DIANA KENDALL

SOCIOLOGY IN OUR TIMES

THE ESSENTIALS

8TH EDITION

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POLITICAL MAP OF THE WORLD

Greenland

Canada

U.S.

United States

Mexico

Guatemala
El Salvador
Nicaragua
Costa Rica
Panama
Colombia
Ecuador

Belize
Honduras
Jamaica
Cuba
Haiti
Dominican Republic
Puerto Rico
Venezuela
Guyana
Suriname
French Guiana
(France)

Peru
Bolivia
Brazil
Paraguay
Uruguay
Argentina
Chile

Iceland
United Kingdom
Ireland
France
Spain
Portugal
Morocco
Western Sahara
Mauritania

Norway
Sweden
Finland
Denmark

Russia

Kazakhstan

Algeria
Tunisia
Libya
Mali
Niger
Chad
Nigeria
Central African Republic
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Angola
Zambia
Zimbabwe
Botswana
Namibia
South Africa
Malawi
Mozambique
Swaziland
Lesotho
Madagascar

Egypt
Sudan
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Djibouti
Somalia
Uganda
Rwanda
Burundi
Tanzania
Kenya

Ukraine
Turkey
Iraq
Iran
Kuwait
Bahrain
Qatar
United Arab Emirates
Oman
Yemen
Saudi Arabia

Mongolia
Kyrgyzstan
Tajikistan
Afghanistan
Nepal
Bhutan
Pakistan
India
Sri Lanka

North Korea
South Korea
Japan
Taiwan
Hong Kong
China
Bangladesh
Burma
Thailand
Laos
Vietnam
Cambodia
Malaysia
Singapore
Philippines
Indonesia
Papua New Guinea

Australia

New Zealand

1

Mauritania
The Gambia
Senegal
Guinea-Bissau
Guinea
Sierra Leone
Liberia
Mali
Côte D'Ivoire
Burkina Faso
Ghana
Togo
Benin
Niger
Nigeria
Chad
Cameroon
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
Republic of the Congo

2

Norway
Sweden
Denmark
Netherlands
Belgium
Luxembourg
Switzerland
France
Corsica
Sardinia
Sicily
Italy
Germany
Czech Republic
Austria
Slovenia
Croatia
Slovakia
Hungary
Poland
Lithuania
Latvia
Estonia
Russia
Belarus
Ukraine
Moldova
Romania
Serbia and Montenegro
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Albania
Greece

3

Georgia
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Turkey
Uzbekistan
Turkmenistan
Iran
Iraq
Syria
Lebanon
Israel
Jordan

Antarctica

about the author

DIANA KENDALL is a Professor of Sociology at Baylor University, where she has been recognized as an Outstanding Professor. Dr. Kendall has taught a variety of courses, including Introduction to Sociology; Sociological Theory (undergraduate and graduate); Sociology of Medicine; and Race, Class, and Gender. Previously, she enjoyed many years of teaching sociology and serving as chair of the Social and Behavioral Science Division at Austin Community College.

Diana Kendall received her Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin, where she was invited to membership in Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. Her areas of specialization and primary research interests are sociological theory and the sociology of medicine. In addition to *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials,* Eighth Edition, she is the author of *The Power of Good Deeds: Privileged Women and the Social Reproduction of the Upper Class* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), *Framing Class: Media Representations of Wealth and Poverty in America* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), and *Members Only: Elite Clubs and the Process of Exclusion* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

Professor Kendall is actively involved in national and regional sociological associations, including the American Sociological Association, Sociologists for Women in Society, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, and the Southwestern Sociological Association.

8 edition

SOCIOLOGY in Our Times
the essentials

Diana Kendall
Baylor University

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preface

Welcome to the eighth edition of *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials*! The twenty-first century offers unprecedented challenges and opportunities for each of us as individuals and for our larger society and world. In the United States, we can no longer take for granted the peace and economic prosperity that many—but far from all—people were able to enjoy in previous decades. However, even as some things change, others remain the same, and among the things that have not changed are the significance of education and the profound importance of understanding how and why people act the way they do. It is also important to analyze how societies grapple with issues such as economic hardship and the threat of terrorist attacks and war, and to gain a better understanding of why many of us seek stability in our social institutions—including family, religion, education, government, and media—even if we believe that some of these institutions might benefit from certain changes.

Like previous editions of this text, the eighth edition of *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials* is up to date, forward looking, and committed to highlighting the presence of sociology in our lives, as well as its relevance to our lives and communities. It achieves this aim in at least two ways. First, it helps students connect with sociology by providing a meaningful, concrete context for learning by featuring the stories—the lived experiences—of diverse individuals and the social issues they face told in their own voices at the beginning of each chapter. In addition to giving students an opportunity to listen in on the lives of others, these engaging personal stories introduce the issues and themes such as child care, the American Dream, and immigration that are returned to throughout the chapters to ground students' understanding of the text's diverse array of classical and contemporary theory as well as interesting supporting research.

The second way this text highlights the relevance of sociology to our lives and communities is by showing students how sociology can help them understand the important social questions and circumstances that not only the featured individuals face but that they themselves or other people they know or encounter may also face. By providing students with greater understanding of others' lives, their own lives, and the leading social issues of our time, this text also tries to help students see themselves as *members of their communities* and to show them what can be done in response to social issues both locally and globally. The result is that students learn how sociology is not only a collection of concepts and theories but also a field that can make a difference in their lives, their communities, and the world at large. In sum, they learn what the sociological imagination is, how to use it, and how to act on the insights it offers.

What's New to the Eighth Edition? For Starters, More Video!

The eighth edition builds on the best of previous editions while offering up-to-date coverage, enhanced learning tools, and new opportunities to apply the content of each chapter to dominant sociological issues and major concerns of our times. As it is my goal to make each edition better than the previous one, I have revised all of the chapters to reflect the latest in major events and sociological theory and research. Correspondingly, I have updated examples throughout; and all statistics, such as data relating to suicide, crime, demographics, health, and poverty, are current. Additional details of what's new follow:

- **New, updated, and expanded coverage.** This edition provides new, updated, and expanded coverage of topics including the U.S. and global economies, U.S. health care reform, politics in the United States and Barack Obama's presidency, immigration, juvenile courts, sexual orientation, the Tea Party Movement, the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, gated communities, and political opportunity theory.
- **Updated research base.** More than 100 new sources are cited in this edition, the majority of them from 2008, 2009, and 2010. All data and statistics are as current as possible at press time.
- **New and updated chapter-opening first-person accounts of individuals' lived experience.** New and updated chapter-opening accounts focus on learning the ropes in college and medical school (Chapter 3, "Socialization"), Facebook compared to face-to-face communication (Chapter 5, "Groups and Organizations"), U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor (Chapter 7, "Class and Stratification in the United States"), and the

effects of economic hardships on families (Chapter 11, "Families and Intimate Relationships").

- **New and updated boxed features.** More than half of the text's Sociology and Everyday Life quizzes have been updated, and several new Sociology in Global Perspective boxes have been added, including "Open Doors: Study Abroad and Global Socialization" (Chapter 3), "Slavery in the Twenty-First Century: A Global Problem" (Chapter 7), and "Racism and Antiracism in European Football" (Chapter 9). Other new boxes include "Don't Be Stressed Out in College: Helping Yourself and Others" (You Can Make a Difference, Chapter 3), "Hero Framing and the Selling of an Agenda" (Media Framing, Chapter 13), and "Helping Others in the Fight Against Illness!" (You Can Make a Difference, Chapter 14).
- **More maps and new figures.** Maps are powerful visuals and especially useful for clearly representing facts and statistics about a country as large as the United States. As a result, the eighth edition's new maps include Map 2.1, "Cultural Diversity: A Nation of Immigrants"; Map 8.2, "Proportion of World's Population Living in Poverty (by Region)"; Map 10.1, "Women's Earnings as a Percentage of Men's Earnings by State and Puerto Rico: 2008"; Map 12.1, "Per Capita Public Elementary and Secondary Spending by State"; and maps 13.1, "2008 Presidential Election: State by State," 13.2a, "U.S. Unemployment Rate by State Before the Fall of 2008," and 13.2b, "U.S. Unemployment Rate by State After the Great Recession." Responding to requests for additional visuals in general, this edition also includes new figures such as Figure 4.2, "Causes of Family Homelessness in 25 Cities"; Figure 6.4, "Organized Crime Threats in the United States"; Figure 11.1, "Living Arrangements of Children Under 18 Years Old for Selected Years: 1970–2008"; and Figure 15.6, "The World's 12 Largest Agglomerations."
- **Expanded multimedia resources and online study options.** Every chapter now concludes with a Turning to Video feature that comprises a short online video with assignable activities. Additional new resources for the eighth edition include a CLeBook (fully searchable with highlighting and note-taking capabilities) and eCompanion, a brief print guide developed to help students who are using the eBook study and learn. Full descriptions of the student and instructor supplements begin on page xx.

Overview of the Text's Contents with Chapter-by-Chapter Changes

Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials, Eighth Edition, contains sixteen high-interest, up-to-date, clearly organized chapters to introduce students to the best of sociological thinking. The length of the text makes full coverage of the book possible in the time typically allocated to the introductory course so that all students are purchasing a book that their instructors will have the time and desire to cover in its entirety.

Part 1 establishes the foundation for studying society and social life. Using the theme of suicide, **Chapter 1** introduces students to the sociological perspective and research process. The chapter sets forth the major theoretical perspectives used by sociologists in analyzing compelling social issues and provides a thorough description of both quantitative and qualitative methods of sociological research. In this edition, Chapter 1 includes an updated Sociology and Everyday Life quiz and a new Sociology in Global Perspective box ("Postmodern Problems in France: Worker Stress and Suicide Rates"). The chapter's You Can Make a Difference box equips students with knowledge that may help them help someone who is contemplating suicide ("Responding to a Cry for Help").

Chapter 2 spotlights culture as either a stabilizing force or a force that can generate discord, conflict, and even violence in societies. Cultural diversity is discussed as a contemporary issue, and unique coverage is given to popular culture and leisure and to divergent perspectives on popular culture. With the theme of global perspectives on food, the chapter opens with a lived experience about how food can serve as a powerful cultural symbol and includes a new map (Map 2.1, "Cultural Diversity: A Nation of Immigrants"). This chapter's You Can Make a Difference box provides students with tips on "bonding with others through food and conversation."

Chapter 3 looks at socialization and presents an innovative analysis of gender and racial–ethnic socialization as well as human development and life span issues. The college experience as a socialization process serves as the new theme (the chapter opens with first-person narratives about learning the ropes in college and medical school) and is integrated throughout the chapter's features: Sociology and Everyday Life: "How Much Do You Know About Socialization and the College Experience?"; Sociology in Global Perspective: "Open Doors: Study Abroad and Global Socialization"; and Sociology Works!: "'Good Job!': Mead's Generalized Other and the Issue of Excessive Praise," which looks at educational analyst Alfie Kohn's study of the practice of praising children for practically everything they say or do, recalling the earlier sociological insights of George Herbert Mead. This chapter's new You Can Make a Difference box provides essential information for students and is titled "Don't Be Stressed Out in College: Helping Yourself and Others."

Part 2 examines social groups and social control. **Chapter 4** applies the sociological imagination to social structure and interaction in everyday life, opening with a personal account of homelessness, which is returned to throughout the chapter to illustrate the dynamic interplay of social structure and human agency in people's daily lives. The chapter's Sociology and Everyday Life quiz ("How Much Do You Know About Homeless Persons?") has been updated, and the chapter includes a new figure (Figure 4.2, "Causes of Family Homelessness in 25 Cities"). This chapter's You Can Make a Difference feature provides practical guidance for students concerned about the homeless in their communities ("Offering a Helping Hand to Homeless People").

Chapter 5 analyzes groups and organizations, and it includes a discussion of innovative forms of social organization and ways in which organizational structures may differentially affect people based on race, class, gender, and age. The chapter opens with updated voices of college students discussing their use of and attitudes toward the social network site Facebook.com, which again sets up the chapter's overall exploration of how groups and organizations are changing as a result of new technological means of communication. This edition offers a new section on organizations in the twenty-first century and includes a guide to developing invisible (but meaningful) networks on the Internet ("You Can Make a Difference").

Chapter 6 examines how deviance and crime emerge in societies, using diverse theoretical approaches to describe the nature of deviance, crime, and the criminal justice system. The chapter opens with personal commentaries on the underground economy and gang membership, themes that are applied throughout the chapter. This edition includes a new figure (Figure 6.4, "Organized Crime Threats in the United States") and a new section on juvenile courts, while its You Can Make a Difference feature provides guidance on responding to graffiti ("Seeing the Writing on the Wall—and Doing Something About It!").

Part 3 looks at social differences and social inequality, focusing on issues of class, race/ethnicity, and sex/gender, while also touching on issues related to social inequality based on age. **Chapter 7** focuses on class and stratification in the United States and opens with new lived experiences, presenting the voices of President Barack Obama and Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor on the occasion of Sotomayor's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court. The chapter goes on to analyze the causes and consequences of inequality and poverty, as well as discuss the ideology and accessibility of the American Dream. The chapter's photo essay, "What Keeps the American Dream Alive?,"

broadens this discussion, while the chapter's new Sociology in Global Perspective feature, "Slavery in the Twenty-First Century: A Global Problem," offers insight into an issue with which many students are likely to be unfamiliar. This chapter's You Can Make a Difference feature offers guidance for feeding the hungry in our communities.

Chapter 8 addresses the issue of global stratification and examines differences in wealth and poverty in rich and poor nations around the world. Explanations for these differences are discussed. The chapter opens with Paul Tergat, a world-record holder in the marathon and winner of two silver Olympic medals, describing his early childhood in Kenya, which was marked by poverty and hunger, and the difference that meals at school made, introducing the theme of the relationship between global stratification and life chances. This chapter includes a new map (Map 8.2, "Proportion of World's Population Living in Poverty [by Region]"), while its You Can Make a Difference box offers a guide for global networking to reduce world hunger and poverty.

Chapter 9 covers race and ethnicity and includes an illustration of the historical relationship (or lack of it) between sports and upward mobility by persons from diverse racial–ethnic groups. A thorough analysis of prejudice, discrimination, theoretical perspectives, and the experiences of diverse racial and ethnic groups is presented, along with global racial and ethnic issues. New lived experiences open the chapter to address racism in the United States following the election of President Barack Obama. The chapter also includes a new Sociology in Global Perspective box ("Racism and Antiracism in European Football") and a new map (Map 9.1, "U.S. Racial and Ethnic Distribution"). The chapter's You Can Make a Difference features provides a guide to working for racial harmony.

Chapter 10 examines sex and gender, with an emphasis on gender stratification in historical perspective. Linkages between gender socialization and contemporary gender inequality are explored, introduced by personal accounts of the Miss America Pageant and body image. New to this edition is an expanded discussion of sexual orientation that addresses problems experienced by gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons, as well as a map (Map 10.1, "Women's Earnings as a Percentage of Men's Earnings by State and Puerto Rico, 2008").

Part 4 offers a systematic discussion of social institutions, building students' awareness of the importance of these foundational elements of society and showing how a problem in one often has a significant influence on others. Families and intimate relationships are explored in **Chapter 11,** which includes both U.S. and global perspectives on family relationships, a view of families throughout

the life course, and a discussion of diversity in contemporary U.S. families. The theme of families weathering tough times is introduced in the chapter's new opening lived experiences, which focus on the ways in which economic hardships, such as loss of jobs, affect families. An entirely new Sociology and Everyday Life quiz ("How Much Do You Know About Contemporary Trends in U.S. Family Life?") brings students deeper into the theme, and a new figure (Figure 11.1, "Living Arrangements of Children Under 18 Years Old for Selected Years: 1970–2008") and map (Map 11.1, "Percentage of Single-Parent Households with Children Under 18 by State, 2007") further illustrate trends associated with this theme. The chapter's You Can Make a Difference box addresses the issue of providing hope and help for children.

Education and religion are presented in **Chapter 12,** which highlights important sociological theories pertaining to these pivotal social institutions and integrates the theme of the influence of religion on education and life. Personal experience involving the debate over teaching "intelligent design" in public schools opens the chapter, and the discussion of the hidden curriculum and class, gender, and racial/ethnic inequalities has been thoroughly revised. The chapter also includes a new figure (Figure 12.3, "Percentage Distribution of Total Public Elementary–Secondary School System Revenue 2005–2006") and a new map (Map 12.1, "Per Capita Public Elementary and Secondary Spending by State"). An updated Sociology Works! feature has been updated to include the latest bullying and suicide news and statistics. The chapter's You Can Make a Difference box guides students to help them understand and tolerate religious and cultural differences.

Chapter 13 discusses politics and the economy in global perspective, highlighting the global context in which contemporary political and economic systems operate and showing the intertwining nature of politics, the economy, and global media outlets. The chapter opens with personal accounts related to the phenomenal success of parody news shows, particularly Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show,* and the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz ("How Much Do You Know About the Media?") has been updated. Additional changes include a new media framing box ("Hero Framing and the Selling of an Agenda"); a new section on the Tea Party; two new figures (Figure 13.3, "The 'Typical' Federal Civilian Employee," and Figure 13.5, "The General Motors Board of Directors"); an updated figure (Figure 13.6, "SAT Scores by Parents' Income and Education, 2008"); and three new maps: Map 13.1, "2008 Presidential Election: State by State," and maps 13.2a and 13.2b, which illustrate U.S. unemployment before and after the recession of 2008.

Chapter 14 analyzes health, health care, and disability from both the U.S. perspective and the global perspective. Among the topics included are social epidemiology, lifestyle factors influencing health and illness, health care organization in the United States and other nations, social implications of advanced medical technology, and holistic and alternative medicine. This chapter is unique in that it contains a thorough discussion of sociological perspectives on disability and of social inequalities based on disability. Dr. Atul Gawande's comments about the power and the limits of medicine open the chapter, which includes two new sections, one on the 2010 Health Care Reform Law and one on mental illness. This chapter also includes a new map (Map 14.1, "HIV Infections Worldwide"), and the You Can Make a Difference guide to joining the fight against illness has been updated.

Part 5 surveys social dynamics and social change. **Chapter 15** examines population and urbanization, looking at demography, global population change, and the process and consequences of urbanization. Special attention is given to race- and class-based segregation in urban areas and the crisis in health care in central cities. In this edition, more first-person accounts of undocumented workers and other immigrants open the chapter and reveal a wider variety of immigrant experiences, including some that address the reasons that "illegal immigrants" choose to enter this country and why many of them think laws should be changed to allow them to stay. Immigration examples are integrated throughout the chapter, and a new section on gated communities in a capitalist economy has been added. Other changes include an updated and renamed figure (Figure 15.6, "The World's 12 Largest Agglomerations") and a new map (Map 15.1, "Percentage of Total Population Living in Urban Areas"). This chapter's You Can Make a Difference guide focuses on ways that college students can establish links with immigrant children.

Chapter 16 concludes the text with an innovative analysis of collective behavior, social movements, and social change. In the opening personal narrative, students hear the voices of Rodney Crowell and Jim Lovell as they explain their concerns about global warming. As in all of the preceding chapters, the chapter theme (here environmental activism) is returned to throughout the chapter to help students grasp the importance of collective behavior and social movements in producing social change. New coverage includes a section on political opportunity theory and significant revisions that include new examples of aggregates, such as crowds in airports waiting for Icelandic volcano ash to ease, and rumors, such as the ones on Twitter about airlines flying doctors and nurses free to Haiti and express

services shipping boxes there for free following the 2010 earthquake. The chapter's You Can Make a Difference box is new and focuses on college students taking the lead in the "go-green" movement.

Distinctive, Classroom-Tested Features

The following special features are specifically designed to demonstrate the relevance of sociology in our lives, as well as to support students' learning. As the preceding overview of the book's contents shows, these features appear throughout the text—some in every chapter, others in selected chapters.

The text's **Sociology Works!** feature shows how sociological theories and research continue to enhance our understanding of contemporary social issues and our interactions in everyday life. Sociology Works! discussions include the following: "Goffman's Stigmatization Theory and Contemporary Homelessness" (Chapter 4), "Why *Place* Matters in Global Poverty" (Chapter 8), and "Sociology Sheds Light on the Physician–Patient Relationship" (Chapter 14).

To visually capture some of the significant circumstances and issues of our time, this edition includes four **photo essays:** "Trying to Go It Alone: Runaway Adolescents and Teens" (Chapter 4), "What Keeps the American Dream Alive?" (Chapter 7), "How Do We 'Do Gender' in the Twenty-First Century?" (Chapter 10), and "Immigration and the Changing Face(s) of the United States" (Chapter 15). Each essay combines three pages of thought- and conversation-stimulating photos with brief sociological commentary and concludes with a companion online **video** with assignable **Turning to Video** questions to further bring the essay's topics to life.

The text's highly praised **Concept Quick Reviews** again appear in every chapter. In table format, these reading and study aids provide concise overviews of key theories and concepts, including "Social Interaction: The Microlevel Perspective" (Chapter 4), "Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance" (Chapter 6), and "Sociological Perspectives on Health and Medicine" (Chapter 14).

Designed to stimulate both students' critical-thinking ability and sociological imagination, **Reflect & Analyze** questions are provided at the end of the Sociology Works! feature and photo essays, as well as at the end of the text's Media Framing and Global Perspectives boxes.

Readers will also notice **unparalleled coverage of and attention to diversity,** as it is integrated in numerous ways throughout the book. The individuals portrayed and discussed in each chapter accurately mirror the diversity in society itself. As a

result, this text speaks to a wide variety of students and captures their interest by taking into account their concerns and perspectives. Moreover, the research used includes the best work of classical and established contemporary sociologists—including many white women and people of color—and it weaves an inclusive treatment of *all* people into the examination of sociology in *all* chapters. Therefore, this text helps students consider the significance of the interlocking nature of individuals' class, race, and gender (and, increasingly, age) in all aspects of social life.

