Systems)

Available at no cost to professors or students, Norton coursepacks for online or hybrid courses are available in a variety of formats, including all versions of Blackboard and WebCT. With just a simple download from our Instructor Resources page, instructors can bring high-quality Norton digital media into a new or existing online course (no extra student passwords required), and it's theirs to keep forever.

The coursepacks are organized around the big concepts in each chapter. They offer an extensive array of materials, including:

- a five- to seven-question pretest that allows instructors to gauge student knowledge of key concepts and tailor lectures and assignments accordingly;
- interactive activities and assessments focused on the big concepts;
- NEW! Analyzing the Data multiple-choice quizzes on key charts and graphs (one to three per chapter);
- exercises that allow students to work with 2010 Census and Community Survey data;
- a "Writing about Sociology" section that includes practice activities and assessments;
- select readings from the previous edition with exercises and discussion questions;
- *Sociology in Practice* DVD activities that include multiple-choice assessments that connect each clip to key sociological concepts (select clips only); and
- a bank of discussion forum questions.

Part I

THE STUDY OF SOCIOLOGY

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

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

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

What Is Sociology?

1

The admissions process at major American universities has:

a. Always favored prettier or more handsome people.
b. Always favored minorities.
c. Always favored athletes.
d. Undergone serious revision across time.

Turn the page for the correct answer.

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

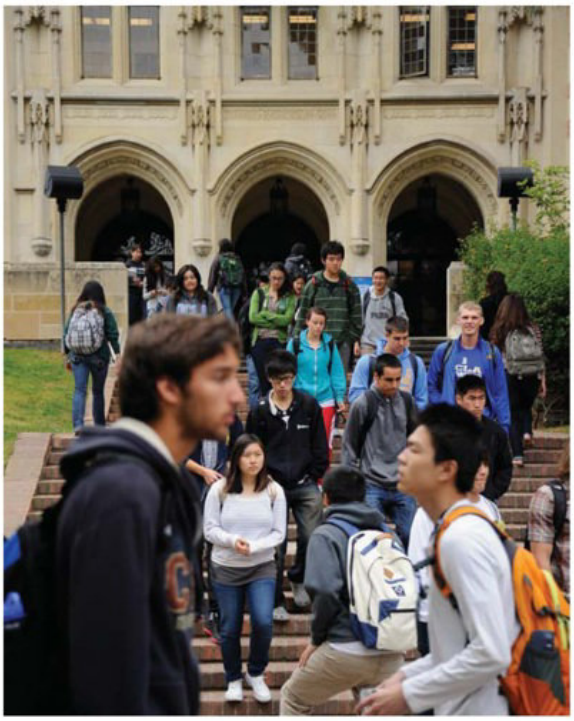
Nevertheless, reflecting the wider anti-Semitism of the era, the people who were running Harvard looked at this as a very undesirable turn of events. The administrators drew an analogy between the university and hotels in upstate New York—first the Jews will arrive, then the Gentiles will leave, and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

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

There were things the admissions office simply didn't like: people with big ears, for example. Short people were also undesirable, as recommendation files from that time indicate. In the mid-1950s, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale were actually keeping records on the number of men who entered the freshman class who were over six feet tall. Today, all schools release records about their incoming freshman classes, but they are

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. **BASIC CONCEPTS**
   Learn what sociology encompasses and how everyday topics are shaped by social and historical forces. Recognize that sociology involves not only acquiring knowledge but also developing a sociological imagination.
2. **THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL THINKING**
   Learn how sociology originated and understand the significance of the intellectual contributions of early sociologists.
3. **MODERN THEORETICAL APPROACHES**
   Be able to identify some of the leading theorists and distinguish between their theoretical approaches to social life.
4. **HOW CAN SOCIOLOGY HELP US?**
   See the practical implications of sociology.



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

more likely to keep track of race, class, and gender variables than height or ear size. Thus, answer choice *a* is incorrect if we are considering the present day; though physical appearance was at one time a salient aspect of college admissions criteria, it is generally no longer a consideration. Indeed, when people hear statistics about incoming college freshman classes, they more frequently ask about affirmative action. Some whites might wonder, "Is it true that I can't get into some competitive schools because so many of the spaces now go to minorities?"

It's interesting how frequently this question is asked. The average person who wants to know is actually using what C. Wright Mills called the **sociological imagination**, a phrase he coined in 1959 in a now-classic book (Mills, 2000; orig. 1959). Mills tried to understand how the average person in the United States understood his everyday life. According to Mills, each of us lives in a very small orbit, and our worldview is limited by the social situations we encounter on a daily basis. These include the family and the small groups we are a part of, the school we attend, and even the dorm in which we live. All these things give rise to a certain limited perspective and point of view.

The average person, according to Mills, doesn't really understand her personal problems as part of any kind of larger framework or series of goings-on. Mills argued that we all need to overcome our limited perspective. What is necessary

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

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

is a certain quality of mind that makes it possible to understand the larger meaning of our experiences. This quality of mind is the sociological imagination.

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

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

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

THE ANSWER IS D.

1 BASIC CONCEPTS

The scope of sociological study is extremely wide, but in general, sociologists ask themselves certain questions that help to focus the sociological imagination and provide them with the

concepts that motivate research. These questions that orient the discipline include: How are the things that we take to be natural actually socially constructed? How is social order possible? Does the individual matter? How are the times in which we are living different from the times that came before?

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

There is a basic flaw in human reasoning that goes something like this: The things that we see before us are inevitable. They are natural and cannot be changed. What sociology teaches us is that in many ways we are freer than we think—that the things we think are natural are actually created by human beings. We might consider the question we started this chapter with as an example: The college admissions system is a **social construction** located in a specific place and time. Criteria for admission to American colleges have shifted according to historical and demographic trends and to changes in university leadership (Gladwell, 2005).

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

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

Sex is different. If you are a parent, you do not want someone coming up to your baby boy and asking, "Is it a boy or a girl?" So what do you do to avoid this scenario? You dress your baby in blue if he is a boy, or in pink if she is a girl. Some parents do not do this at the beginning—until they start getting asked that question. Then they start dressing their baby in a certain way so that people will stop asking. Of course, even if you do dress your baby in the traditional blue or pink, there may still be people who come up and ask, "Is it a boy or a girl?" But it is not something that will happen often, because most people are pretty good at reading social cues—such as a blue or pink cap.

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

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

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

being thinks are biological, and thus natural, are actually socially constructed.

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

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

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

SOCIAL ORDER

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

Sociologists have offered up many different explanations to try to answer such questions. One explanation is that it is rational for individuals to act this way. Students know it is in their self-interest to sit quietly and pay, or pretend to pay, attention. Perhaps a student hopes to apply to graduate school and wants to get a letter of recommendation from the professor. This goal motivates her to respond to the classroom environment: The professor's willingness to write a letter is an incentive for good behavior. The recommendation acts as an incentive, stimulating the response of the student who wants it. The student tries to make a good impression, all the while keeping in mind that if she turns around and talks to her friend week after week instead of listening, the professor might write an unflattering letter or refuse to write one at all. This explanation based on self-interest and incentives is what economists would use to explain most things. While some sociologists adopt such theories, most find such explanations to be based on an all-too-narrow conception of human nature. They appeal to a different set of theories.

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

How do sociologists explain the typical orderly behavior in a lecture hall?

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

It is important to keep in mind that we do not need to choose between these theories. Multiple factors can operate together. All these explanations address the question of social order from a sociological perspective. As such, the existence of social order is not taken for granted. For the average person, the question of social order arises in response to disruptions or