Authentic first-person narratives open each chapter to personalize the issue that unifies the chapter's coverage. These lived experiences provide opportunities for students to examine social life beyond their own experiences and for instructors to systematically incorporate into lectures and discussions an array of interesting and relevant topics that help demonstrate to students the value of applying sociology to their everyday lives. Further, each set of narratives introduces its chapter's theme, which is then, as a familiar and reliable touchstone, returned to throughout the chapter.

Highlighting the relationship between sociology and everyday life, each chapter, early on, has a brief **Sociology and Everyday Life** quiz that relates the sociological perspective to the important social issues presented in the opening lived experiences. (Answers are provided on a subsequent page.)

The **global implications of all topics** are examined throughout each chapter and in the **Sociology in Global Perspective** boxes, which highlight our interconnected world and reveal how the sociological imagination extends beyond national borders.

A significant benefit of a sociology course is encouraging critical thinking about such things as how the manner in which the media "package" news and entertainment influences our perception of social issues, and this text's **Media Framing** boxes provide a solid introduction to the concept itself and several compelling examples.

Designed to help get students involved in their communities and contribute in positive ways, the **You Can Make a Difference** boxes look at ways in which students can address, on a personal level, issues raised by the chapter theme.

Census Profiles highlight current relevant data from the U.S. Census Bureau, providing students with further insight into the United States.

In addition to basic reading and study aids such as chapter outlines, key terms, and running glossaries, as well as quality online resources, *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials,* Eighth Edition, includes the following **study aids** to promote students' mastery of the course's content:

- **Concept Quick Review.** These tables categorize and contrast the major theories or perspectives on the specific topics presented in a chapter.
- **Questions for Critical Thinking.** Each chapter concludes with questions for critical thinking to encourage students to reflect on important issues, to develop their own critical-thinking skills, and to highlight how ideas presented in one chapter often build on those developed previously.
- **End-of-Chapter Summaries in Question-and-Answer Format.** Chapter summaries provide a built-in review for students by reexamining material covered in the chapter in an easy-to-read question-and-answer format to review, highlight, and reinforce the most important concepts and issues discussed in each chapter.
- **End-of-Chapter Turning to Video** activities comprising online video and assignable questions provide a dynamic, multimedia study option that effectively reinforces chapter concepts in a review context.
- **Quick-Start Guide to Using Your Sociological Imagination.** Located at the front of the book, this feature orients students and poses quick-start questions for each chapter so that students are already thinking sociologically even before they begin reading a chapter. It has proven to be an appreciated feature.

Comprehensive Supplements Package

A wide array of supplements developed to create the best teaching and learning experience inside as well as outside the classroom accompanies *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials,* Eighth Edition. All of the continuing supplements have been thoroughly revised and updated, and some new supplements have been added. Cengage Learning prepared the following descriptions, and I invite you to start taking full advantage of the teaching and learning tools available to you by reading this overview.

Supplements for Instructors

Annotated Instructor's Edition.   The thoroughly revised Annotated Instructor's Edition (AIE) of the text offers page-by-page annotations to assist instructors before, during, and after class. The AIE's annotations are gathered under several distinctive headings, including Active Learning, Extra Examples, Global Perspective, Popular Culture, Sociological Imagination, and Applied Sociology. Additionally, annotations flag coverage that fulfills the American Sociological Association (ASA) Task Force's recommendations for teaching sociology.

Instructor's Resource Manual.   Written by D. R. Wilson, Ph.D., of Houston Baptist University, this fundamental teaching tool is designed to streamline and maximize the effectiveness of your course preparation by using such resources as brief chapter outlines, chapter summaries, extensively detailed chapter lecture outlines, lecture suggestions, video suggestions, and creative lecture and teaching suggestions. This manual also contains student learning objectives, key terms, essay/discussion questions, student activities, InfoTrac® College Edition exercises, discussion exercises, Internet exercises, applied ASA recommendations, group activities, and experimental learning activities based on the ASA Task Force recommendations. Student activities and discussion questions have been added for the videos presented at the end of each chapter to further support the assignability of this additional Turning to Video feature.

Test Bank.   Simplify testing and assessment by using this printed selection of 100 multiple-choice questions, 30 true/false questions, 15 short-answer questions, and 10 essay questions for each chapter of the text, all with answer explanations and page references that correspond to the text. The eighth edition's test bank was written by Gerald Titchener of Des Moines Area Community College.

PowerLecture with JoinIn™ and Exam-View®.   On disc, this one-stop class-preparation tool contains ready-to-use Microsoft® PowerPoint® slides, enabling you to assemble, edit, publish, and present custom lectures with ease. PowerLecture helps you bring together text-specific lecture outlines and art from the text along with videos and your own materials—culminating in powerful, personalized, media-enhanced presentations. The JoinIn™ content (for use with most "clicker" systems) available within PowerLecture delivers instant classroom assessment and active learning. Take polls and attendance, quiz students, and invite them to actively participate while they learn. Featuring automatic grading, ExamView® is also available within PowerLecture, allowing you to create, deliver, and customize tests and study guides (both print and online) in minutes. See assessments onscreen exactly as they will print or display online. Build tests of up to 250 questions using up to 12 question types, and enter an unlimited number of new questions or edit existing questions. PowerLecture also includes the text's *Instructor's Resource Manual* and *Test Bank* as Word documents.

Sociology CourseMate.   This website for *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials,* Eighth Edition, brings chapter topics to life with interactive learning, study, and exam preparation tools, including quizzes

and flash cards for each chapter's key terms and concepts. The site also provides an **eBook** version of the text with highlighting and note-taking capabilities. For instructors, this text's CourseMate also includes **Engagement Tracker,** a first-of-its-kind tool that monitors student engagement in the course. Go to **login.cengage.com** to access these resources.

WebTutor™ on Blackboard® and WebCT®.

Jump-start your course with customizable, rich, text-specific content within your course management system. Simply load a content cartridge into your course management system to easily blend, add, edit, reorganize, or delete content, all of which is specific to Kendall's *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials,* Eighth Edition, and includes media resources, quizzing, Internet links, discussion topics, and interactive games and exercises.

Classroom Activities for Introductory Sociology Courses.

Made up of contributions from instructors teaching introductory sociology around the country, this booklet features classroom activities, student projects, and lecture ideas to help instructors make topics fun and interesting for students. With general teaching tactics as well as topic-focused activities, it's never been easier to find a way to integrate new ideas into your classroom.

Tips for Teaching Sociology, Third Edition.

Written by veteran instructor Jerry M. Lewis of Kent State University, this booklet contains tips on course goals and syllabi, lecture preparation, exams, class exercises, research projects, course evaluations, and more. It is an invaluable tool for first-time instructors of the introductory course and for veteran instructors in search of new ideas.

Videos.

Adopters of *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials,* Eighth Edition, have numerous video options available for use with the text:

- **The Wadsworth Sociology Video Library Volume 1** (featuring BBC Motion Gallery video clips) drives home the relevance of course topics through short, provocative clips of current and historical events. Perfect for enriching lectures and engaging students in discussion, many of the segments on this volume have been gathered from the BBC Motion Gallery. Ask your Cengage Learning representative for a list of contents.
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- **Sociology: Core Concepts Video.** Another exclusive offering jointly created by Wadsworth/Cengage Learning and DALLAS TeleLearning, this video contains 15- to 20-minute video segments that will enhance student learning of the essential concepts in the introductory course and can be used to initiate class lectures, discussion, and review. The video covers topics such as the sociological imagination, stratification, race and ethnic relations, and social change. Available on DVD or VHS.
- **ABC® videos.** Launch your lectures with exciting video clips from the award-winning news coverage of ABC. Addressing topics covered in a typical course, these videos are divided into short segments—perfect for introducing key concepts in contexts relevant to students' lives.
- **AIDS in Africa DVD.** Expand your students' global perspective of HIV/AIDS with this award-winning documentary series, which focuses on controlling HIV/AIDS in southern Africa. Films focus on caregivers in the faith community; how young people share messages of hope through song and dance; the relationship of HIV/AIDS to gender, poverty, stigma, education, and justice; and the story of two HIV-positive women helping others.

Readers.

To help you add depth or further broaden the scope of your course, Wadsworth/Cengage Learning offers readers for your consideration. These readers are available at a discount when packaged with *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials:*

- *CourseReader: Sociology* is a new, fully customizable online reader that provides access to hundreds of readings as well as audio and video selections from multiple disciplines. This easy-to-use supplementary content solution allows you to select exactly the content you need for your courses and is loaded with convenient pedagogical features such as highlighting, printing, note taking, and audio downloads. *CourseReader: Sociology* is the perfect complement to any class, giving you the freedom to assign individualized content at an affordable price.
- *Sociological Odyssey: Contemporary Readings in Introductory Sociology,* **Third Edition,** by Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler

- *Globalization: The Transformation of Social Worlds,* by D. Stanley Eitzen and Maxine Baca Zinn
- *Classic Readings in Sociology,* **Fourth Edition,** by Eve L. Howard
- *Understanding Society: An Introductory Reader,* **Second Edition,** by Margaret L. Andersen, Kim A. Logio, and Howard F. Taylor
- *Sociological Footprints: Introductory Readings in Sociology,* **Eleventh Edition,** by Leonard Cargan and Jeanne H. Ballantine
- **Extension: Wadsworth's Sociology Reader Collection.** Create your own customized reader for your sociology class, drawing from dozens of classic and contemporary articles found on the exclusive Wadsworth Cengage Learning TextChoice database. Using the TextChoice website (**www .textchoice.com**), you can preview articles, select your content, and add your own original material. TextChoice will then produce your materials as a printed supplementary reader for your class.

Supplements for Students

Sociology CourseMate.   This website for *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials,* Eighth Edition, brings chapter topics to life with interactive learning, study, and exam preparation tools, including quizzes and flash cards for each chapter's key terms and concepts. The site also provides an **eBook** version of the text with highlighting and note-taking capabilities. Students can access this new learning tool and all other online resources through **cengagebrain.com**.

eCompanion.   For many students, using eBooks has been a hurdle because their format is not always portable and accessible in class. Addressing this challenge, the eCompanion is a portable tool under 200 pages designed to complement the comprehensive digital text. It includes review questions, chapter outlines with space for note taking, and removable study cards to help with learning and test preparation. Together, this print and digital combination offers the complete textbook in digital format with core study resources in print, thereby providing the functionality of digital and the convenience and familiarity of print, enabling today's students to learn the course's key concepts in the most flexible way possible. Allison Gustafson of Ventura College prepared the original content of the eCompanion for *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials,* Eighth Edition.

Study Guide with Practice Tests.   This student study tool, by Kathryn Sinast Mueller of Baylor University, contains brief chapter outlines, chapter summaries, student learning objectives, a list of key terms and key people with page references to the text, detailed chapter outlines, "Analyzing and Understanding the Boxes," study activities, learning objectives, practice tests consisting of 25–30 multiple-choice questions and 10–15 true–false questions, InfoTrac College Edition readings and exercises, and Internet exercises. All multiple-choice and true–false questions include answer explanations and page references to the text.

Introduction to Sociology Group Activities Workbook.   This supplement, by Lori Ann Fowler of Tarrant County College, contains both in- and out-of-class group activities (using resources such as MicroCase® Online Data exercises from Wadsworth's Online Sociology Resource Center) that you can tear out and turn in to the instructor once they are completed. Also included are ideas for video clips to anchor group discussions, maps, case studies, group quizzes, ethical debates, group questions, group project topics, and ideas for outside readings on which you can base group discussions. Both a workbook for students and a repository of ideas, this is a valuable resource for students and instructors alike!

Student Telecourse Guide.   This telecourse guide for Kendall's *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials,* Eighth Edition, is designed to accompany the *Exploring Society: Introduction to Sociology* telecourse produced by DALLAS TeleLearning of the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD). The Telecourse Guide provides the essential integration of videos and text, giving you valuable resources designed to direct your daily study in the *Exploring Society* telecourse. Each chapter of the Telecourse Guide contains a lesson that corresponds to each of the 22 video segments in the telecourse. Every lesson includes the following components: Overview, Lesson Assignment, Lesson Goal, Lesson Learning Objectives, Review, Lesson Focus Points, Related Activities, Practice Tests, and Answer Key. These resources are available to qualified adopters, and ordering options for student supplements are flexible. Please visit us at **www.cengage.com** for more information, including ISBNs; to receive examination copies of any of these instructor or student resources; or for product demonstrations. All text purchase and rental options as well as supplemental materials are available to students through **www.cengagebrain.com**.

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I invite you to send your comments and suggestions about this book to me in care of:

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SOCIOLOGY
in Our Times
the essentials

The Sociological Perspective and Research Process

His name was Josh Evans. He was 16 years old. And he was hot.

"Mom! Mom! Mom! Look at him!" Tina Meier recalls her daughter saying.

Josh had contacted Megan Meier through her MySpace page and wanted to be added as a friend.

"Yes, he's cute," Tina Meier told her daughter. "Do you know who he is?"

"No, but look at him! He's hot! Please, please, can I add him?"

Mom said yes. And for six weeks Megan and Josh—under Tina's watchful eye—became acquainted in the virtual world of MySpace.

Josh said he was born in Florida and recently had moved to O'Fallon [Missouri]. He was homeschooled. He played the guitar and drums. . . .

As for 13-year-old Megan . . . [she] loved swimming, boating, fishing, dogs, rap music and boys.

But her life had not always been easy, her mother says. She was heavy and for years had tried to lose weight. She had attention deficit disorder and battled depression. . . . But things were going exceptionally well. She had shed 20 pounds, getting down to 175. She was 5 foot 5½ inches tall. . . .

Part of the reason for Megan's rosy outlook was Josh, Tina says. After school Megan would

© AP Images/Tom Gannam

▲ Tina Meier, the mother of Megan Meier, displays photographs of her daughter, who committed suicide at the age of thirteen after reacting to fake MySpace postings by the mother of one of her former friends. Studying sociology provides us with new insights on problems such as suicide by making us aware that much more goes on in social life than we initially observe.

rush to the computer. . . . It did seem odd, Tina says, that Josh never asked for Megan's phone number. And when Megan asked for his, she says, Josh said he didn't have a cell and his mother did not yet have a landline.

And then on Sunday, Oct. 15, 2006, Megan received a puzzling and disturbing message from Josh. Tina recalls that it said, "I don't know if I want to be friends with you anymore because I've heard that you are not very nice to your friends."

Frantic, Megan shot back: "What are you talking about?" (Pokin, 2007)

This and other hostile instant message exchanges set into motion the final, disturbing episode in the life of Megan Meier, as she was suddenly confronted with not only the anger and cynicism of a young man she thought she knew and trusted but also the bullying of other young people gathered on the social networking site MySpace who also sent a barrage of hate-filled messages that called Megan a liar and much worse.

"Mom, they're being Horrible!" Megan said, sobbing into the phone when her mother called. After an hour, Megan ran into her bedroom and hanged herself with a belt.

"She felt there was no way out," Ms. Meier said. (Maag, 2007)

—the parents of Megan Meier recalling the events leading up to her suicide at only thirteen years of age

Chapter Focus Question

How do sociological theory and research add to our knowledge of human societies and social issues such as suicide?

Clearly, the suicide of Megan deeply touched her parents and friends while raising many issues about the problem of cyber-bullying. In the aftermath of Megan's tragic death, her parents tried to send an instant message to Josh Evans to inform him about the destructive nature of his actions, only to learn that his MySpace account had been deleted. Six weeks after Megan's death, her parents learned that Josh Evans never existed: His fake persona allegedly had been created by a mother whose daughter was once Megan's friend. According to some media reports, this parent created a fake MySpace account for "Josh Evans" so that she could find out what Megan would say about her daughter and other people. Subsequently, other members gathered on MySpace and—not knowing that Josh Evans did not exist—jumped into the fray and began hurling accusations at Megan and bullying her. A local ordinance in Megan's hometown now prohibits any harassment that uses the Internet, text messaging services, or any other electronic medium.

Although we will never know the full story of Megan's life, this tragic occurrence brings us to a larger sociological question: Why does anyone commit suicide? Is suicide purely an individual phenomenon, or is it related to our social interactions and the social environment and society in which we live?

In this chapter, we examine how sociological theories and research can help us understand the seemingly individualistic act of taking one's own life. We will see how sociological theory and research methods might be used to answer complex questions, and we will wrestle with some of the difficulties that sociologists experience as they study human behavior.

Putting Social Life into Perspective

Sociology is the systematic study of human society and social interaction. It is a *systematic* study because sociologists apply both theoretical perspectives and research methods (or orderly approaches) to examinations of social behavior. Sociologists study human societies and their social interactions in order to develop theories of how human behavior is shaped by group life and how, in turn, group life is affected by individuals.

Why Study Sociology?

Sociology helps us gain a better understanding of ourselves and our social world. It enables us to see how behavior is largely shaped by the groups to which we belong and the society in which we live. A *society* is a large social grouping that shares the same geographical territory and is subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations, such as the United States, Mexico, or Nigeria. Examining the world order helps us understand that each of us is affected by *global interdependence*—a relationship in which the lives of all people are intertwined closely and any one nation's problems are part of a larger global problem. Environmental problems are an example: People throughout the world share the same biosphere—the zone of the Earth's surface and atmosphere that sustains life. When environmental degradation, such as removing natural resources or polluting the air and water, takes place in one region, it may have an adverse effect on people around the globe.

Individuals can make use of sociology on a more personal level. Sociology enables us to move beyond established ways of thinking, thus allowing us to gain new insights into ourselves and to develop a greater awareness of the connection between our own "world" and that of other people. According to the sociologist Peter Berger (1963: 23), sociological inquiry helps us see that "things are not what they seem." Sociology provides new ways of approaching problems and making decisions in everyday life. For this reason, people with a knowledge of sociology are employed in a variety of fields that apply sociological insights to everyday life (see ▶ Figure 1.1).

Sociology promotes understanding and tolerance by enabling each of us to look beyond intuition, common sense, and our personal experiences. Many of us rely on intuition or common sense gained from personal experience to help us understand our daily lives and other people's behavior. *Commonsense knowledge* guides ordinary conduct in everyday life. However, many commonsense notions are actually myths. A *myth* is a popular but false notion that may be used, either intentionally or unintentionally, to perpetuate certain beliefs or "theories" even in the light of conclusive evidence to the contrary. Before reading on, take the quiz in the Sociology and Everyday Life box on page 6.

- **IRM:** Check for class discussion ideas on the topic of Megan Meier's death and Durkheim's theory of suicide.
- **Popular Culture:** Ask students to talk about their own experiences with Facebook and MySpace and to create lists of positive and negative functions of these social networking sites.
- **Popular Culture:** What do you think these popular reality TV shows tell us about U.S. society: *The Jersey Shore, Keeping up with the Kardashians, Extreme Makeover, The Bachelorette,* and *The Real Housewives of Orange County*?

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #9 Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-National Content
- **Recent Events:** Have students analyze President Obama's 2009 comments to the U.N. General Assembly on a new era of global interdependence: "In an era when our destiny is shared, power is no longer a zero-sum game. No one nation can or should try to dominate another nation. No world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will succeed. No balance of power among nations will hold" (**whitehouse.gov**).

Health and Human Services	Business	Communication	Academia	Law
Counseling Education Medicine Nursing Social Work	Advertising Labor Relations Management Marketing	Broadcasting Public Relations Journalism	Anthropology Economics Geography History Information Studies Media Studies/ Communication Political Science Psychology Sociology	Law Criminal Justice

▲ **FIGURE 1.1 FIELDS THAT USE SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

In many careers, including jobs in academia, business, communication, health and human services, and law, the ability to analyze social science research is an important asset.

Source: Based on Katzer, Cook, and Crouch, 1991.

By contrast, sociologists strive to use scientific standards, not popular myths or hearsay, in studying society and social interaction. They use systematic research techniques and are accountable to the scientific community for their methods and the presentation of their findings. Whereas some sociologists argue that sociology must be completely value free—free from distorting subjective (personal or emotional) bias—others do not think that total objectivity is an attainable or desirable goal when studying human behavior. However, all sociologists attempt to discover patterns or commonalities in human behavior. When they study suicide, for example, they look for recurring patterns of behavior even though *individual* people usually commit the acts and *other individuals* suffer as a result of these actions.

Consequently, sociologists seek out the multiple causes and effects of suicide or other social issues. They analyze the impact of the problem not only from the standpoint of the people directly involved but also from the standpoint of the effects of such behavior on all people.

The Sociological Imagination

Sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959b) described sociological reasoning as the *sociological imagination—the ability to see the relationship between individual experiences and the larger society.* This awareness enables us to understand the link between our personal experiences and the social contexts in which they occur. The sociological imagination helps us distinguish between personal troubles and social (or public) issues. *Personal troubles* are private problems that affect individuals and the networks of people with whom they associate regularly. As a result, those problems must be solved by individuals within their immediate social settings. For example, one person being unemployed may be a personal trouble. *Public issues* are problems that affect large numbers of people and often require solutions at the societal level. Widespread unemployment as a result of economic changes such as plant closings is an example of a public issue. The sociological imagination helps us place seemingly personal troubles, such as losing one's job or feeling like committing suicide, into a larger social context, where we can distinguish whether and how personal troubles may be related to public issues.

Suicide as a Personal Trouble Many of our individual experiences may be largely beyond our own control. They are determined by society as a

> **sociology** the systematic study of human society and social interaction.
>
> **society** a large social grouping that shares the same geographical territory and is subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations.
>
> **sociological imagination** C. Wright Mills's term for the ability to see the relationship between individual experiences and the larger society.

- **Active Learning:** Positivism is a school of thought that emphasizes direct experience and an optimistic view of scientific knowledge. Ask students to write for ten minutes in class about their opinions of scientific progress and to share their thoughts aloud in a class discussion about the challenges of studying society scientifically.
- **Extra Examples:** Sociologist Peter Berger uses the phrase "debunking motif" in relation to what sociology does. Provide your class with some examples from advertising, warfare, or social conventions.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Pop Culture:** Recent films with a suicide theme include *Little Miss Sunshine, The Hours, Wristcutters: A Love Story, Million Dollar Baby, The Happening, Suicide Club, The Bridge,* and *Last Days.*
- **Pop Culture:** *The Sorrows of Young Werther* was published in 1774 by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. It led to some of the first cases of copycat suicides, by people who read about the suicide of Werther in the novel. Talk with your class about the media and its influence on our actions—even on suicide (suicide contagion).

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Suicide?

True	False	
T	F	1. For people thinking of suicide, it is difficult, if not impossible, to see the bright side of life.
T	F	2. People who talk about suicide don't do it.
T	F	3. Suicide rates in the United States are highest for Asian/Pacific Islanders because of pressure to achieve.
T	F	4. Rates of suicide are highest in the intermountain states located in the western and northwestern regions of the United States.
T	F	5. Females complete suicide (take their own life) at a much higher rate than that of males.
T	F	6. Over half of all suicides occur in adult women between the ages of 25 and 65.
T	F	7. Older women have lower rates of both attempted and completed suicide than older men.
T	F	8. Children don't know enough to be able to intentionally kill themselves.
T	F	9. Suicide rates for African Americans are higher than for white Americans.
T	F	10. More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease combined.

Answers on page 8.

whole—by its historical development and its organization. In everyday life, we do not define personal experiences in these terms. If a person commits suicide, many people consider it to be the result of his or her own personal problems.

Suicide as a Public Issue   We can also use the sociological imagination to look at the problem of suicide as a public issue—a societal problem. Early sociologist Emile Durkheim refused to accept commonsense explanations of suicide. In what is probably the first sociological study to use scientific research methods, he related suicide to the issue of cohesiveness (or lack of cohesiveness) in society instead of viewing suicide as an isolated act that could be understood only by studying individual personalities or inherited tendencies. In *Suicide* (1964b/1897), Durkheim documented his contention that a high suicide rate was symptomatic of large-scale societal problems.

The Importance of a Global Sociological Imagination

Although existing sociological theory and research provide the foundation for sociological thinking, we must reach beyond past studies that have focused primarily on the United States to develop a more comprehensive *global* approach for the future (see ▶ Map 1.1). In the twenty-first century, we face important challenges in a rapidly changing nation and world. The world's **high-income countries are nations with highly industrialized economies; technologically advanced industrial, administrative, and service occupations; and relatively high levels of national and personal income.** Some examples are the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and the countries of Western Europe.

As compared with other nations of the world, many high-income nations have a high standard of living and a lower death rate due to advances in nutrition and medical technology. However, everyone living in a so-called high-income country does not necessarily have a high income or an outstanding quality of life. In contrast, **middle-income countries are nations with industrializing economies, particularly in urban areas, and moderate levels of national and personal income.** Some examples of middle-income countries are the nations of Eastern Europe and many Latin American countries, where nations such as Brazil and Mexico are industrializing rapidly.

- **Active Learning:** Provide students with a list of concerns such as paying tuition, stress disorders, and substance abuse. Ask students to talk about how these can be seen as both personal troubles and public issues.
- **IRM:** You'll find material that explores the contrasts between high- and low-income cultures to help students recognize concrete differences in the ways that various cultures define reality.
- **For Discussion:** The United States has a very religious culture compared to most other high-income cultures.

How are U.S. religious values influenced by our high-income culture?
- **Research:** The rapid gains in the market share of developing countries means that these low-income countries have become a driving force underlying the global trade cycle, reducing (but certainly not eliminating) the influence of high-income countries (World Bank).
- **Extra Examples:** Other middle-income countries include the Philippines, Iran, Turkey, and Russia.

New York, United States   Poland, Europe   West Bengal, India
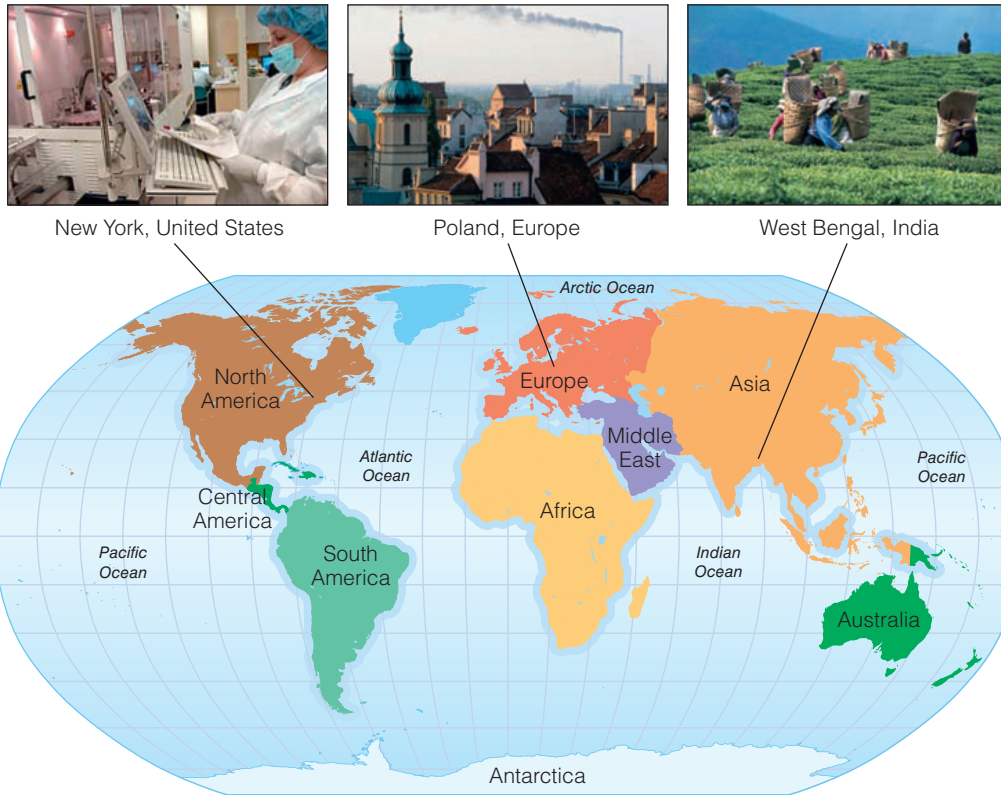
▲ MAP 1.1 THE WORLD'S ECONOMIES IN THE EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
High-income, middle-income, and low-income countries.

***Low-income countries* are primarily agrarian nations with little industrialization and low levels of national and personal income.** Examples of low-income countries are many of the nations of Africa and Asia, particularly India and the People's Republic of China, where people typically work the land and are among the poorest in the world. However, generalizations are difficult to make because there are wide differences in income and standards of living within many nations (see Chapter 8, "Global Stratification"). Throughout this text, we will continue to develop our sociological imaginations by examining social life in the United States and other nations.

Developing a better understanding of diversity and tolerance for people who are different from us is important for our personal, social, and economic well-being. Whatever your race/ethnicity, class, sex, or age, are you able to include in your thinking the perspectives of people who are quite dissimilar in experiences and points of view? Before answering

this question, a few definitions are in order. *Race* is a term used by many people to specify groups of people distinguished by physical characteristics such as skin color; in fact, there are no "pure" racial types, and the concept of race is considered by most

high-income countries (sometimes referred to as **industrial countries**) nations with highly industrialized economies; technologically advanced industrial, administrative, and service occupations; and relatively high levels of national and personal income.

middle-income countries (sometimes referred to as **developing countries**) nations with industrializing economies, particularly in urban areas, and moderate levels of national and personal income.

low-income countries (sometimes referred to as **underdeveloped countries**) nations with little industrialization and low levels of national and personal income.

- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disc provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint slides, vedios. PowerPoint and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.
- **Extra Examples:** Suicide is the fourth-leading cause of death for adults between the ages of 18 and 65 years in the United States, with approximately 27,321 suicides annually. For all age groups, a

person dies by suicide about every 16 minutes in the United States. An attempt is estimated to be made once every minute (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention).

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Suicide

1. **True.** To people thinking of suicide, an acknowledgment that there is a bright side only confirms and conveys the message that they have failed; otherwise, they could see the bright side of life as well.

2. **False.** Some people who talk about suicide do kill themselves. Warning signals of possible suicide attempts include talk of suicide, the desire not to exist anymore, and despair.

3. **False.** Asian/Pacific Islanders had the lowest rates of suicide per 100,000 in the United States, whereas Native Americans (American Indian/Alaskan Natives) had the highest suicide rates.

4. **True.** Suicide rates are highest in the western and northwestern regions of the United States (see Map 1.2 on page 33). What sociological factors might help explain this trend?

5. **False.** Males *complete* suicide at a rate four times that of females. However, females *attempt* suicide three times more often than males.

6. **False.** Just the opposite is true: Over half of all suicides occur in adult men aged 25 to 65.

7. **True.** In the United States, as in other countries, suicide rates are the highest among men over age 70. One theory of why this is true asserts that older women may have a more flexible and diverse coping style than do older men.

8. **False.** Children do know how to intentionally hurt or kill themselves. They may learn the means and methods from television, movies, or other people. However, the National Center for Health Statistics (the agency responsible for compiling suicide statistics) does not recognize suicides under the age of 10; they are classified as accidents, despite evidence that young children have taken their own lives.

9. **False.** Suicide rates are much higher among white Americans than African Americans.

10. **True.** Suicide is a leading cause of death among teenagers and young adults. It is the third leading cause of death among young people between 15 and 24 years of age, following accidents (unintentional injuries) and homicide.

Sources: Based on American Association of Suicidology, 2009; and National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009b.

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sociologists to be a social construction that people use to justify existing social inequalities. *Ethnicity* refers to the cultural heritage or identity of a group and is based on factors such as language or country of origin. *Class* is the relative location of a person or group within the larger society, based on wealth, power, prestige, or other valued resources. *Sex* refers to the biological and anatomical differences between females and males. By contrast, *gender* refers to the meanings, beliefs, and practices associated with sex differences, referred to as *femininity* and *masculinity*.

The Development of Sociological Thinking

Throughout history, social philosophers and religious authorities have made countless observations about human behavior. However, the idea of observing how people lived, finding out what they thought, and doing so in a systematic manner that could be verified did not take hold until the nineteenth century and the social upheaval brought about by industrialization and urbanization.

Industrialization is the process by which societies are transformed from dependence on agriculture and handmade products to an emphasis on manufacturing and related industries. This process occurred first during the Industrial Revolution in Britain between 1760 and 1850, and was soon repeated throughout Western Europe. By the mid-nineteenth century, industrialization was well under way in the United States. Massive economic, technological, and social changes occurred as machine technology and the factory system shifted the economic base of these nations from agriculture to manufacturing. A new social class of

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- **Active Learning:** Have students work in small groups to compare their answers to the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz.

◀ As the Industrial Revolution swept through the United States beginning in the nineteenth century, sights like this became increasingly common. This early automobile assembly line is emblematic of the factory system that shifted the base of the U.S. economy from agriculture to manufacturing. What new technologies are transforming the U.S. economy in the twenty-first century?

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industrialists emerged in textiles, iron smelting, and related industries. Many people who had labored on the land were forced to leave their tightly knit rural communities and sacrifice well-defined social relationships to seek employment as factory workers in the emerging cities, which became the centers of industrial work.

Urbanization is the process by which an increasing proportion of a population lives in cities rather than in rural areas. Although cities existed long before the Industrial Revolution, the development of the factory system led to a rapid increase in both the number of cities and the size of their populations. People from very diverse backgrounds worked together in the same factory. At the same time, many people shifted from being *producers* to being *consumers*. For example, families living in the cities had to buy food with their wages because they could no longer grow their own crops to consume or to barter for other resources. Similarly, people had to pay rent for their lodging because they could no longer exchange their services for shelter.

These living and working conditions led to the development of new social problems: inadequate housing, crowding, unsanitary conditions, poverty, pollution, and crime. Wages were so low that entire families—including very young children—were forced to work, often under hazardous conditions and with no job security. As these conditions became more visible, a new breed of social thinkers turned its attention to trying to understand why and how society was changing.

Early Thinkers: A Concern with Social Order and Stability

At the same time that urban problems were growing worse, natural scientists had been using reason, or rational thinking, to discover the laws of physics and the movement of the planets. Social thinkers started to believe that by applying the methods developed by the natural sciences, they might discover the laws of human behavior and apply these laws to solve social problems.

industrialization the process by which societies are transformed from dependence on agriculture and handmade products to an emphasis on manufacturing and related industries.

urbanization the process by which an increasing proportion of a population lives in cities rather than in rural areas.

Auguste Comte (1798–1857) (oil on canvas), Etex, Louis Jules (1810–1889)/Temple de la Religion de l'Humanité, Paris, France/The Bridgeman Art Library International

▲ Auguste Comte

Auguste Comte The French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857) coined the term *sociology* from the Latin *socius* ("social, being with others") and the Greek *logos* ("study of") to describe a new science that would engage in the study of society. Even though he never actually conducted sociological research, Comte is considered by some to be the "founder of sociology." Comte's theory that societies contain *social statics* (forces for social order and stability) and *social dynamics* (forces for conflict and change) continues to be used, although not in these exact terms, in contemporary sociology.

Comte stressed that the methods of the natural sciences should be applied to the objective study of society. He sought to unlock the secrets of society so that intellectuals like him could become the new secular (as contrasted with religious) "high priests" of society (Nisbet, 1979). For Comte, the best policies involved order and authority. He envisioned that a new consensus would emerge on social issues and that the new science of sociology would play a significant part in the reorganization of society (Lenzer, 1998).

Comte's philosophy became known as *positivism*—a belief that the world can best be understood through scientific inquiry. He believed that positivism had two dimensions: (1) methodological—the application of scientific knowledge to both physical and social phenomena—and (2) social and political—the use of such knowledge to predict the likely results of different policies so that the best one could be chosen.

Social analysts have praised Comte for his advocacy of sociology and his insights regarding linkages between the social structural elements of society (such as family, religion, and government) and social thinking in specific historical periods. However, a number of contemporary sociologists argue that Comte contributed to an overemphasis on the "natural science model" and focused on the experiences of a privileged few, to the exclusion by class, gender, race, ethnicity, and age of all others.

Harriet Martineau Comte's works were made more accessible for a wide variety of scholars through the efforts of the British sociologist Harriet Martineau (1802–1876). Until recently, Martineau received no recognition in the field of sociology, partly because she was a woman in a male-dominated discipline and society. Not only did she translate and condense Comte's works, but she was also an active sociologist in her own right.

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▲ Harriet Martineau

- **IRM:** Student Activities: Introduce theoretical sociology by asking your students to come up with some of their own theories about "why things are the way they are" in society. Keep asking the question "why?" in response to their explanations. Doing so will help push students into more general and abstract thinking and lead them toward key theories discussed in this chapter.
- **Extra Examples:** The founders of the Brazilian republic included "Order and Progress" on their flag to reflect Comte's motto for

positivism: "Love as a principle and order as the basis; progress as the goal." Have students research Comte's global influence (**statemaster.com**).
- **Extra Examples:** The "Sociological Tour Through Cyberspace" website provides additional resources on Auguste Comte: **trinity .edu/mkearl.**
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss Comte's view that "Religion is an illusion of childhood, outgrown under proper education."

Martineau studied the social customs of Britain and the United States, analyzing the consequences of industrialization and capitalism. In *Society in America* (1962/1837), she examined religion, politics, child rearing, slavery, and immigration in the United States, paying special attention to social distinctions based on class, race, and gender. Her works explore the status of women, children, and "sufferers" (persons who are considered to be criminal, mentally ill, handicapped, poor, or alcoholic).

Martineau advocated racial and gender equality. She was also committed to creating a science of society that would be grounded in empirical observations and widely accessible to people. She argued that sociologists should be impartial in their assessment of society but that it is entirely appropriate to compare the existing state of society with the principles on which it was founded (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1998). Martineau believed that a better society would emerge if women and men were treated equally, enlightened reform occurred, and cooperation existed among people in all social classes (but led by the middle class).

Herbert Spencer Unlike Comte, who was strongly influenced by the upheavals of the French Revolution, the British social theorist Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) was born in a more peaceful and optimistic period in his country's history. Spencer's major contribution to sociology was an evolutionary perspective on social order and social change. Evolutionary theory is "a theory to explain the mechanisms of organic/social change" (Haines, 1997: 81). According to Spencer's Theory of General Evolution, society, like a biological organism, has various interdependent parts (such as the family, the economy, and the government) that work to ensure the stability and survival of the entire society.

Spencer believed that societies develop through a process of "struggle" (for existence) and "fitness" (for survival), which he referred to as the "survival of the fittest." Because this phrase is often attributed to Charles Darwin, Spencer's view of society is known as *social Darwinism*—**the belief that those species of animals, including human beings, best adapted to their environment survive and prosper, whereas those poorly adapted die out.** Spencer equated this process of *natural selection* with progress because only the "fittest" members of society would survive

▲ Herbert Spencer

the competition, and the "unfit" would be filtered out of society.

Critics believe that his ideas are flawed because societies are not the same as biological systems; people are able to create and transform the environment in which they live. Moreover, the notion of the survival of the fittest can easily be used to justify class, racial–ethnic, and gender inequalities and to rationalize the lack of action to eliminate harmful practices that contribute to such inequalities.

positivism a term describing Auguste Comte's belief that the world can best be understood through scientific inquiry.

social Darwinism Herbert Spencer's belief that those species of animals, including human beings, best adapted to their environment survive and prosper, whereas those poorly adapted die out.

▲ Emile Durkheim

the relationship between anomic social conditions and suicide, a concept that remains important in the twenty-first century (see "Sociology Works!").

Durkheim's contributions to sociology are so significant that he has been referred to as "*the* crucial figure in the development of sociology as an academic discipline [and as] one of the deepest roots of the sociological imagination" (Tiryakian, 1978: 187). He is described as the founding figure of the functionalist theoretical tradition.

Although they acknowledge Durkheim's important contributions, some critics note that his emphasis on societal stability, or the "problem of order"—how society can establish and maintain social stability and cohesiveness—obscured the *subjective meaning* that individuals give to social phenomena such as religion, work, and suicide. From this view, overemphasis on *structure* and the determining power of "society" resulted in a corresponding neglect of *agency* (the beliefs and actions of the actors involved) in much of Durkheim's theorizing (Zeitlin, 1997).

Emile Durkheim French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) stressed that people are the product of their social environment and that behavior cannot be understood fully in terms of *individual* biological and psychological traits. He believed that the limits of human potential are *socially* based, not *biologically* based.

In his work *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1964a/1895), Durkheim set forth one of his most important contributions to sociology: the idea that societies are built on social facts. **Social facts are patterned ways of acting, thinking, and feeling that exist *outside* any one individual but that exert social control over each person.** Durkheim believed that social facts must be explained by other social facts—by reference to the social structure rather than to individual attributes.

Durkheim observed that rapid social change and a more specialized division of labor produce *strains* in society. These strains lead to a breakdown in traditional organization, values, and authority and to a dramatic increase in *anomie—**a condition in which social control becomes ineffective as a result of the loss of shared values and of a sense of purpose in society.*** According to Durkheim, anomie is most likely to occur during a period of rapid social change. In *Suicide* (1964b/1897), he explored

Differing Views on the Status Quo: Stability Versus Change

Together with Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Georg Simmel, Durkheim established the course of modern sociology. We will look first at Marx's and Weber's divergent thoughts about conflict and social change in societies and then at Georg Simmel's microlevel analysis of society.

Karl Marx In sharp contrast to Durkheim's focus on the stability of society, German economist and philosopher Karl Marx (1818–1883) stressed that history is a continuous clash between conflicting ideas and forces. He believed that conflict—especially class conflict—is necessary in order to produce social change and a better society. For Marx, the most important changes are economic. He concluded that the capitalist economic system was responsible for the overwhelming poverty that he observed in London at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution (Marx and Engels, 1967/1848).

In the Marxian framework, *class conflict* is the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class. The capitalist class, or *bourgeoisie,* comprises those who own and control the means of production—the tools, land, factories, and money for investment

- **Historical Perspective:** Herbert Spencer believed that the "great aim of education is not knowledge but action." Ask students if they agree with this claim and to explain why or why not.
- **Sociological Imagination:** How do people experience *shared* values these days? Do online social networking sites promote or confuse shared values?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

- **Applied Sociology:** "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it" (Karl Marx). Students may be unfamiliar with Marx's influence on world history. Introduce socialism and communism, along with the pivotal role of Marxist thought in global history and culture.
- **Global Perspective:** Have students research and discuss the leftward movement of politics in Latin America and the continuing

sociology works!

Durkheim's Sociology of Suicide and Twenty-First-Century India

> The bond attaching [people] to life slackens because the bond which attaches [them] to society is itself slack.
> —Emile Durkheim, *Suicide* (1964b/1897)

Although this statement described social conditions accompanying the high rates of suicide found in late-nineteenth-century France, Durkheim's words ring true today as we look at contemporary suicide rates for cities such as Bangalore, which some refer to as "India's Suicide City" (Guha, 2004).

At first glance, we might think that the outsourcing of jobs in the technology sector—from high-income nations such as the United States to India—would provide happiness and job satisfaction for individuals in cities such as Bangalore and New Delhi who have gained new opportunities and higher salaries in recent years as a result of outsourcing. News stories have focused on the wealth of opportunities that these outsourced jobs have brought to millions of men and women in India, most of whom are in their twenties and thirties and who now earn larger incomes than do their parents and many of their contemporaries. However, the underlying story of what is really going on in these cities stands in stark contrast:

Rapid urbanization and fast-paced changes in the economy and society are weakening social ties that have been very important to individuals. Social bonds have been weakened or dissolved as people move away from their families and their community. Life in the cities moves at a much faster pace than in the rural areas, and many individuals experience loneliness, sleep disorders, family discord, and major health risks such as heart disease and depression (Mahapatra, 2007). In the words of Ramachandra Guha (2004), a historian residing in India, Durkheim's sociology of suicide remains highly relevant to finding new answers to this challenging problem: "The rash of suicides in city and village is a qualitatively new development in our history. We sense that tragedies are as much social as they are individual. But we know very little of what lies behind them. What we now await, in sum, is an Indian Durkheim."

reflect & analyze

How does sociology help us to examine seemingly private acts such as suicide within a larger social context? Why are some people more inclined to commit suicide if they are not part of a strong social fabric?
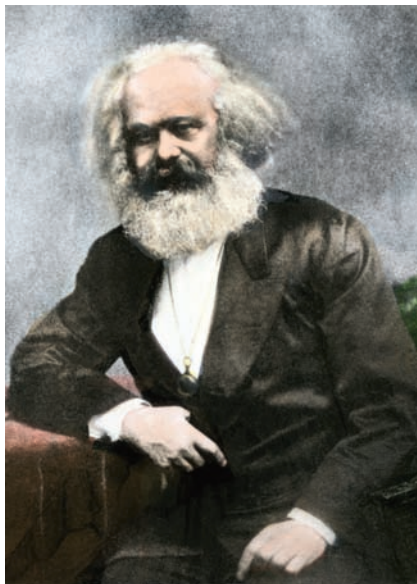
▲ Karl Marx

that form the economic basis of a society. The working class, or *proletariat,* is composed of those who must sell their labor because they have no other means to earn a livelihood. From Marx's viewpoint, the capitalist class controls and exploits the masses of struggling workers by paying less than the value of their labor. This exploitation results in workers' *alienation*—a feeling of powerlessness

social facts Emile Durkheim's term for patterned ways of acting, thinking, and feeling that exist *outside* any one individual but that exert social control over each person.

anomie Emile Durkheim's designation for a condition in which social control becomes ineffective as a result of the loss of shared values and of a sense of purpose in society.

influence of Marxist ideas in the region (Cuba, Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, and Nicaragua).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Popular Culture:** Ask students to imagine how Karl Marx would interpret the U.S. hip-hop/rap music subculture. Would he be right to see it as an expression of class consciousness? What might he miss in such an interpretation?

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **IRM:** Lecture Ideas: Compare Simmel's ideas about social spheres with Tönnies's ideas about *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* society.
- **IRM:** "Sociology Works!" Use this feature's questions for an in-class writing assignment.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

and estrangement from other people and from one-self. Marx predicted that the working class would become aware of its exploitation, overthrow the capitalists, and establish a free and classless society.

Marx is regarded as one of the most profound sociological thinkers; however, his social and economic analyses have also inspired heated debates among generations of social scientists. Central to his view was the belief that society should not just be studied but should also be changed, because the *status quo* (the existing state of society) involved the oppression of most of the population by a small group of wealthy people. Those who believe that sociology should be value free are uncomfortable with Marx's advocacy of what some perceive to be radical social change. Scholars who examine society through the lens of race, gender, and class believe his analysis places too much emphasis on class relations, often to the exclusion of issues regarding race/ethnicity and gender.

Max Weber   German social scientist Max Weber (pronounced VAY-ber) (1864–1920) was also concerned about the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Although he disagreed with Marx's idea that economics is *the* central force in social change, Weber acknowledged that economic interests are important in shaping human action.

▲ Max Weber

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Even so, he thought that economic systems were heavily influenced by other factors in a society.

Unlike many early analysts who believed that values could not be separated from the research process, Weber emphasized that sociology should be *value free—*research should be conducted in a scientific manner and should exclude the researcher's personal values and economic interests (Turner, Beeghley, and Powers, 2002). However, Weber realized that social behavior cannot be analyzed by the objective criteria that we use to measure such things as temperature or weight. Although he recognized that sociologists cannot be totally value free, Weber stressed that they should employ *verstehen* (German for "understanding" or "insight") to gain the ability to see the world as others see it. In contemporary sociology, Weber's idea is incorporated into the concept of the sociological imagination (discussed earlier in this chapter).

Weber was also concerned that large-scale organizations (bureaucracies) were becoming increasingly oriented toward routine administration and a specialized division of labor, which he believed were destructive to human vitality and freedom. According to Weber, rational bureaucracy, rather than class struggle, is the most significant factor in determining the social relations between people in industrial societies. From this view, bureaucratic domination can be used to maintain powerful (capitalist) interests in society. As discussed in Chapter 5 ("Groups and Organizations"), Weber's work on bureaucracy has had a far-reaching impact.

Weber made significant contributions to modern sociology by emphasizing the goal of value-free inquiry and the necessity of understanding how others see the world. He also provided important insights on the process of rationalization, bureaucracy, religion, and many other topics. In his writings, Weber was more aware of women's issues than many of the scholars of his day. Perhaps his awareness at least partially resulted from the fact that his wife, Marianne Weber, was an important figure in the women's movement in Germany in the early twentieth century (Roth, 1988).

Georg Simmel   At about the same time that Durkheim was developing the field of sociology in France, the German sociologist Georg Simmel (pronounced ZIM-mel) (1858–1918) was theorizing

- **IRM:** Have students contrast the emphasis on class struggles and bureaucratic institutions in Marx and Weber, respectively. Which do they think has a bigger impact on contemporary life?
- **Media Coverage:** Ask students to examine political campaigns and their use of populism and other forms of class solidarity to win over voters.

- **Active Learning:** Examine Simmel's concept of patterned interactions. Ask students to explore how college classes, student/student, and student/professor interactions are examples. Have them come up with other examples and diagram the "web" of patterned interactions in their own lives.

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▲ Georg Simmel

© Simon Jarratt/Cardinal/Corbis

▲ According to the sociologist Georg Simmel, society is a web of patterned interactions among people. If we focus on the behavior of individuals only, we may miss the underlying forms that make up the "geometry of social life."

about society as a web of patterned interactions among people. In *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (1950/1902–1917), he analyzed how social interactions vary depending on the size of the social group. He concluded that interaction patterns differed between a *dyad,* a social group with two members, and a *triad,* a social group with three members. He developed *formal sociology,* an approach that focuses attention on the universal recurring social forms that underlie the varying content of social interaction. Simmel referred to these forms as the "geometry of social life."

Like the other social thinkers of his day, Simmel analyzed the impact of industrialization and urbanization on people's lives. He concluded that class conflict was becoming more pronounced in modern industrial societies. He also linked the increase in individualism, as opposed to concern for the group, to the fact that people now had many cross-cutting "social spheres"—membership in a number of organizations and voluntary associations—rather than having the singular community ties of the past.

Simmel's contributions to sociology are significant. He wrote more than thirty books and numerous essays on diverse topics, leading some critics to state that his work is fragmentary and piecemeal. However, his thinking has influenced a wide array of sociologists, including the members of the "Chicago School" in the United States.

The Beginnings of Sociology in the United States

From Western Europe, sociology spread in the 1890s to the United States, where it thrived as a result of the intellectual climate and the rapid rate of social change. The first departments of sociology in the United States were located at the University of Chicago and at Atlanta University, then an African American school.

The Chicago School   The first department of sociology in the United States was established at the University of Chicago, where the faculty was instrumental in starting the American Sociological Society (now known as the American Sociological Association). Robert E. Park (1864–1944), a member of the Chicago faculty, asserted that urbanization has a disintegrating influence on social life by producing an increase in the crime rate and in racial

▲ Jane Addams

and class antagonisms that contribute to the segregation and isolation of neighborhoods (Ross, 1991). George Herbert Mead (1863–1931), another member of the faculty at Chicago, founded the symbolic interaction perspective, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Jane Addams   Jane Addams (1860–1935) is one of the best-known early women sociologists in the United States because she founded Hull House, one of the most famous settlement houses, in an impoverished area of Chicago. Throughout her career, she was actively engaged in sociological endeavors: She lectured at numerous colleges, was a charter member of the American Sociological Society, and published a number of articles and books. Addams was one of the authors of *Hull-House Maps and Papers,* a ground-breaking book that used a methodological technique employed by sociologists for the next forty years (Deegan, 1988). She was also awarded a Nobel Prize for her assistance to the underprivileged.

W. E. B. Du Bois and Atlanta University   The second department of sociology in the United States was founded by W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963) at Atlanta University. He created a laboratory of sociology, instituted a program of systematic research, founded and conducted regular sociological conferences on research, founded two journals, and established a record of valuable publications. His classic work, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1967/1899), was based on his research into Philadelphia's African American community and

▲ W. E. B. Du Bois

stressed the strengths and weaknesses of a community wrestling with overwhelming social problems. Du Bois was one of the first scholars to note that a dual heritage creates conflict for people of color. He called this duality *double-consciousness*—the identity conflict of being both a black and an American. Du Bois pointed out that although people in this country espouse such values as democracy, freedom, and equality, they also accept racism and group discrimination. African Americans are the victims of these conflicting values and the actions that result from them (Benjamin, 1991).

Contemporary Theoretical Perspectives

Given the many and varied ideas and trends that influenced the development of sociology, how do contemporary sociologists view society? Some see it as basically a stable and ongoing entity; others view it in terms of many groups competing for scarce resources; still others describe it based on the everyday, routine interactions among individuals. Each of these views represents a method of examining the same phenomena. Each is based on general ideas about how social life is organized and represents an effort to link specific observations in a meaningful way. Each uses a *theory—a set of logically interrelated statements that attempts to describe, explain,*

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8: The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis
- **IRM:** Lecture Idea: Contrast Du Bois's ideas with those of Booker T. Washington, and warn students about the dehumanizing effect of assuming that members of various minority groups all think alike. (See a similar comment in the section on feminist theory in the text.)

- **Extra Examples:** Have students discuss this statement: "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. . . . The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. . . ." (W. E. B. Du Bois, 1903).

and (occasionally) predict social events. Each theory helps interpret reality in a distinct way by providing a framework in which observations may be logically ordered. Sociologists refer to this theoretical framework as a *perspective*—an overall approach to or viewpoint on some subject. Three major theoretical perspectives have been predominant in U.S. sociology: the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist perspectives. Other perspectives, such as postmodernism, have emerged and gained acceptance among some social thinkers more recently. Before turning to the specifics of these perspectives, we should note that some theorists and theories do not fit neatly into any of these perspectives.

Functionalist Perspectives

Also known as *functionalism* and *structural functionalism*, **functionalist perspectives are based on the assumption that society is a stable, orderly system.** This stable system is characterized by *societal consensus,* whereby the majority of members share a common set of values, beliefs, and behavioral expectations. According to this perspective, a society is composed of interrelated parts, each of which serves a function and (ideally) contributes to the overall stability of the society. Societies develop social structures, or institutions, that persist because they play
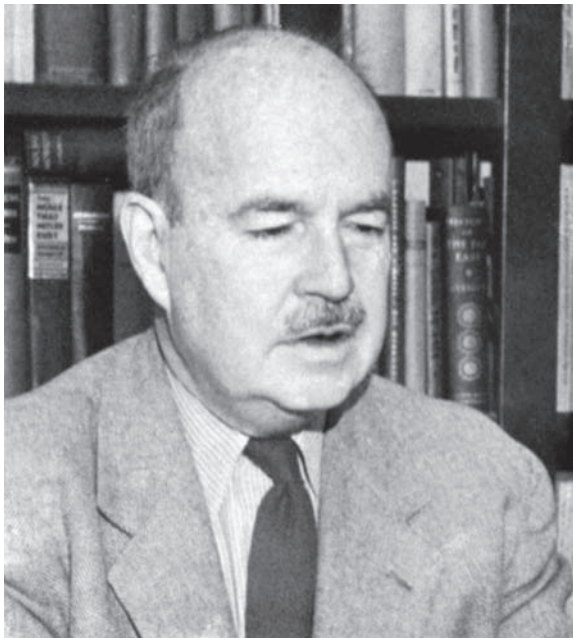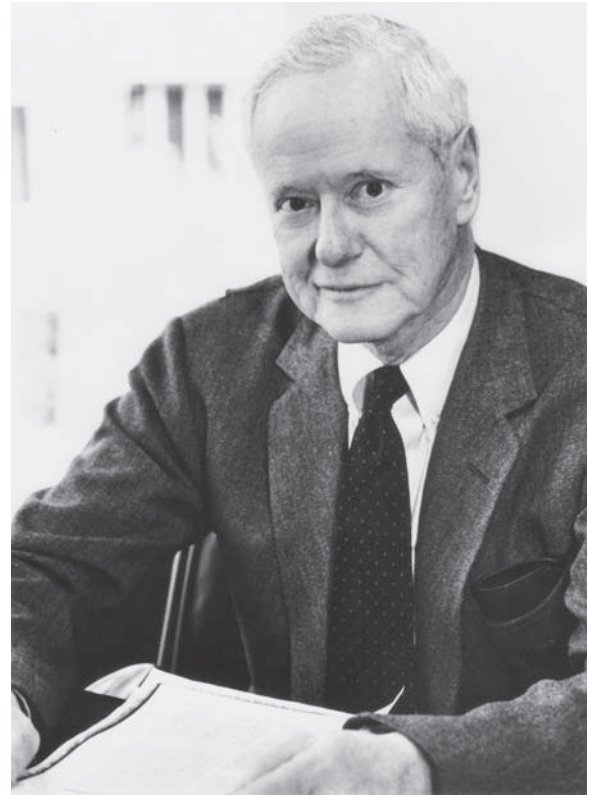
Estate of Robert K. Merton, photo by Sandra Still

▲ Robert Merton

a part in helping society survive. These institutions include the family, education, government, religion, and the economy. If anything adverse happens to one of these institutions or parts, all other parts are affected, and the system no longer functions properly.

Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton   Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), perhaps the most influential contemporary advocate of the functionalist perspective, stressed that all societies must provide for meeting social needs in order to survive. Parsons (1955) suggested, for example, that a division of labor (distinct, specialized functions) between husband and wife is essential for family stability and social order. The husband/father performs the *instrumental tasks,* which involve leadership and decision-making responsibilities in the home and

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▲ Talcott Parsons

> **theory** a set of logically interrelated statements that attempts to describe, explain, and (occasionally) predict social events.
>
> **functionalist perspectives** the sociological approach that views society as a stable, orderly system.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** To help understand functionalist perspectives, ask students to write about the ways that a typical family works. They should list the various functions fulfilled by parents, infants, adult children, grandparents, aunts and uncles, different ages, genders, and so on.
- **For Discussion:** Point to the following sentence in the text: "Each theory helps interpret reality in a distinct way by providing a framework in which observations may be logically ordered." What are some of the theories that your students are using to interpret reality?
- **Sociological Imagination:** To help students with their critical thinking, ask them to write about how the various social institutions have "worked" (or not worked) in their lives.

employment outside the home to support the family. The wife/mother is responsible for the *expressive tasks,* including housework, caring for the children, and providing emotional support for the entire family. Parsons believed that other institutions, including school, church, and government, must function to assist the family and that all institutions must work together to preserve the system over time (Parsons, 1955).

Functionalism was refined further by Robert K. Merton (1910–2003), who distinguished between manifest and latent functions of social institutions. **Manifest functions are intended and/or overtly recognized by the participants in a social unit.** In contrast, **latent functions are unintended functions that are hidden and remain unacknowledged by participants.** For example, a manifest function of education is the transmission of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next; a latent function is the establishment of social relations and networks. Merton noted that all features of a social system may not be functional at all times; **dysfunctions are the undesirable consequences of any element of a society.** A dysfunction of education in the United States is the perpetuation of gender, racial, and class inequalities. Such dysfunctions may threaten the capacity of a society to adapt and survive (Merton, 1968).

Applying a Functional Perspective to Suicide

How might functionalists analyze the problem of suicide among young people? Most functionalists emphasize the importance to a society of shared moral values and strong social bonds. When rapid social change or other disruptive conditions occur, moral values may erode, and people may become more uncertain about how to act and about whether or not their life has meaning.

In sociologist Donna Gaines's (1991) study of the suicide pact of four teenagers in Bergenfield, New Jersey, she concluded that Durkheim's description of both fatalistic and anomic suicide could be applied to the suicides of some teenagers. In regard to fatalistic suicide, people sometimes commit suicide "because they have lost the ability to dream" (Gaines, 1991: 253). According to Gaines, the four teenagers who took their lives in Bergenfield were bound closely together in a shared predicament: They wanted to get out, but they couldn't. As one young man noted, "They were beaten down as far as they could go" because they lacked confidence in themselves and were fearful of the world they faced. In other words, they felt trapped, and to them—without having a sense of meaningful choices—the only way out was to commit suicide (Gaines, 1991: 253). But, according to Gaines, fatalistic suicide does not completely explain the experiences of suicidal young people. Young people may also engage in anomic suicide, where the individual does not feel connected to the society. In fact, as Gaines (1991: 253) notes, "the glue that holds the person to the group isn't strong enough; social bonds are loose, weak, or absent. To be anomic is to feel disengaged, adrift, alienated. Like you don't fit in anywhere, there is no place for

◀ Shopping malls are a reflection of a consumer society. A manifest function of a shopping mall is to sell goods and services to shoppers; however, a latent function may be to provide a communal area in which people can visit friends and eat. For this reason, food courts have proven to be a boon in shopping malls around the globe.

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- **Media Coverage:** U.S. soldiers' suicide rates have been rising at an alarming rate over the past several years. Have students research this in the national news media. Might these types of suicides have a sociological explanation?
- **Popular Culture:** Sociologist Donna Gaines has a personal blog site: **http://drdonnagaines.blogspot.com.**

- **Active Learning:** In small groups, ask students to tackle the problem of anomic suicide. How can individuals feel more connected to society? What are the major obstacles to solving the problems associated with anomie?

you: in your family, your school, your town—in the social order."

Conflict Perspectives

According to *conflict perspectives,* **groups in society are engaged in a continuous power struggle for control of scarce resources.** Conflict may take the form of politics, litigation, negotiations, or family discussions about financial matters. Simmel, Marx, and Weber contributed significantly to this perspective by focusing on the inevitability of clashes between social groups. Today, advocates of the conflict perspective view social life as a continuous power struggle among competing social groups.

Max Weber and C. Wright Mills   As previously discussed, Karl Marx focused on the exploitation and oppression of the proletariat (the workers) by the bourgeoisie (the owners or capitalist class). Max Weber recognized the importance of economic
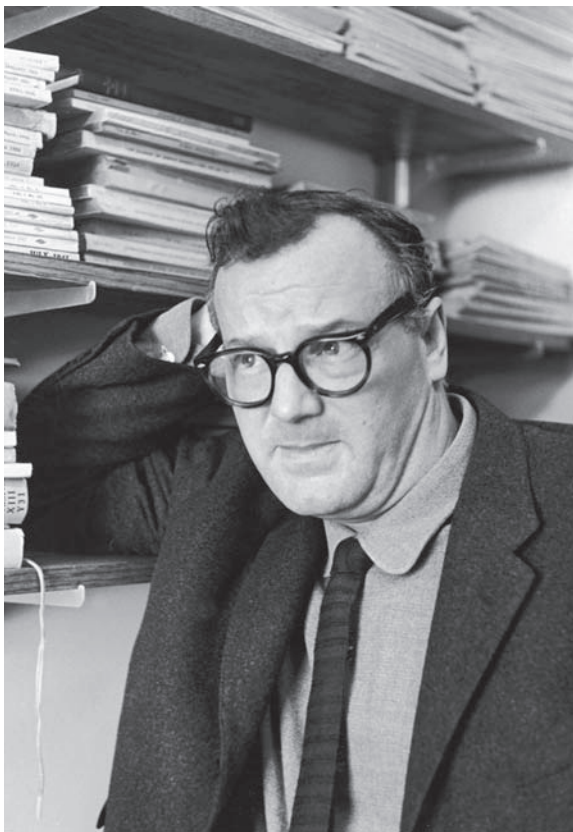
▲ C. Wright Mills

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conditions in producing inequality and conflict in society, but he added *power* and *prestige* as other sources of inequality. Weber (1968/1922) defined *power* as the ability of a person within a social relationship to carry out his or her own will despite resistance from others, and *prestige* as a positive or negative social estimation of honor (Weber, 1968/1922).

C. Wright Mills (1916–1962), a key figure in the development of contemporary conflict theory, encouraged sociologists to get involved in social reform. Mills encouraged everyone to look beneath everyday events in order to observe the major resource and power inequalities that exist in society. He believed that the most important decisions in the United States are made largely behind the scenes by the *power elite*—a small clique composed of top corporate, political, and military officials. Mills's power elite theory is discussed in Chapter 13 ("Politics and the Economy in Global Perspective").

The conflict perspective is not one unified theory but rather encompasses several branches. One branch is the neo-Marxist approach, which views struggle between the classes as inevitable and as a prime source of social change. A second branch focuses on racial–ethnic inequalities and the continued exploitation of members of some racial–ethnic groups. A third branch is the feminist perspective, which focuses on gender issues.

The Feminist Approach   A feminist theoretical approach (or "feminism") directs attention to women's experiences and the importance of gender as an element of social structure. This approach is based on the belief that "women and men are equal and should be equally valued as well as have equal rights" (Basow, 1992). According to feminist theorists, we live in a *patriarchy,* a system in which men

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manifest functions functions that are intended and/or overtly recognized by the participants in a social unit.

latent functions unintended functions that are hidden and remain unacknowledged by participants.

conflict perspectives the sociological approach that views groups in society as engaged in a continuous power struggle for control of scarce resources.

- **Active Learning:** Have your class discuss Weber's conceptions of power and prestige. Have them identify examples from their own social lives.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **IRM:** Questions for Discussion: Where might Mills's theory of the "power elite" apply in contemporary society? Could it ever distort our view of society, as in conspiracy theories?

- **Popular Culture:** Ask your class if they can come up with a list of things Oprah Winfrey does *not* have the power to accomplish. Use this to help students understand the powerful impact of prestige in a democratic society.
- **Active Learning:** Have students write down their first impressions of the term *feminism*. Group students, and then ask them to share their thoughts on this word. Consider creating a collective list of negative and positive impressions of the word. Which list is larger? Why?

◀ As one of the wealthiest and most-beloved entertainers in the world, Oprah Winfrey is an example of Max Weber's concept of prestige—a positive estimate of honor. Ms. Winfrey has used her success and prestige to do good works for many causes, including starting the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa.

dominate women and in which things that are considered to be "male" or "masculine" are more highly valued than those considered to be "female" or "feminine." The feminist perspective assumes that gender is socially created, rather than determined by one's biological inheritance, and that change is essential in order for people to achieve their human potential without limits based on gender. Some feminists argue that women's subordination can end only after the patriarchal system becomes obsolete. However, feminism is not one single, unified approach; there are several feminist perspectives, which are discussed in Chapter 10 ("Sex and Gender").

Applying Conflict Perspectives to Suicide

How might advocates of a conflict approach explain suicide among teenagers and young people?

Social Class Although many other factors may be present, social class pressures may affect rates of suicide among young people when they perceive that they have few educational or employment opportunities in our technologically oriented society and little hope for the future. As a result, young people from low-income or working-class family backgrounds may believe that they are among the most powerless people in society. However, class-based inequality alone cannot explain suicides among young people because teenage suicides also occur among affluent young people (Colt, 1991).

Gender In North America, females are more likely to attempt suicide, whereas males are more likely to actually take their own life. Despite the fact that women's suicidal behavior has traditionally been attributed to problems in their interpersonal relationships, such as loss of a boyfriend, lover, or husband, feminist analysts believe that we must examine social structural pressures that are brought to bear on young women and how these may contribute to their behavior—for example, cultural assumptions about women and what their multiple roles should be in the family, education, and the workplace. Women also experience unequal educational and employment opportunities that may contribute to feelings of powerlessness and alienation. Recent research shows that there are persistent gender gaps in U.S. employment, politics, and other areas of social life that tend to adversely affect women more than men.

Race Racial subordination may be a factor in some suicides. (▶ Figure 1.2 displays U.S. suicides in terms of race and sex.) This fact is most glaringly reflected in the extremely high rate of suicide among Native Americans, who constitute about 1 percent of the U.S. population. The rate of suicide among young Native American males on government-owned reservations is especially high, and almost 60 percent of Native American suicides involve firearms (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2009). Most research has focused on individualistic reasons why young Native Americans commit suicide; however, analysts using a race-and-ethnic framework focus on the effect of social inequalities and racial discrimination on suicidal behavior.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives

The conflict and functionalist perspectives have been criticized for focusing primarily on macrolevel analysis. A *macrolevel analysis* examines whole societies, large-scale social structures,

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- **Research:** "The stereotype that boys do better at math is still held widely by teachers and parents. . . . I still hear anecdotes about guidance counselors steering girls away from engineering, telling them they won't be able to do the math"(*New York Times,* 7/25/2008). Have students evaluate this statement from Professor Janet Hyde, whose study found no sex differences in math scores in grades 2–11.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Figure Note:** After examining the chart presented in Figure 1.2, ask students why they think males are more successful at suicide than females. What would a macrolevel analysis of this type of question look like? What would a microlevel analysis look like?
- **Active Learning:** What are the symbols that are in place in your class that give meaning to experience and interactions? Have
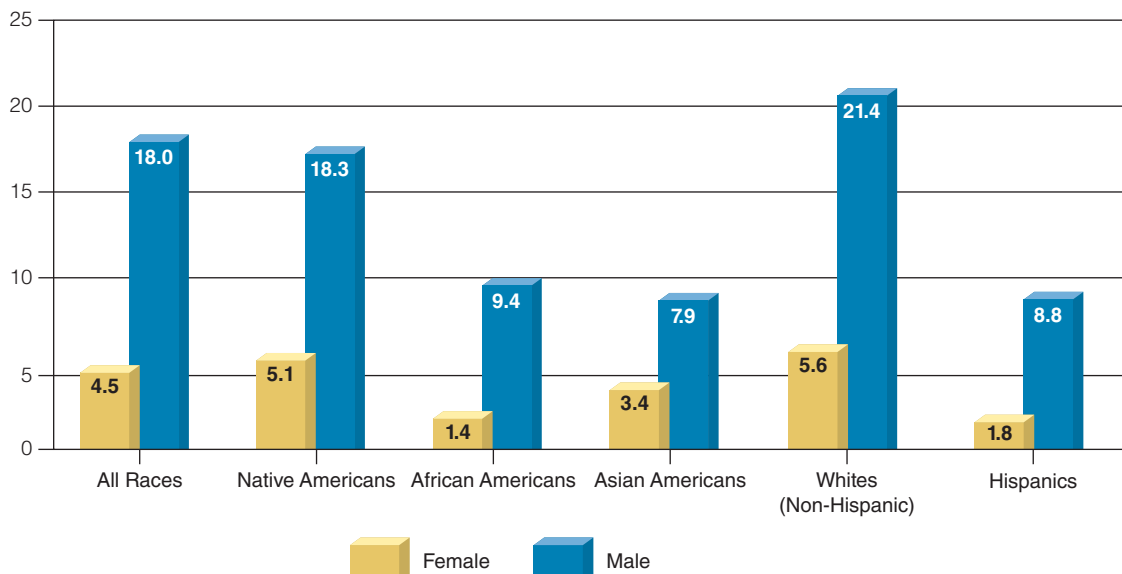
▲ FIGURE 1.2 SUICIDE RATES BY RACE AND SEX

Rates are for U.S. suicides and indicate the number of deaths by suicide for every 100,000 people in each category for 2006.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, 2008.

and social systems instead of looking at important social dynamics in individuals' lives. Our third perspective, symbolic interactionism, fills this void by examining people's day-to-day interactions and their behavior in groups. Thus, symbolic interactionist approaches are based on a *microlevel analysis,* **which focuses on small groups rather than large-scale social structures.**

We can trace the origins of this perspective to the Chicago School, especially George Herbert Mead and the sociologist Herbert Blumer (1900–1986), who is credited with coining the term *symbolic interactionism.* According to *symbolic interactionist perspectives,* **society is the sum of the interactions of individuals and groups.** Theorists using this perspective focus on the process of *interaction*—defined as immediate reciprocally oriented communication between two or more people—and the part that symbols play in giving meaning to human communication. A *symbol* is anything that meaningfully represents something else. Examples of symbols include signs, gestures, written language, and shared values. Symbolic interaction occurs when people communicate through the use of symbols—for example, a ring to indicate a couple's engagement. But symbolic communication occurs in a variety of forms, including facial gestures, posture, tone of voice, and other symbolic gestures (such as a handshake or a clenched fist).

Symbols are instrumental in helping people derive meanings from social interactions. In social encounters, each person's interpretation or definition of a given situation becomes a *subjective reality* from that person's viewpoint. We often assume that what we consider to be "reality" is shared by others; however, this assumption is often incorrect. Subjective reality is acquired and shared through agreed-upon symbols, especially language. If a person shouts "Fire!" in a crowded movie theater, for example, that language produces the same response (attempting to escape) in all of those who hear and understand it. When

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macrolevel analysis an approach that examines whole societies, large-scale social structures, and social systems.

microlevel analysis sociological theory and research that focus on small groups rather than on large-scale social structures.

symbolic interactionist perspectives the sociological approach that views society as the sum of the interactions of individuals and groups.

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students come up with a list on their own, starting with the Chicago School's examples. Then compare lists with two other students. Create a combined list as an all-class activity.
- **IRM:** See the IRM for discussion questions focusing on definitions of race/ethnicity, gender, class, and age.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

- **Applied Sociology:** Use concepts from Goffman's dramaturgical analysis to help students understand their local shopping mall and the methods used to market status, sex, and success. You may want to quote Ralph Waldo Emerson: "We are symbols and inhabit symbols."
- **IRM:** Question for Discussion: What are some of the pros and cons of taking either a macrolevel or microlevel analysis of society?

sociology in global perspective

Postmodern Problems in France: Worker Stress and Suicide Rates

When I started as a psychiatrist, 35 years ago, my patients were talking about their personal lives. Now it's all about their jobs. People are suffering in the workplace. They shouldn't be, from the logic of management. After all, they have a good job, a nice vacation. But they are suffering.
—Marie-France Hirigoyen, a psychiatrist in France, describing how workers who many believe should feel secure are complaining about rapid economic changes and job-related stress (qtd. in Jolly and Saltmarsh, 2009)

Although social scientists and health care professionals believe that many factors contribute to an increase in the number of suicides that occur in a region or a nation, there is some consensus that an increase in the suicide rate in France might be attributed to stress in the workplace. Some of the suicides in France have drawn widespread media attention, including a male worker who stabbed himself hara-kiri style in the middle of a meeting and a female employee who leaped to her death from her fifth-floor office window (Jolly and Saltmarsh, 2009). Suicides such as these have brought about a question: What is going on in a nation that is assumed by much of the rest of the world to have it made when it comes to work? For many years, workers in France have had excellent job security, a thirty-five-hour workweek, and lengthy, paid vacations.

Applying a postmodern perspective, what might contribute to an increase in the number of suicides in France? If we think of the postmodern perspective regarding risk, it is possible to envision how some people who have a good job and benefits might remain fearful. People who already think of themselves as somewhat powerless may have an increase in feelings of depression, fear, and ambivalence when they are constantly exposed to increasing levels of personal risk. According to one labor union official, "Stress has become a national sport. We need employers to modify the way that they organize work, but we don't have the impression that anything will happen soon" (qtd. in Jolly and Saltmarsh, 2009: B3).

Although job security is somewhat guaranteed in France, numerous companies are now facing competition in the global marketplace, and some of them are cutting jobs through voluntary departures, early retirement, and other mechanisms short of actually giving workers "pink slips" that terminate their employment. As current workers see this

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people in a group do not share the same meaning for a given symbol, however, confusion results: People who do not know the meaning of the word *fire* will not know what the commotion is about. How people *interpret* the messages they receive and the situations they encounter becomes their subjective reality and may strongly influence their behavior.

Applying Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives to Suicide

Social analysts applying a symbolic interactionist framework to the study of suicide would focus on a microlevel analysis of the people's face-to-face interactions and the roles they played in society. In our efforts to interact with others, we define the situation according to our own subjective reality. This applies to suicide just as it does to other types of conduct.

From this point of view, a suicide attempt may be a way of moving toward other people—in the form of a cry for help and personal acceptance—rather than a move toward death (Colt, 1991). People may attempt to communicate in such desperate ways because other forms of communication have failed. For example, a thirteen-year-old Illinois girl slashed her wrists shortly before she knew her mother was expected to come into her room; she wanted to show her parents how upset and unhappy she was about their pending divorce. As the girl later said, "I didn't really want to die. I just hoped and prayed that if Mom and Dad knew how upset and unhappy I was, Dad would move back in" (qtd. in Giffin and Felsenthal, 1983: 19).

Postmodern Perspectives

According to **postmodern perspectives**, existing theories have been unsuccessful in explaining social life in contemporary societies that are characterized by postindustrialization, consumerism,

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- **Media Coverage:** Have students research media accounts of the suicide epidemic at France Telecom, where 26 workers killed themselves in an 18-month period during a major corporate restructuring. Have them apply postmodern perspectives to the changes in the company and its plans to cut one-fifth of its workforce (*CBS News,* 11/20/2009).

- **Global Perspective:** Ask students to examine the recent histories of Lithuania, Russia, Hungary, and Japan. What kinds of structural shifts might help explain their having such high suicide rates? What other factors in culture, society, and religion might explain these statistics?

going on around them, many of them are apparently becoming concerned about their own future. Despite the ability to keep their jobs, some employees are being asked to change jobs internally, change work locations, or both. When workers have a sense that constant upheaval is going on around them, they become insecure even if they are reminded that they have job security.

When we look at current economic issues from a global perspective, particularly in light of a postmodern theoretical approach, we can see that rapid social change (as suggested by Durkheim) may be a factor in why some nations have a higher rate of suicide than others. However, we can also see that factors such as risk and the increasingly fragmented nature of contemporary society may lead to feelings of stress and ambivalence regardless of what the true nature of the situation might be. In the words of Xavier Darcos, France's employment minister, "We are in a transforming economy. . . . For us, unemployment is the absolute failure. We prefer to have people who don't feel totally happy at work, or to work part time, rather than people being unemployed" (qtd. in Jolly and Saltmarsh, 2009: B3).

According to the World Health Organization, France as a nation has the eighth-highest suicide rate per 100,000 people, with a rate of 26.4 per 100,000 for men and a rate of 9.2 per 100,000 for women (Jolly and Saltmarsh, 2009). Countries with higher rates of suicide than France (in order from first to seventh) are Lithuania (68.1 for men, 12.9 for women), Russia (58.1 for men, 9.8 for women), Hungary (42.3 for men, 11.2 for women), Japan (34.8 for men, 13.2 for women), Belgium (31.2 for men, 11.4 for women), South Korea (29.6 for men, 14.1 for women), and Poland (27.8 for men, 4.6 for women). The rates for men and women are listed separately so that you can see the differences based on gender. This brings us to several important questions not only about the reasons for suicide but also the pronounced gender differences in rates of suicide.

reflect & analyze

How is it that we can feel high levels of stress when we are placed in situations where everything is supposedly all right? Why do some workers in France feel as much stress when they are asked to move from one position to another as workers feel in the United States when they are laid off or fired? How might the postmodern perspective on the relationship between risk and the class structure be applied to the problem of an increasing rate of suicide in France?

and global communications. Postmodern social theorists reject the theoretical perspectives we have previously discussed, as well as how those theories were created (Ritzer, 2000b).

Postmodern theories are based on the assumption that the rapid social change that occurs as societies move from modern to postmodern (or postindustrial) conditions has a harmful effect on people. One evident change is a significant decline in the influence of social institutions such as the family, religion, and education on people's lives. Those who live in postmodern societies typically pursue individual freedom and do not want the structural constraints that are imposed by social institutions. However, the collective ties that once bound people together become weakened, placing people at higher levels of risk—"probabilities of physical harm due to given technological or other processes"—than in the past (Beck, 1992: 4). As social institutions grow weaker, people at risk come to believe that social and economic chaos looms before them and that no safety net is provided by families, peers, and the larger community. According to one theorist, there is a relationship between risk and the class structure: "Wealth accumulates at the top, risks at the bottom" (Beck, 1992: 35). Social inequality and class differences increase as people in the lower economic tiers are exposed to increasing levels of personal risk that, in turn, produce depression, fear, and ambivalence. Problems such as these are found in nations throughout the world, as discussed in the Sociology in Global Perspective box.

postmodern perspectives the sociological approach that attempts to explain social life in modern societies that are characterized by postindustrialization, consumerism, and global communications.

In sum, postmodern theories tend to emphasize the fragmented nature of contemporary society brought about by constant change, a situation that leads to feelings of ambivalence among individuals because they are uncertain about which course of action they should take and because there is no one present to help them figure this out (Bauman, 1992). Postmodern theory enhances our study of sociology because it opens up broad new avenues of inquiry, even as it challenges other theoretical perspectives and asks pertinent questions about our current belief systems. However, postmodern theory has also been criticized for raising more questions than it attempts to answer and for being so vague and abstract that it is hard to understand and even more difficult to apply (Ritzer and Goodman, 2004).

Applying Postmodern Perspectives to Suicide

Although most postmodern social theorists have not addressed suicide as a social issue, some sociologists believe that postmodern theory can help us understand differing rates of suicide, particularly among people in certain ethnic categories. Consider, for example, this research question: Why in recent decades has there been a significant increase in suicide rates among young African American males between the ages of fifteen and nineteen? Historically, African Americans at all income levels had lower rates of suicide than other ethnic groups in the United States—a fact that scholars attributed to higher levels of religiosity and group support that protected African Americans from suicidal behavior (Willis, Coombs, Cockerham, and Frison, 2002). However, this pattern changed over the past two decades, particularly in the category of young African American males between the ages of fifteen and nineteen, a statistical group that now has a rate of suicide comparable to that of young white males (Willis et al., 2002).

Although youths across ethnic categories share certain risk factors for suicide, such as social isolation, feelings of marginality, high rates of unemployment, and sometimes depression, young African American males appear to be at greater risk for suicide (based on postmodern theorization) because people in this statistical category are among the most likely to be at risk in other ways in a postmodern society. A major problem for some African American young men is the absence of educational and employment opportunities. This problem is combined with other issues, such as the weakening of the family structure, a breakdown in community values, the diminished importance of the African American church, and the growing influence of the media in revealing the vast inequalities that exist in the United States and in other high-income nations. These problems have been further exacerbated by a dramatic rise in the drug trade and in possession of firearms (Willis et al., 2002).

According to some sociologists, postmodern theory helps explain why there are higher rates of suicide among African American youths than in the past: The transition from a modern to a postmodern society has left them at greater risk than others due to the loss of social support systems that previously would have helped them cope with fear, depression, and suicidal tendencies. In the past, African Americans lived a community-oriented existence; today, they face an "individualistic" society that contributes to personal stress and heightened vulnerability without any place in which to turn (Willis et al., 2002).

Each of the four sociological perspectives we have examined involves different assumptions. Consequently, each leads us to ask different questions and to view the world somewhat differently. Different aspects of reality are the focus of each approach. Whereas functionalism emphasizes social cohesion and order, conflict approaches focus primarily on social tension and change. In contrast, symbolic interactionism primarily examines people's interactions and shared meanings in everyday life. Postmodernism challenges all of the other perspectives and questions current belief systems.

The Concept Quick Review for this chapter summarizes all four of these perspectives. Throughout this book, we will be using these perspectives as lenses through which to view our social world.

The Sociological Research Process

Research is the process of systematically collecting information for the purpose of testing an existing theory or generating a new one. What is the relationship between sociological theory and research? The relationship between theory and research has

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[concept quick review 1.1]

The Major Theoretical Perspectives

Perspective	Analysis Level	View of Society
Functionalist	Macrolevel	Society is composed of interrelated parts that work together to maintain stability within society. This stability is threatened by dysfunctional acts and institutions.
Conflict	Macrolevel	Society is characterized by social inequality; social life is a struggle for scarce resources. Social arrangements benefit some groups at the expense of others.
Symbolic Interactionist	Microlevel	Society is the sum of the interactions of people and groups. Behavior is learned in interaction with other people; how people define a situation becomes the foundation for how they behave.
Postmodernist	Macrolevel/Microlevel	Societies characterized by postindustrialization, consumerism, and global communication bring into question existing assumptions about social life and the nature of reality.
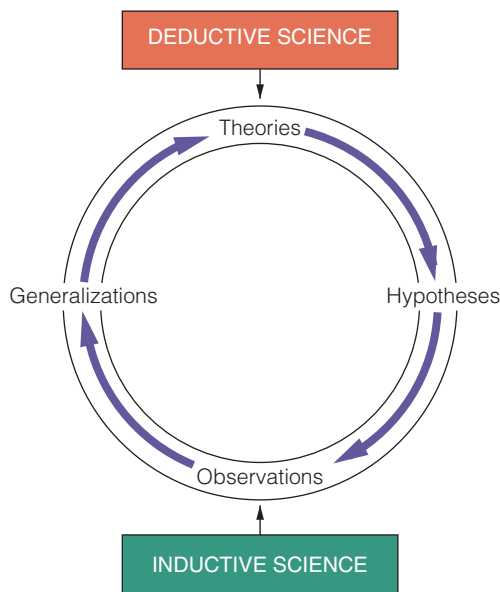
▲ **FIGURE 1.3 THE THEORY AND RESEARCH CYCLE**
The theory and research cycle can be compared to a relay race; although all participants do not necessarily start or stop at the same point, they share a common goal—to examine all levels of social life.

Source: Adapted from Walter Wallace, *The Logic of Science in Sociology.* New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1971.

been referred to as a continuous cycle, as shown in ▶ Figure 1.3 (Wallace, 1971).

Not all sociologists conduct research in the same manner. Some researchers primarily engage in quantitative research, whereas others engage in qualitative research. With **quantitative research, the goal is scientific objectivity, and the focus is on data that can be measured numerically.** Quantitative research typically emphasizes complex statistical techniques. Most sociological studies on suicide have used quantitative research. They have compared rates of suicide with almost every conceivable variable, including age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, and even sports participation. For example, researchers in one study examined the effects of church membership, divorce, and migration on suicide rates in the United States at various times between 1933 and 1980. The study concluded that suicide rates were higher where divorce rates were higher, migration higher, and church membership lower (see Breault, 1986). (The Understanding Statistical Data Presentations box explains how to read numerical tables, how to interpret the data and draw conclusions, and how to calculate ratios and rates.)

> **quantitative research** sociological research methods that are based on the goal of scientific objectivity and that focus on data that can be measured numerically.

- **Active Learning:** The first step in the conventional research model is to select and define the research problem. Ask students to brainstorm together and come up with a list of five social research problems. For extra credit, you could send students to the library to find research studies that have already been conducted.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Table Note:** Use the diagram of the major theoretical perspectives available on the PowerLecture disc to supplement your review of the perspectives summarized above.

Understanding Statistical Data Presentations

Are men or women more likely to commit suicide? Are suicide rates increasing or decreasing? Such questions can be answered in numerical terms. Sociologists often use statistical tables as a concise way to present data because such tables convey a large amount of information in a relatively small space; ■ Table 1 gives an example. To understand a table, follow these steps:

1. *Read the title.* The title, "U.S. Suicides, by Sex and Method Used, 1984 and 2005," tells us that the table shows relationships between two variables: sex and method of suicide used. It also indicates that the table contains data for two different time periods: 1984 and 2005.

2. *Check the source and other explanatory notes.* In this case, the source is *National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2006.* Checking the source helps determine its reliability and timeliness. The first footnote indicates that the table includes only people who reside in the United States. The next footnote reflects that, due to rounding, the percentages in a column may not total 100.0%. The final two footnotes provide more information about exactly what is included in each category.

3. *Read the headings for each column and each row.* The main column headings in Table 1 are "Method," "Males," and "Females." These last two column headings are divided into two groups: 1984 and 2005. The columns present information (usually numbers) arranged vertically. The rows present information horizontally. Here, the row headings indicate suicide methods.

4. *Examine and compare the data.* To examine the data, determine what units of measurement have been used. In Table 1, the figures are numerical counts (for example, the total number of reported female suicides by poisoning in 2005 was 2,632) and percentages (for example, in 2005, poisoning accounted for 39.1 percent of all female suicides reported). A *percentage,* or proportion, shows how many of a given item there are in every one hundred. Percentages allow us to compare groups of different sizes.

5. *Draw conclusions.* By looking for patterns, some conclusions can be drawn from Table 1.

   a. *Determining the increase or decrease.* Between 1984 and 2005, reported male suicides by firearms increased from 14,504 to 14,926—an increase of 422—while female suicides by firearms decreased by 523. This represents a *total* increase (for males) and decrease (for females) in suicides by firearms for the two years being compared. The *amount* of increase or decrease can be stated as a percentage: Total male suicides by firearms were about 2.9 percent higher in 2005, calculated by dividing the total increase (422) by the earlier (lower) number. Total female suicides by firearms were about 20 percent lower in 2005, calculated by dividing the total decrease (523) by the earlier (higher) number.

   b. *Drawing appropriate conclusions.* The number of female suicides by firearms decreased about 20 percent between 1984 and 2005; the number for poisoning increased by about 9.4 percent. We might conclude that more women preferred poisoning over firearms as a means of killing themselves in 2005 than in 1984. Does that mean fewer women had access to guns in 2005? That poisoning oneself became more acceptable? Although several possible answers to these questions exist, one thing is evident as we compare data on suicide by sex and method over time: Firearms remain the most commonly used method of suicide among males (usually in the range of 56–58 percent annually) while poisoning continues to be the most common method of suicide for females (usually in the range of 39–41 percent annually).

table 1

U.S. Suicides, by Sex and Method Used, 1984 and 2005[a]

Method	Males		Females	
	1984	2005	1984	2005
Total	22,689	25,907	6,597	6,730
Firearms	14,504	14,926	2,609	2,086
(% of total)[b]	(64.0)	(57.6)	(39.5)	(30.9)
Poisoning[c]	3,203	3,112	2,406	2,632
(% of total)[b]	(14.1)	(12.0)	(36.5)	(39.1)
Suffocation[d]	3,478	5,887	863	1,361
(% of total)[b]	(15.3)	(22.7)	(13.0)	(20.2)
Other	1,504	1,992	719	651
(% of total)[b]	(6.6)	(7.7)	(10.9)	(9.8)

[a]Excludes deaths of nonresidents of the United States.
[b]Due to rounding, the percentages in a column may not add up to 100.0%.
[c]Includes solids, liquids, and gases.
[d]Includes hanging and strangulation.

Source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2006.

- **Media Coverage:** Explain some of the statistical procedures that have been presented in recent news stories. Help your students to see the link between the methods discussed above and what they experience in the media.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

- **For Discussion:** Be careful to explain to students the logic behind variable relationships. Use a number of concrete examples, and have your students create their own hypotheses to explain suicide. Review these, emphasizing the difference between independent and dependent variables.

DEDUCTIVE METHOD (Classic)	INDUCTIVE METHOD (Inclusive)

Select and define the research problem

Review the literature	Review the literature	Develop the research design
Formulate the hypothesis	Develop the research design	Collect and analyze the data
Develop the research design	Collect and analyze the data	Review the literature
Collect and analyze the data		
Draw conclusions; report the findings		Generate hypotheses for theory construction, draw conclusions, and report the findings

▲ **FIGURE 1.4   STEPS IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH**

With **qualitative research, interpretive descriptions (words) rather than statistics (numbers) are used to analyze underlying meanings and patterns of social relationships.** An example of qualitative research is a study in which the researchers systematically analyzed the contents of suicide notes to look for recurring themes (such as feelings of despair or failure) in such notes to determine if any patterns could be found that would help in understanding why people kill themselves (Leenaars, 1988).

The "Conventional" Research Model

Research models are tailored to the specific problem being investigated and the focus of the researcher. Both quantitative research and qualitative research contribute to our knowledge of society and human social interaction, and involve a series of steps as shown in ▶ Figure 1.4. We will now trace the steps in the "conventional" research model, which focuses on quantitative research. Then we will describe an alternative model that emphasizes qualitative research.

1. *Select and define the research problem.* Sometimes, a specific experience such as knowing someone who committed suicide can trigger your interest in a topic. Other times, you might select topics to fill gaps or challenge misconceptions in existing research or to test a specific theory (Babbie, 2004). Emile Durkheim selected suicide because he wanted to demonstrate the importance of

qualitative research sociological research methods that use interpretive description (words) rather than statistics (numbers) to analyze underlying meanings and patterns of social relationships.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Extra Examples:** Craig Rusbult has developed a visual strategy for teaching the scientific method—a much more elaborate diagram—that you might find useful as you go deeper into this topic with your class: **www.asa3.org/asa/education/think/ science.htm.**
- **Active Learning:** Explore the differing rationales for using either a quantitative or qualitative research model. Ask students to bring to class examples of research conducted using each method. Have small groups of students try to discern which method is being used in each example.
- **For Discussion:** Discuss in class some of the ways that statistical research and reports can be misused by individuals and organizations. Describe these statistical problems to your class: overgeneralizations, loaded questions, correlation versus causation, and biased samples.

society in situations that might appear to be arbitrary acts by individuals. Suicide was a suitable topic because it was widely believed that suicide was a uniquely individualistic act. However, Durkheim emphasized that *suicide rates* provide better explanations for suicide than do *individual acts* of suicide. He reasoned that if suicide were purely an individual act, then the rate of suicide (the relative number of people who kill themselves each year) should be the same for every group regardless of culture and social structure. Moreover, Durkheim wanted to know why there were different rates of suicide—whether factors such as religion, marital status, sex, and age had an effect on social cohesion.

2. *Review previous research.* Before beginning the research, it is important to analyze what others have written about the topic. You should determine where gaps exist and note mistakes to avoid. When Durkheim began his study, very little sociological literature existed to review; however, he studied the works of several moral philosophers, including Henry Morselli (1975/1881).

3. *Formulate the hypothesis* (if applicable). You may formulate a *hypothesis—a statement of the expected relationship*

▶ **FIGURE 1.5 HYPOTHESIZED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VARIABLES**
A causal hypothesis connects one or more independent (causal) variables with a dependent (affected) variable. The diagram illustrates three hypotheses about the causes of suicide. To test these hypotheses, social scientists would need to operationalize the variables (define them in measurable terms) and then investigate whether the data support the proposed explanation.

between two or more variables. A *variable* is any concept with measurable traits or characteristics that can change or vary from one person, time, situation, or society to another. The most fundamental relationship in a hypothesis is between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables (see ▶ Figure 1.5). The *independent variable* is presumed to be the cause of the relationship; the *dependent variable* is assumed to be caused by the independent variable(s) (Babbie, 2004). Durkheim's

a. Causal relationship

Depression → Suicide rate
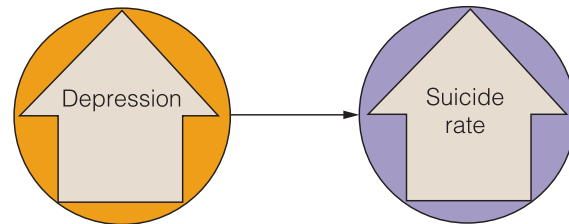
"Depression causes suicide."

b. Inverse causal relationship (Durkheim)

Social integration → Suicide rate
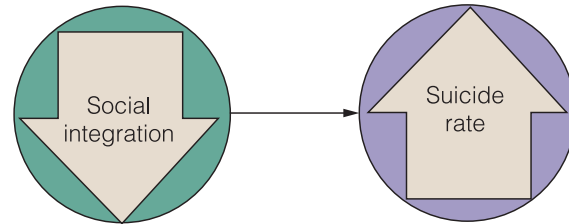
"The lack of social integration causes suicide."

c. Multiple-cause explanation

Rate of social change / Poverty / Religiosity → Suicide rate
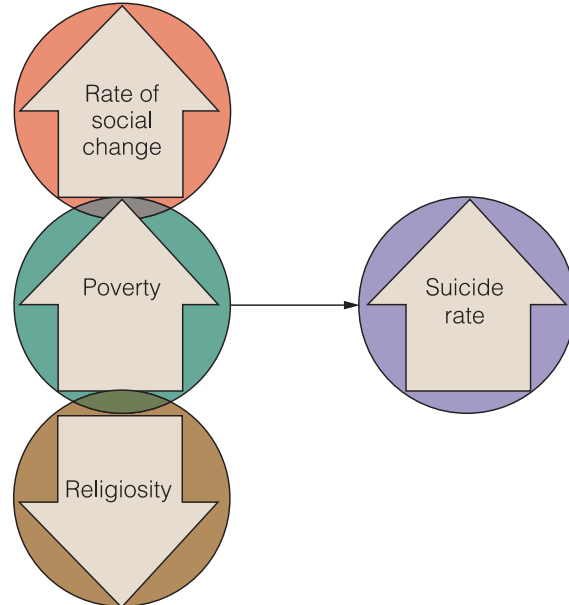
"Many factors interact to cause suicide."

- **For Discussion:** What are some of the important variables that might be correlated in some way with suicide? Have students identify them as dependent or independent.
- **IRM:** See the IRM for an activity that asks students to bring to class copies of research articles from sociology journals and identify components of the research process as reflected in these articles.
- **Figure Note:** As students come into class, ask them to turn to Figure 1.5 and to write descriptions of the three relationships symbolically presented in the diagram. Students can compare their descriptions with one another and then create group descriptions that are more elaborate and comprehensive.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

hypothesis stated that the rate of suicide varies *inversely* with the degree of social integration. In other words, a low degree of social integration (the independent variable) may "cause" or "be related to" a high rate of suicide (the dependent variable).

Not all social research uses hypotheses. If you plan to conduct an explanatory study (showing a cause-and-effect relationship), you will likely want to formulate one or more hypotheses to test theories. If you plan to conduct a descriptive study, however, you will be less likely to do so because you may desire only to describe social reality or provide facts.

4. *Develop the research design.* You must determine the unit of analysis to be used in the study. A *unit of analysis* is *what* or *whom* is being studied (Babbie, 2004). In social science research, individuals, social groups (such as families, cities, or geographic regions), organizations (such as clubs, labor unions, or political parties), and social artifacts (such as books, paintings, or weddings) may be units of analysis. Durkheim's unit of analysis was social groups, not individuals, because he believed that the study of individual cases of suicide would not explain the rates of suicide in various European countries.

5. *Collect and analyze the data.* You must decide what population will be observed or questioned and then carefully select a sample. A *sample* is the people who are selected from the population to be studied; the sample should accurately represent the larger population. A *representative sample* is a selection from a larger population that has the essential characteristics of the total population. For example, if you interviewed five students selected haphazardly from your sociology class, they would not be representative of your school's total student body. By contrast, if you selected five students from the total student body by a random sample, they would be closer to being representative (although a random sample of five students would be too small to yield much useful data).

Validity and reliability may be problems in research. *Validity* **is the extent to which a study or research instrument accurately measures what it is supposed to measure.** A recurring issue in studies that analyze the relationship

between religious beliefs and suicide is whether "church membership" is an accurate indicator of a person's religious beliefs. In fact, one person may be very religious yet not belong to a specific church, whereas another person may be a member of a church yet not hold very deep religious beliefs. *Reliability* **is the extent to which a study or research instrument yields consistent results when applied to different individuals at one time or to the same individuals over time.** Sociologists have found that different interviewers get different answers from the people being interviewed. For example, how might interviews with college students who have contemplated suicide be influenced by the interviewers themselves?

Once you have collected your data, the data must be analyzed. *Analysis* is the process through which data are organized so that comparisons can be made and conclusions drawn. Sociologists use many techniques to analyze data. After collecting data from vital statistics for approximately 26,000 suicides, Durkheim analyzed his data according to four distinctive categories of suicide. *Egoistic suicide* occurs among people who are isolated from any social group. By contrast, *altruistic suicide* occurs among individuals who are excessively integrated into society (for example,

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hypothesis a statement of the expected relationship between two or more variables.

variable in sociological research, any concept with measurable traits or characteristics that can change or vary from one person, time, situation, or society to another.

independent variable in an experiment, the variable assumed to be the cause of the relationship between variables.

dependent variable in an experiment, the variable assumed to be caused by the independent variable(s).

validity in sociological research, the extent to which a study or research instrument accurately measures what it is supposed to measure.

reliability in sociological research, the extent to which a study or research instrument yields consistent results when applied to different individuals at one time or to the same individuals over time.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** Be sure to clarify the difference between validity and reliability. Use concrete examples. Give students some samples to work on to test their understanding.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #9 Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-National Content

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Research:** Bring to class a number of leading sociology journals. Pass them around so that students can get an idea of the current research topics that social scientists are studying.

military leaders who kill themselves after defeat in battle). *Anomic suicide* results from a lack of social regulation, whereas *fatalistic suicide* results from excessive regulation and oppressive discipline (for example, slaves).

6. *Draw conclusions and report the findings.* After analyzing the data, your first step in drawing conclusions is to return to your hypothesis or research objective to clarify how the data relate both to the hypothesis and to the larger issues being addressed. At this stage, you note the limitations of the study, such as problems with the sample, the influence of variables over which you had no control, or variables that your study was unable to measure.

Reporting the findings is the final stage. The report generally includes a review of each step taken in the research process in order to make the study available for *replication*—the repetition of the investigation in substantially the same way that it was originally conducted. Social scientists generally present their findings in papers at professional meetings and publish them in technical journals and books. In reporting his findings in *Suicide* (1964b/1897), Durkheim concluded that the suicide rate of a group is a social fact that cannot be explained in terms of the personality traits of individuals. Instead, his findings suggested that social conditions in a society are a more significant influence in determining rates of suicide.

We have traced the steps in the "conventional" research process (based on deduction and quantitative research). But what steps might be taken in an alternative approach based on induction and qualitative research?

A Qualitative Research Model

Although the same underlying logic is involved in both quantitative and qualitative sociological research, the *styles* of these two models are very different (King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994). As previously stated, qualitative research is more likely to be used when the research question does not easily lend itself to numbers and statistical methods. As compared to a quantitative model, a qualitative approach often involves a different type of research question and a smaller number of cases.

How might qualitative research be used to study suicidal behavior? In studying different rates of suicide among women and men, for example, the social psychologist Silvia Canetto (1992) questioned whether existing theories and quantitative research provided an adequate explanation for gender differences in suicidal behavior and decided that she would explore alternate explanations. Analyzing previous research, Canetto learned that most studies linked suicidal behavior in women to problems in their personal relationships, particularly with men. By contrast, most studies of men's suicides focused on their performance and found that men are more likely to be suicidal when their self-esteem and independence are threatened. According to Canetto's analysis, gender differences in suicidal behavior are more closely associated with beliefs about and cultural expectations for men and women rather than purely interpersonal crises.

As in Canetto's study, researchers using a qualitative approach may engage in *problem formulation* to clarify the research question and to formulate questions of concern and interest to people participating in the research (Reinharz, 1992). To create a research design for Canetto's study, we might start with the proposition that studies have attributed women's and men's suicidal behavior to the wrong causes. Next, we might decide to interview individuals who have attempted suicide. Our research design might develop a collaborative approach in which the participants are brought into the research-design process, not just treated as passive objects to be studied (Reinharz, 1992).

Although Canetto did not gather data in her study, she reevaluated existing research, concluding from existing data that alternate explanations of women's and men's suicidal behavior are justified.

In a qualitative approach, the next step is collecting and analyzing data to assess the validity of the starting proposition. Data gathering is the foundation of the research. Researchers pursuing a qualitative approach tend to gather data in natural settings, such as where the person lives or works, rather than in a laboratory or other research setting. Data collection and analysis frequently occur concurrently, and the analysis draws heavily on the language of the persons studied, not the researcher.

- **For Discussion:** Most students have seen examples of conventional research in their natural science classes, but many are unfamiliar with qualitative studies. Bring samples of qualitative abstracts to class, and have students compare them to quantitative approaches.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

- **For Discussion:** The text reports research on suicide by Silvia Canetto: "According to Canetto's analysis, gender differences in suicidal behavior are more closely associated with beliefs about and cultural expectations for men and women rather than purely interpersonal crises." Have the class discuss what some of these cultural gender expectations might be.

Research Methods

How do sociologists know which research method to use? Are some approaches best for a particular problem? *Research methods* **are specific strategies or techniques for systematically conducting research.** We will look at four of these methods: survey research, analysis of existing statistical data, field research, and experiments.

Survey Research

A *survey* **is a poll in which the researcher gathers facts or attempts to determine the relationships among facts.** Surveys are the most widely used research method in the social sciences because they make it possible to study things that are not directly observable—such as people's attitudes and beliefs—and to describe a population too large to observe directly (Babbie, 2004). Researchers frequently select a representative sample (a small group of respondents) from a larger population (the total group of people) to answer questions about their attitudes, opinions, or behavior. *Respondents* are people who provide data for analysis through interviews or questionnaires. The Gallup and Harris polls are among the most widely known large-scale surveys; however, government agencies such as the U.S. Census Bureau conduct a variety of surveys as well.

Unlike many polls that use various methods of gaining a representative sample of the larger population, the Census Bureau attempts to gain information from all persons in the United States. The decennial census occurs every 10 years, in the years ending in "0." The purpose of this census is to count the population and housing units of the entire United States. The population count determines how seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are apportioned; however, census figures are also used in formulating public policy and in planning and decision making in the private sector. The Census Bureau attempts to survey the *entire* U.S. population by using two forms—a "short form" of questions asked of *all* respondents, and a "long form" that contains additional questions asked of a *representative sample* of about one in six respondents. Statistics from the Census Bureau provide information that sociologists use in their research. An example is shown in the Census Profiles feature: "How People in the United States Self-Identify as to Race." Note that because of recent changes in the methods used to collect data by the Census Bureau, information on race from the 2000 census is not directly comparable with data from earlier censuses.

Survey data are collected by using questionnaires and interviews. A *questionnaire* is a printed research instrument containing a series of items to which subjects respond. Items are often in the form

▲ Conducting surveys and polls is an important means of gathering data from respondents. Some surveys take place on street corners; increasingly, however, such surveys are done by telephone, Internet, or other means.

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research methods specific strategies or techniques for systematically conducting research.

survey a poll in which the researcher gathers facts or attempts to determine the relationships among facts.

- **IRM:** See the IRM discussion questions focused on comparing and contrasting the research methods that sociologists use to analyze society.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Applied Sociology:** Take your class on a quick tour of the Gallup and Harris organizations' websites: **gallup.com** and **harrisinteractive.com.** Have them examine their statistical methods.

census profiles

How People in the United States Self-Identify as to Race

Beginning with Census 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau has made it possible for people responding to census questions regarding their race to mark more than one racial category. Although the vast majority of respondents select only one category (see below), the Census Bureau reports that in 2003 approximately 4.3 million people (1.48 percent of the population) in the United States self-identified as being of more than one race. As a result, if you look at the figures as set forth, they total more than 100 percent of the total population. How can this be? Simply stated, some individuals are counted at least twice, based on the number of racial categories they listed.
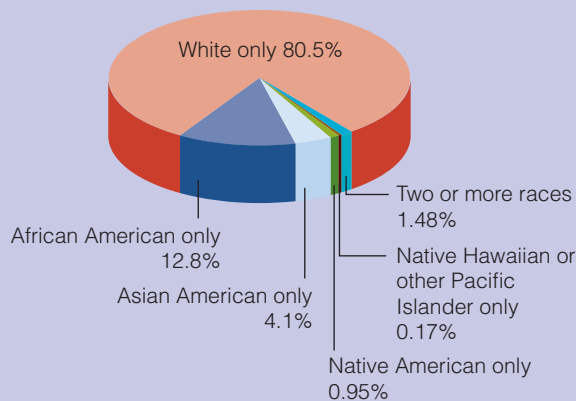
White only 80.5%

African American only 12.8%

Asian American only 4.1%

Native American only 0.95%

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander only 0.17%

Two or more races 1.48%

Race	Percentage of Total Population
White alone or in combination with one or more other races	81.8
African American alone or in combination with one or more other races	13.3
Asian American alone or in combination with one or more other races	4.6
Native American alone or in combination with one or more other races	1.5
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone or in combination with one or more other races	0.3
Total	101.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007.

of statements with which the respondent is asked to "agree" or "disagree." Questionnaires may be administered by interviewers in face-to-face encounters or by telephone, but the most commonly used technique is the *self-administered questionnaire,* which is either mailed to the respondent's home or administered to groups of respondents gathered at the same place at the same time. For example, the sociologist Kevin E. Early (1992) used survey data collected through questionnaires to test his hypothesis that suicide rates are lower among African Americans than among white Americans due to the influence of the black church. Data from questionnaires filled out by members of six African American churches in Florida supported Early's hypothesis that the church buffers some African Americans against harsh social forces—such as racism—that might otherwise lead to suicide.

Survey data may also be collected by interviews. An *interview* is a data-collection encounter in which an interviewer asks the respondent questions and records the answers. Survey research often uses *structured interviews,* in which the interviewer asks questions from a standardized questionnaire. Structured interviews tend to produce uniform or replicable data that can be elicited time after time by different interviews. For example, in addition to surveying congregation members, Early (1992) conducted interviews with pastors of African American churches to determine the pastors' opinions about the extent to which the African American church reinforces values and beliefs that discourage suicide.

Survey research is useful in describing the characteristics of a large population without having to interview each person in that population. In recent

- **U.S. Census:** The U.S. Census is the largest survey taken in this country. Explain how and why it is not a sample of respondents. Based on the most recent Census figures, 26 percent of women age 25 years and over had obtained a bachelor's degree as of 2004. Twenty percent of fathers with employed wives were the primary caregiver for their preschoolers. Have students discuss why such information might be important.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **U.S. Census:** Pull up the U.S. Census Bureau website (**census .gov**), and show your class the range of resources and reports that researchers use for secondary analysis.

| | 5.42–11.81 | | 11.82–13.08 | | 13.09–14.30 | | 14.31–15.89 | | 15.90–18.19 | | 18.20–83.76 | | Suppressed/undefined |
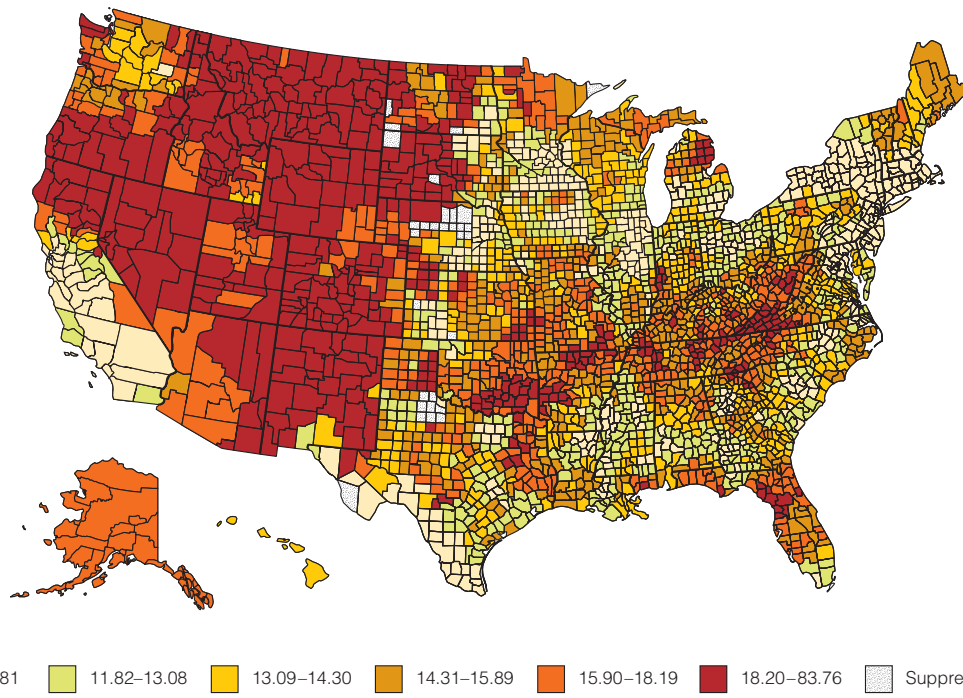
▲ **MAP 1.2** NATIONAL SUICIDE STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

Source: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/statistics/suicide_map.html

years, computer technology has enhanced research-ers' ability to do *multivariate analysis*—research involving more than two independent variables. For example, to assess the influence of religion on suicidal behavior among African Americans, a researcher might look at the effects of age, sex, income level, and other variables all at once to determine which of these independent variables influences suicide the most or least and how influential each variable is relative to the others. However, a weakness of survey research is the use of standardized questions; this approach tends to force respondents into categories in which they may or may not belong. Moreover, survey research relies on self-reported information, and some people may be less than truthful, particu-larly on emotionally charged issues such as suicide.

Secondary Analysis of Existing Data

In *secondary analysis,* researchers use existing material and analyze data that were originally collected by others. Existing data sources include public records, official reports of organizations or government agencies, and *raw data* collected by other researchers. For example, Durkheim used vital statistics (death records) that were originally collected for other purposes to examine the rela-tionship among variables such as age, marital status, and the circumstances surrounding the person's sui-cide. Today, many researchers studying suicide use data compiled by the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. For example, look at ▶ Map 1.2, "National Suicide Sta-tistics at a Glance," based on data compiled by the

interview a research method using a data-collection encounter in which an interviewer asks the respondent questions and records the answers.

secondary analysis a research method in which researchers use existing material and analyze data that were originally collected by others.

- **Research:** When your students look at Facebook or MySpace pages, they are conducting a form of content analysis. Pull up a sample in class, and demonstrate some of the content dimensions you would begin to analyze. What aspects of Facebook do your students notice that you miss?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

- **Active Learning:** Obtain permission ahead of time, divide your class into small groups, and have them conduct a content analysis of someone's purse or backpack. If your class is small enough and security is not a problem, use a bag from someone in another group. Ask groups to construct a description of the person who owns the purse or bag.

CDC, and try to develop several plausible sociological explanations for why suicide rates are the highest in the western and northwestern regions of the United States. Also note the patterns of high suicide rates among some counties in the central Midwest, the South, and Central Florida. Can you provide an explanation of why rates might be higher in these areas?

Secondary analysis also includes *content analysis*—the systematic examination of cultural artifacts or various forms of communication to extract thematic data and draw conclusions about social life. Among the materials studied are written records (such as books, diaries, poems, and graffiti), narratives and visual texts (such as movies, television shows, advertisements, and greeting cards), and material culture (such as music, art, and even garbage). In content analysis, researchers look for regular patterns, such as the frequency of suicide as a topic on television talk shows.

One strength of secondary analysis is that data are readily available and inexpensive. Another is that because the researcher often does not collect the data personally, the chances of bias may be reduced. In addition, the use of existing sources makes it possible to analyze longitudinal data (things that take place over a period of time or at several different points in time) to provide a historical context within which to locate original research. However, secondary analysis has inherent problems. For one thing, the researcher does not always know if the data are incomplete, unauthentic, or inaccurate.

Field Research

Field research is the study of social life in its natural setting: observing and interviewing people where they live, work, and play. Some kinds of behavior can be best studied by "being there"; a fuller understanding can be developed through observations, face-to-face discussions, and participation in events. Researchers use these methods to generate *qualitative* data: observations that are best described verbally rather than numerically.

Sociologists who are interested in observing social interaction as it occurs may use *participant observation*—the process of collecting systematic observations while being part of the activities of the group that the researcher is studying. Participant observation generates more "inside" information than simply asking questions or observing from the outside. For example, to learn more about how coroners make a ruling of "suicide" in connection with a death and to analyze what (if any) effect such a ruling has on the accuracy of "official" suicide statistics, the sociologist Steve Taylor (1982) engaged in participant observation at a coroner's office over a six-month period. As he followed a number of cases from the initial report of death through the various stages of investigation, Taylor learned that it was important to "be around" so that he could listen to discussions and ask the coroners questions because intuition and guesswork play a large part in some decisions to rule a death as a suicide.

Another approach to field research is the *ethnography*—a detailed study of the life and activities of a group of people by researchers who may live with that group over a period of years (Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg, 1991). Unlike participant observation, ethnographic studies usually take place over a longer period of time. For example, the sociologist Elijah Anderson (1990) conducted a study in two areas of a major city—one African American and low-income, the other racially mixed but becoming increasingly middle- to upper-income and white. As Anderson spent numerous hours on the streets, talking and listening to the people, he was able to document changes in residents' everyday lives brought about by increased drug abuse, loss of jobs, decreases in city services despite increases in taxes, and the eventual exodus of middle-income people from the central city.

Experiments

An *experiment* is a carefully designed situation in which the researcher studies the impact of certain variables on subjects' attitudes or behavior. Experiments are designed to create "real-life" situations, ideally under controlled circumstances, in which the influence of different variables can be modified and measured. Conventional experiments require that subjects be divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The *experimental group* contains the subjects who are exposed to an independent variable (the experimental

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▲ Elijah Anderson (shown above) conducted an ethnographic study of two very different Philadelphia neighborhoods that became the basis for his landmark study, *Code of the Street*. What can researchers learn from ethnographic research that might be less apparent if they used other methods to study human behavior?
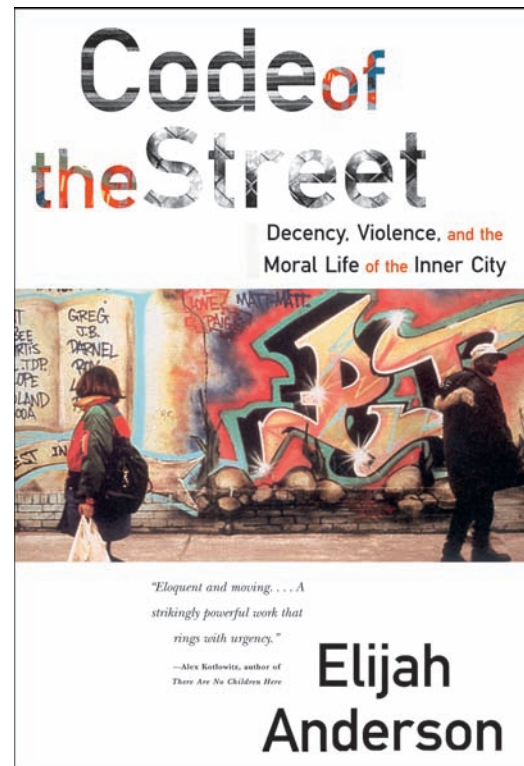
Cover used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Cover photo © Camilo Jose Vergara.

condition) to study its effect on them. The *control group* **contains the subjects who are not exposed to the independent variable.** For example, the sociologist Arturo Biblarz and colleagues (1991) examined the effects of media violence and depictions of suicide on attitudes toward suicide by showing one group of subjects (an experimental group) a film about suicide, while a second (another experimental group) saw a film about violence, and a third (the control group) saw a film containing neither suicide nor violence. The research found some evidence that people exposed to suicidal acts or violence in the media may be more likely to demonstrate an emotional state favorable to suicidal behavior, particularly if they are already "at risk" for suicide.

Researchers may use experiments when they want to demonstrate that a cause-and-effect relationship exists between variables. In order to show that a change in one variable causes a change in another, three conditions must be satisfied: (1) a correlation between the two variables must be shown to exist (*correlation* exists when two variables are associated more frequently than could be expected by

content analysis the systematic examination of cultural artifacts or various forms of communication to extract thematic data and draw conclusions about social life.

participant observation a research method in which researchers collect data while being part of the activities of the group being studied.

ethnography a detailed study of the life and activities of a group of people by researchers who may live with that group over a period of years.

experiment a research method involving a carefully designed situation in which the researcher studies the impact of certain variables on subjects' attitudes or behavior.

experimental group in an experiment, the group that contains the subjects who are exposed to an independent variable (the experimental condition) to study its effect on them.

control group in an experiment, the group that contains the subjects who are not exposed to the independent variable.

correlation a relationship that exists when two variables are associated more frequently than could be expected by chance.

- **Research:** In a 2008 study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* men were found to look at their partners in a more negative light after meeting a single, attractive woman. In contrast, women were more likely to work to strengthen their current relationships after meeting an available, attractive man. Help students understand the basics of experimental method by asking them to design a study that might produce such results.

▲ Do extremely violent video games cause an increase in violent tendencies in their users? Experiments are one way to test this hypothesis.

© Cate Gillon/Getty Images

chance), (2) the independent variable must have occurred prior to the dependent variable, and (3) any change in the dependent variable must not have been due to an extraneous variable—one outside the stated hypothesis.

The major advantage of an experiment is the researcher's control over the environment and the ability to isolate the experimental variable. Because many experiments require relatively little time and money and can be conducted with limited numbers of subjects, it is possible for researchers to replicate an experiment several times by using different groups of subjects (Babbie, 2004). Perhaps the greatest limitation of experiments is that they are artificial: Social processes that are set up by researchers or that take place in a laboratory setting are often not the same as real-life occurrences.

Ethical Issues in Sociological Research

The study of people ("human subjects") raises vital questions about ethical concerns in sociological research. Researchers are required to obtain written "informed consent" statements from the persons they study—but what constitutes "informed consent"? And how do researchers protect the identity and confidentiality of their sources?

The American Sociological Association (ASA) *Code of Ethics* (1997) sets forth certain basic standards that sociologists must follow in conducting research. Among these standards are the following:

1. Researchers must endeavor to maintain objectivity and integrity in their research by disclosing their research findings in full and including all possible interpretations of the data (even when these interpretations do not support their own viewpoints).
2. Researchers must safeguard the participants' right to privacy and dignity while protecting them from harm.
3. Researchers must protect confidential information provided by participants, even when this information is not considered to be "privileged" (legally protected, as is the case between doctor and patient and between attorney and client) and legal pressure is applied to reveal this information.
4. Researchers must acknowledge research collaboration and assistance they receive from others and disclose all sources of financial support.

Sociologists are obligated to adhere to this code and to protect research participants; however, many ethical issues arise in conducting research. For example, the sociologist William Zellner (1978) wanted to look at fatal single-occupant automobile accidents to determine if some drivers were actually committing suicide. To examine this issue further, he sought to interview the family, friends, and acquaintances of persons killed in single-car crashes to determine if the deaths were possibly intentional. To recruit respondents, Zellner told them that he hoped the research would reduce the number of automobile accidents in the future. He did not mention that he suspected "autocide" might have occurred in the case of their friend or loved one. From his data, Zellner concluded that at least 12 percent of the fatal single-occupant crashes were suicides—and that these crashes sometimes also killed or critically injured other people as well. However, Zellner's research raised important research questions: Was his research unethical? Did he misrepresent the reasons for his study?

In this chapter, we have looked at how theory and research work together to provide us with insights on human behavior. Theory and research are the "lifeblood" of sociology. Theory provides the framework

- **Research:** Have students go online to the American Sociological Association's website (**asanet.org**) and then pull up the Code of Ethics page. Have them follow links from this page to explore more specific issues in research ethics.
- **For Discussion:** What would violations of the ASA Code of Ethics look like? Have students brainstorm about scenarios that would and would not breach these ethical standards.

- **For Discussion:** Ask students to evaluate Zellner's methodology for his research. Do the ends justify his means? What are some other choices that he could have made in designing his research model?

you can make a difference

Responding to a Cry for Help

Chad felt that he knew Frank quite well. After all, they had been roommates for two years at State U. As a result, Chad was taken aback when Frank became very withdrawn, sleeping most of the day and mumbling about how unhappy he was. One evening, Chad began to wonder whether he needed to do something because Frank had begun to talk about "ending it all" and saying things like "The world will be better off without me." If you were in Chad's place, would you know the warning signs that you should look for? Do you know what you might do to help someone like Frank?

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to funding research, education, and treatment programs for depression and suicide prevention, suggests that each of us should be aware of these warning signs of suicide:

- *Talking about death or suicide.* Be alert to such statements as "Everyone would be better off without me." Sometimes, individuals who are thinking about suicide speak as if they are saying good-bye.
- *Making plans.* The person may do such things as giving away valuable items, paying off debts, and otherwise "putting things in order."
- *Showing signs of depression.* Although most depressed people are not suicidal, most suicidal people are depressed. Serious depression tends to be expressed as a loss of pleasure or withdrawal from activities that a person has previously enjoyed. It is especially important to note whether five of the following symptoms are present almost every day for several weeks: change in appetite or weight, change in sleeping patterns, speaking or moving with unusual speed or slowness, loss of interest in usual activities, decrease in sexual drive, fatigue, feelings of guilt or worthlessness, and indecisiveness or inability to concentrate.

The possibility of suicide must be taken seriously: Most people who commit suicide give some warning to family members or friends. Instead of attempting to argue the person out of suicide or saying "You have so much to live for," let the person know that you care and understand, and that his or her problems can be solved. Urge the person to see a school counselor, a physician, or a mental health professional immediately. If you think the person is in imminent danger of committing suicide, you should take the person to an emergency room or a walk-in clinic at a psychiatric hospital. It is best to remain with the person until help is available.

For more information about suicide prevention, contact the following organizations:

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (**www.afsp.org**), 120 Wall Street, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10005. (888) 333-2377. AFSP is a leading not-for-profit organization dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research and education.
- Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (**www.save.org**) is a resource index with links to other valuable resources, such as "Questions Most Frequently Asked on Suicide," "Symptoms of Depression and Danger Signs of Suicide," and "What to Do If Someone You Love Is Suicidal."
- Befrienders Worldwide (**www.befrienders.org**) is a website providing information for anyone feeling depressed or suicidal or who is worried about a friend or relative who feels that way. It includes a directory of suicide and crisis helplines.

for analysis; research provides opportunities for us to use our sociological imagination to generate new knowledge. Our challenge today is to find new ways of integrating knowledge and action and to include all people in the theory and research process in order to help fill the gaps in our existing knowledge about social life and how it is shaped by gender, race, class, age, and the broader social and cultural context in which everyday life occurs (Cancian, 1992). Each of us can and should find new ways to integrate knowledge and action into our daily lives (see the You Can Make a Difference box).

chapter review

● **What is sociology, and how can it help us understand ourselves and others?**

Sociology is the systematic study of human society and social interaction. We study sociology to understand how human behavior is shaped by group life and, in turn, how group life is affected by individuals. Our culture tends to emphasize individualism, and sociology pushes us to consider more complex connections between our personal lives and the larger world.

● **What is the sociological imagination?**

According to C. Wright Mills, the sociological imagination helps us understand how seemingly personal troubles, such as suicide, are actually related to larger social forces. It is the ability to see the relationship between individual experiences and the larger society.

● **What are the major contributions of early sociologists such as Durkheim, Marx, and Weber?**

Durkheim argued that societies are built on social facts, that rapid social change produces strains in society, and that the loss of shared values and purpose can lead to a condition of anomie. Marx stressed that within society there is a continuous clash between the owners of the means of production and the workers, who have no choice but to sell their labor to others. According to Weber, sociology should be value free and people should become more aware of the role that bureaucracies play in daily life.

● **How did Simmel's perspective differ from that of other early sociologists?**

Whereas other sociologists primarily focused on society as a whole, Simmel explored small social groups and argued that society is best seen as a web of patterned interactions among people.

● **What are the major contemporary sociological perspectives?**

Functionalist perspectives assume that society is a stable, orderly system characterized by societal consensus. Conflict perspectives argue that society is a continuous power struggle among competing groups, often based on class, race, ethnicity, or gender. Symbolic interactionist perspectives focus on how people make sense of their everyday social interactions. Postmodern theorists believe that entirely new ways of examining social life are needed and that it is time to move beyond functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist approaches.

● **How does quantitative research differ from qualitative research?**

Quantitative research focuses on data that can be measured numerically (comparing rates of suicide, for example). Qualitative research focuses on interpretive description (words) rather than statistics to analyze underlying meanings and patterns of social relationships.

● **What are the key steps in the conventional research process?**

A conventional research process based on deduction and the quantitative approach has these key steps: (1) selecting and defining the research problem; (2) reviewing previous research; (3) formulating the hypothesis, which involves constructing variables; (4) developing the research design; (5) collecting and analyzing the data; and (6) drawing conclusions and reporting the findings.

● **What steps are often taken by researchers using the qualitative approach?**

A researcher taking the qualitative approach might (1) formulate the problem to be studied instead of creating a hypothesis, (2) collect and analyze the data, and (3) report the results.

● **What are the major types of research methods?**

The main types of research methods are surveys, secondary analysis, field research, and experiments. Surveys are polls used to gather facts about people's attitudes, opinions, or behaviors; a representative sample of respondents provides data through questionnaires or interviews. In secondary analysis, researchers analyze existing data, such as a government census, or cultural artifacts, such as a diary. In field research, sociologists study social life in its natural setting through participant observation, interviews, and ethnography. Through experiments, researchers study the impact of certain variables on their subjects.

key terms

anomie 12

conflict perspectives 19

content analysis 34

control group 35

correlation 35

dependent variable 28

ethnography 34

experiment 34

experimental group 34

functionalist perspectives 17

high-income countries 6

hypothesis 28

independent variable 28

industrialization 8

interview 32

latent functions 18

low-income countries 7

macrolevel analysis 20

manifest functions 18

microlevel analysis 21

middle-income countries 6

participant observation 34

positivism 10

postmodern perspectives 22

qualitative research 27

quantitative research 25

reliability 29

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social Darwinism 11

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society 4

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survey 31

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     perspectives 21

theory 16

urbanization 9

validity 29

variable 28

questions for critical thinking

1. What does C. Wright Mills mean when he says that the sociological imagination helps us "to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society"? (Mills, 1959b: 6).

2. As a sociologist, how would you remain objective yet still see the world as others see it? Would you make subjective decisions when trying to understand the perspectives of others?

3. Early social thinkers were concerned about stability in times of rapid change. In our more global world, is stability still a primary goal? Or is constant conflict important for the well-being of all humans? Use the conflict and functionalist perspectives to bolster your analysis.

turning to video

Watch the CBS video *Census 2010* (running time 2:25), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video reports the purpose of the census and the efforts to count everyone. (See page xiv for a list of Census Profiles included in this text.) As you watch the video, think about the saying "Stand up and be counted," and consider the ways in which your community may be affected by the results of the census. After you've watched the video, consider these questions: Were you counted in the 2010 Census? Why were you or weren't you?

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- Alternatively, you may search by this book's title to locate its complimentary resources.

At home, I kept opening the refrigerator and cupboards, wishing for American foods to magically appear. I wanted what the other kids had: Bundt cakes and casseroles, Cheetos and Doritos. . . . The more American foods I ate, the more my desires multiplied, outpacing my interest in Vietnamese food. I had memorized the menu at Dairy Cone, the sugary options in the cereal aisle at Meijer's [grocery], and every inch of the candy display at Gas City: the rows of gum, the rows of chocolate, the rows without chocolate. . . . I knew Reese's peanut butter cups, Twix, Heath Crunch, Nestlé Crunch, Baby Ruth, Bar None, Oh Henry!, Mounds and Almond Joy, Snickers, Mr. Goodbar[,] . . . Milk Duds, [and] Junior Mints. I dreamed of taking it all, plus the freezer full of popsicles and nutty, chocolate-coated ice cream drumsticks. I dreamed of Little Debbie, Dolly Madison, Swiss Miss, all the bakeries presided over by prim and proper girls.

—Bich Minh Nguyen (2007: 50–51), an English professor at Purdue University, describing how food served as a powerful cultural symbol in her childhood as a Vietnamese American

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▲ **How is the food that we consume linked to our identity and the larger culture of which we are a part? Do people who identify with more than one culture face more-complex issues when it comes to food preferences?**

Growing up in Oakland . . . I came to dislike Chinese food. That may have been, in part, because I was Chinese and desperately wanted to be American. I was American, of course, but being born and raised in Chinatown—in a restaurant my parents operated, in fact—I didn't feel much like the people I saw outside Chinatown, or in books and movies.

It didn't help that for lunch at school, my mother would pack—
Ai ya!—Chinese food. Barbecued pork sandwiches, not ham and
cheese; Chinese pears, not apples. At home—that is, at the New
Eastern Café—it was Chinese food night after night. No wonder I
would sneak off, on the way to Chinese school, to Hamburger Gus
for a helping of thick-cut French fries.

—author Ben Fong-Torres (2007: 11) describing his experiences as a Chinese American who desired
to "Americanize" his eating habits

Chapter Focus Question

What part does culture play in shaping people and the social relations in which they participate?

Why are these authors concerned about the food they ate as children? For all of us, the food we consume is linked to our identity and to the larger culture of which we are a part. For people who identify with more than one culture, food and eating patterns may become a very complex issue. To some people, food consumption is nothing more than how we meet a basic biological need; however, many sociologists are interested in food and eating because of their cultural significance in our lives (see Mennell, 1996; Mennell, Murcott, and van Otterloo, 1993).

What is culture? **Culture is the knowledge, language, values, customs, and material objects that are passed from person to person and from one generation to the next in a human group or society.** As previously defined, a *society* is a large social grouping that occupies the same geographic territory and is subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Whereas a society is composed of people, a culture is composed of ideas, behavior, and material possessions. Society and culture are interdependent; neither could exist without the other.

In this chapter, we examine society and culture, with special attention to how our material culture, including the food we eat, is related to our beliefs, values, and actions. We also analyze culture from functionalist, conflict, symbolic interactionist, and postmodern perspectives. Before reading on, test your knowledge of food and culture by answering the questions in the Sociology and Everyday Life box.

In this chapter

- Culture and Society in a Changing World
- Components of Culture
- Technology, Cultural Change, and Diversity
- A Global Popular Culture?
- Sociological Analysis of Culture
- Culture in the Future

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Global Food and Culture?

True	False	
T	F	1. Cheese is a universal food enjoyed by people of all nations and cultures.
T	F	2. Giving round-shaped foods to the parents of new babies is considered to be lucky in some cultures.
T	F	3. Wedding cakes are made of similar ingredients in all countries, regardless of culture or religion.
T	F	4. Food is an important part of religious observance for many different faiths.
T	F	5. In authentic Chinese cuisine, cooking methods are divided into "yin" and "yang" qualities.
T	F	6. Because of the fast pace of life in the United States, virtually everyone relies on mixes and instant foods at home and fast foods when eating out.
T	F	7. Potatoes are the most popular mainstay in the diet of first- and second-generation immigrants who have arrived in the United States over the past forty years.
T	F	8. According to sociologists, individuals may be offended when a person from another culture does not understand local food preferences or the cultural traditions associated with eating even if the person is obviously an "outsider" or a "tourist."

Answers on page 44.

Culture and Society in a Changing World

How important is culture in determining how people think and act on a daily basis? Simply stated, culture is essential for our individual survival and our communication with other people. We rely on culture because we are not born with the information we need to survive. We do not know how to take care of ourselves, how to behave, how to dress, what to eat, which gods to worship, or how to make or spend money. We must learn about culture through interaction, observation, and imitation in order to participate as members of the group. Sharing a common culture with others simplifies day-to-day interactions. However, we must also understand other cultures and the world views therein.

Just as culture is essential for individuals, it is also fundamental for the survival of societies. Culture has been described as "the common denominator that makes the actions of individuals intelligible to the group" (Haviland, 1993: 30). Some system of rule making and enforcing necessarily exists in all societies. What would happen, for example, if *all* rules and laws in the United States suddenly disappeared? At a basic level, we need rules in order to navigate our bicycles and cars through traffic. At a more abstract level, we need laws to establish and protect our rights.

In order to survive, societies need rules about civility and tolerance. We are not born knowing how to express certain kinds of feelings toward others. When a person shows kindness or hatred toward another individual, some people may say "Well, that's just human nature" when explaining this behavior. Such a statement is built on the assumption that what we do as human beings is determined by *nature* (our biological and genetic makeup) rather than *nurture* (our social environment)—in other words, that our behavior is instinctive. An *instinct* is an unlearned, biologically determined behavior pattern common to all members of a species that predictably occurs whenever certain environmental conditions exist. For example, spiders do not learn to build webs. They build webs because of instincts that are triggered by basic biological needs such as protection and reproduction.

Humans do not have instincts. What we most often think of as instinctive behavior can actually be attributed to reflexes and drives. A *reflex* is

- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disc provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint slides, videos, PowerPoint and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.
- **Quote, Unquote:** Have your class respond to the following: "The illiterate of the twenty-first century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn" (Alvin Toffler). How might Toffler's remark apply to contemporary culture?
- **Active Learning:** Anthropologist Clifford Geertz defined *culture* as the total way of life of a people. Ask your students to write down a definition of this word as they begin this chapter.

an unlearned, biologically determined involuntary response to some physical stimuli (such as a sneeze after breathing some pepper in through the nose or the blinking of an eye when a speck of dust gets in it). *Drives* are unlearned, biologically determined impulses common to all members of a species that satisfy needs such as those for sleep, food, water, or sexual gratification. Reflexes and drives do not determine how people will behave in human societies; even the expression of these biological characteristics is channeled by culture. For example, we may be taught that the "appropriate" way to sneeze (an involuntary response) is to use a tissue or turn our head away from others (a learned response). Similarly, we may learn to sleep on mats or in beds. Most contemporary sociologists agree that culture and social learning, not nature, account for virtually all of our behavior patterns.

Because humans cannot rely on instincts in order to survive, culture is a "tool kit" for survival. According to the sociologist Ann Swidler (1986: 273), culture is a "tool kit of symbols, stories, rituals, and world views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems." The tools we choose will vary according to our own personality and the situations we face. We are not puppets on a string; we make choices from among the items in our own "tool box."

Material Culture and Nonmaterial Culture

Our cultural tool box is divided into two major parts: material culture and nonmaterial culture (Ogburn, 1966/1922). *Material culture* consists of the physical or tangible creations that members of a society make, use, and share. Initially, items of material culture begin as raw materials or resources such as ore, trees, and oil. Through technology, these raw materials are transformed into usable items (ranging from books and computers to guns and tanks). Sociologists define technology as the knowledge, techniques, and tools that make it possible for people to transform resources into usable forms, and the knowledge and skills required to use them after they are developed. From this standpoint, technology is both concrete and abstract. For example, technology includes a pair of scissors and the knowledge and skill necessary

to make them from iron, carbon, and chromium (Westrum, 1991). At the most basic level, material culture is important because it is our buffer against the environment. For example, we create shelter to protect ourselves from the weather and to give ourselves privacy. Beyond the survival level, we make, use, and share objects that are interesting and important to us. Why are you wearing the particular clothes you have on today? Perhaps you're communicating something about yourself, such as where you attend school, what kind of music you like, or where you went on vacation.

Nonmaterial culture consists of the abstract or intangible human creations of society that influence people's behavior. Language, beliefs, values, rules of behavior, family patterns, and political systems are examples of nonmaterial culture. Even the gestures that we use in daily conversation are part of the nonmaterial culture in a society. As many international travelers and businesspeople have learned, it is important to know what gestures mean in various nations (see ▶ Figure 2.1). Although the "hook 'em Horns" sign—the pinky and index finger raised up and the middle two fingers folded down— is used by fans to express their support for University of Texas at Austin sports teams, for millions of Italians the same gesture means "Your spouse is being unfaithful." In Argentina, rotating one's index finger around the front of the ear means "You have a telephone call," but in the United States it usually suggests that a person is "crazy" (Axtell, 1991). Similarly, making a circle with your thumb and index finger indicates "OK" in the United States, but in Tunisia it means "I'll kill you!" (Samovar and Porter, 1991).

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culture the knowledge, language, values, customs, and material objects that are passed from person to person and from one generation to the next in a human group or society.

material culture a component of culture that consists of the physical or tangible creations (such as clothing, shelter, and art) that members of a society make, use, and share.

nonmaterial culture a component of culture that consists of the abstract or intangible human creations of society (such as attitudes, beliefs, and values) that influence people's behavior.

- **For Discussion:** Ask students to compare their answers on the Global Food and Culture quiz. What do our food and eating habits reveal about our culture?
- **Active Learning:** Working in small groups, students should list examples of material culture. Next, ask them to find examples of nonmaterial culture that some of those items on their first list might represent.

- **Active Learning:** Take your students online to explore material culture around the world. Take a look at **Amazon.com**. At the bottom of the home page you will find links to the company's international sites: Canada, United Kingdom, France, Japan, Germany, and China. Have them compare differences in style and substance. Other sites that have gone international include McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and Apple.

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Global Food and Culture

1. **False.** Although cheese is a popular food in many cultures, most of the people living in China find cheese very distasteful and prefer delicacies such as duck's feet.

2. **True.** Round foods such as pears, grapes, and moon cakes are given to celebrate the birth of babies because the shape of the food is believed to symbolize family unity.

3. **False.** Although wedding cakes are a tradition in virtually all nations and cultures, the ingredients of the cake—as well as other foods served at the celebration—vary widely at this important family celebration. The traditional wedding cake in Italy is made from biscuits, for example, whereas in Norway the wedding cake is made from bread topped with cream, cheese, and syrup.

4. **True.** Many faiths, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, have dietary rules and rituals that involve food; however, these practices and beliefs vary widely among individuals and communities. For some people, food forms an integral part of religion in their life; for others, food is less relevant.

5. **True.** Just as foods are divided into yin foods (e.g., bean sprouts, cabbage, and carrots) and yang foods (beef, chicken, eggs, and mushrooms), cooking methods are also referred to as having yin qualities (e.g., boiling, poaching, and steaming) or yang qualities (deep-frying, roasting, and stir-frying). For many Chinese Americans, yin and yang are complementary pairs that should be incorporated into all aspects of social life, including the ingredients and preparation of foods.

6. **False.** Although more people now rely on fast foods, there is a "slow-food" movement afoot to encourage people to prepare their food from scratch for a healthier lifestyle. Also, some cultural and religious communities—such as the Amish of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana—encourage families to prepare their food from scratch and to preserve their own fruits, vegetables, and meats. Rural families are more likely to grow their own food or prepare it from scratch than are families residing in urban areas.

7. **False.** Rice is a popular mainstay in the diets of people from diverse cultural backgrounds who have arrived in the United States over the past four decades. Groups ranging from the Hmong and Vietnamese to Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans use rice as a central ingredient in their diets. Among some in the younger generations, however, food choices have become increasingly Americanized, and items such as french fries and pizza have become very popular.

8. **True.** Cultural diversity is a major issue in eating, and people in some cultures, religions, and nations expect that even an "outsider" will have a basic familiarity with, and respect for, their traditions and practices. However, social analysts also suggest that we should not generalize or imply that certain characteristics apply to *all* people in a cultural group or nation.

Sources: Based on Better Health Channel, 2007; Ohio State University, 2007; and PBS, 2005a.

As the example of hand gestures shows, a central component of nonmaterial culture is **beliefs—the mental acceptance or conviction that certain things are true or real.** Beliefs may be based on tradition, faith, experience, scientific research, or some combination of these. Faith in a supreme being and trust in another person are examples of beliefs. We may also have a belief in items of material culture. When we travel by airplane, for instance, we believe that it is possible to fly at 33,000 feet and to arrive at our destination even though we know that we could not do this without the airplane itself.

Cultural Universals

Because all humans face the same basic needs (such as for food, clothing, and shelter), we engage in similar activities that contribute to our survival. Anthropologist George Murdock (1945: 124) compiled a list of more than seventy *cultural universals*—**customs and**

- **Extra Examples:** Ask what the following statement implies about culture, from business etiquette expert Lydia Ramsey: "The American-style handshake with a firm grip, two quick pumps, eye contact, and a smile is not universal. Variations in handshakes are based on cultural differences, not on personality or values. The Japanese give a light handshake. Germans offer a firm shake with one pump. . . . Middle Eastern people will continue shaking your hand throughout the greeting."

- **Active Learning:** Engage the class in creating a list of cultural universals such as economics, family, religion, government, art, recreation, and education. In small groups, have them list examples of how these universals are manifested differently in places around the world.

a. HORNS: "Hook 'em Horns" or "your spouse is unfaithful"

b. CIRCLE: "OK (absolutely fine)" or "I'll kill you"

c. THUMBS UP: "Great" or an obscenity
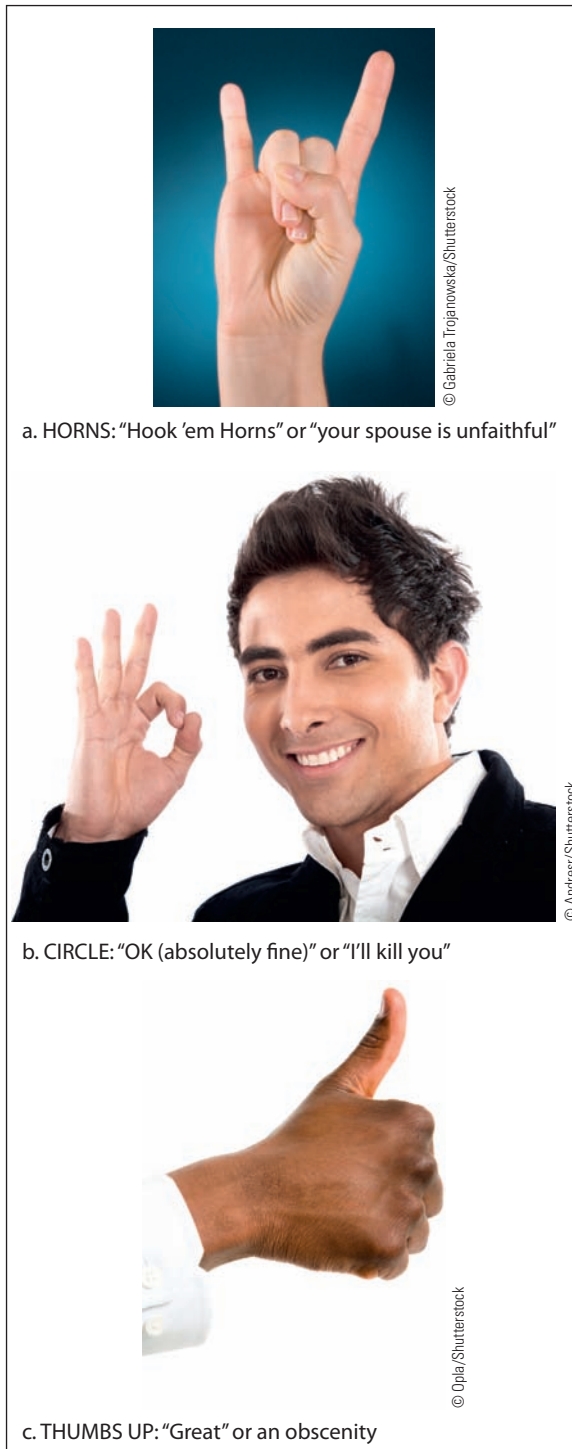
▲ **FIGURE 2.1 HAND GESTURES WITH DIFFERENT MEANINGS**

As international travelers and businesspeople have learned, hand gestures may have very different meanings in different cultures.

practices that occur across all societies. His categories included appearance (such as bodily adornment and hairstyles), activities (such as sports, dancing, games, joking, and visiting), social institutions (such as family, law, and religion), and customary practices (such as cooking, folklore, gift giving, and hospitality). Whereas these general customs and practices may be present in all cultures, their specific forms vary from one group to another and from one time to another within the same group. For example, although telling jokes may be a universal practice, what is considered to be a joke in one society may be an insult in another.

How do sociologists view cultural universals? In terms of their functions, cultural universals are useful because they ensure the smooth and continual operation of society (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952). A society must meet basic human needs by providing food, shelter, and some degree of safety for its members so that they will survive. Children and other new members (such as immigrants) must be taught the ways of the group. A society must also settle disputes and deal with people's emotions. All the while, the self-interest of individuals must be balanced with the needs of society as a whole. Cultural universals help fulfill these important functions of society.

From another perspective, however, cultural universals are not the result of functional necessity; these practices may have been *imposed* by members of one society on members of another. Similar customs and practices do not necessarily constitute cultural universals. They may be an indication that a conquering nation used its power to enforce certain types of behavior on those who were defeated (Sargent, 1987). Sociologists might ask questions such as "Who determines the dominant cultural patterns?" For example, although religion is a cultural universal, traditional religious practices of indigenous peoples (those who first live in an area) have often been repressed and even stamped out by subsequent settlers or conquerors who hold political and economic power over them. However, many people believe there is cause for optimism in the

beliefs the mental acceptance or conviction that certain things are true or real.

cultural universals customs and practices that occur across all societies.

• **IRM:** See the IRM for an activity that asks students about the worst thing they ever ate, which helps to get the discussion started about *ethnocentrism.*

◀ Food is a universal type of material culture, but what people eat and how they eat it vary widely, as shown in these cross-cultural examples from the United Arab Emirates (upper left), Holland (upper right), and China (bottom). What might be some reasons for the similarities and differences that you see in these photos?

United States because the democratic ideas of this nation provide more guarantees of religious freedom than do some other nations.

Components of Culture

Even though the specifics of individual cultures vary widely, all cultures have four common nonmaterial cultural components: symbols, language, values, and norms. These components contribute to both harmony and strife in a society.

Symbols

A *symbol* is anything that meaningfully represents something else. Culture could not exist without symbols because there would be no shared meanings among people. Symbols can simultaneously produce loyalty and animosity, and love and hate. They help us communicate ideas such as love or patriotism because they express abstract concepts with visible objects. For example, flags can stand for patriotism, nationalism, school spirit, or religious beliefs held by members of a group or society. Symbols can stand for love (a heart on a valentine), peace (a dove), or hate (a Nazi swastika), just as words can be used to convey these meanings. Symbols can also transmit other types of ideas. A siren is a symbol that denotes an emergency situation and sends the message to clear the way immediately. Gestures are also a symbolic form of communication—a movement of the head, body, or hands can express our ideas or feelings to others. For example, in the United States,

- **For Discussion:** Ask students this: What are the most important symbols that reflect your cultural values—a U.S. flag, a rock t-shirt, an infant, a shiny new car, a successful relationship, the mall, etc.? (Provide students with some sample images.)
- **Global Perspective:** More than one billion people are believed to speak some form of English. For every native speaker there are three nonnative speakers. Three-quarters of the world's mail is in English, and four-fifths of electronic information is stored in English.
- **Extra Examples:** In 2005, Indian government statistics reported 6,787 dowry-related murders and suicides, caused by husbands' dissatisfaction with their wives' dowry payments (National Crime Records Bureau). Have students discuss violence against women across cultures. Can different cultures learn from one another in these matters? Do they have the right to judge one another?

◀ The customs and rituals associated with weddings are one example of nonmaterial culture. What can you infer about beliefs and attitudes concerning marriage in the societies represented by these photographs?

pointing toward your chest with your thumb or finger is a symbol for "me."

Symbols affect our thoughts about class. For example, how a person is dressed or the kind of car that he or she drives is often at least subconsciously used as a measure of that individual's economic standing or position. With regard to clothing, although many people wear casual clothes on a daily basis, where the clothing was purchased is sometimes used as a symbol of social status. Were the items purchased at Wal-Mart, Old Navy, Abercrombie & Fitch, or Saks Fifth Avenue? What indicators are there on the items of clothing—such as the Nike *swoosh,* some other logo, or a brand name—that indicate something about the status of the product? Automobiles and their logos are also symbols that have cultural meaning beyond the shopping environment in which they originate.

Finally, symbols may be specific to a given culture and have special meaning to individuals who share that culture but not necessarily to other people. Consider, for example, the use of certain foods to celebrate the Chinese New Year: Bamboo shoots and black moss seaweed both represent wealth, peanuts and noodles symbolize a long life, and tangerines represent good luck. What foods in other cultures represent "good luck" or prosperity?

> **symbol** anything that meaningfully represents something else.

- **Recent Events:** Have students examine the U.S. debate around same-sex marriage as a cultural phenomenon. Have them identify ways in which the culture of marriage has changed in the United States (e.g., earlier condemnation of interracial marriage and vows that wives should "obey" husbands). How has marriage changed in our culture and in other cultures?

- **Research:** Have students research the field of semiotics, which studies signs and symbols and their relation to each other and to the world. Have them identify and define semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics, as they apply to the study of semiotics.

▲ Would you expect the user of this device to be impoverished or affluent? What do possessions indicate about their owner's social class?

Language

Language is a set of symbols that expresses ideas and enables people to think and communicate with one another. Verbal (spoken) language and nonverbal (written or gestured) language help us describe reality. One of our most important human attributes is the ability to use language to share our experiences, feelings, and knowledge with others. Language can create visual images in our head, such as "the kittens look like little cotton balls" (Samovar and Porter, 1991). Language also allows people to distinguish themselves from outsiders and maintain group boundaries and solidarity (Farb, 1973).

Language is not solely a human characteristic. Other animals use sounds, gestures, touch, and smell to communicate with one another, but they use signals with fixed meanings that are limited to the immediate situation (the present) and that cannot encompass past or future situations. For example, chimpanzees can use elements of Standard American Sign Language and manipulate physical objects to make "sentences," but they are not physically endowed with the vocal apparatus needed to form the consonants required for oral language. As a result, nonhuman animals cannot transmit the more complex aspects of culture to their offspring. Humans have a unique ability to manipulate symbols to express abstract concepts and rules and thus to create and transmit culture from one generation to the next.

Language and Social Reality

Does language *create* or simply *communicate* reality? Anthropological linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf have suggested that language not only expresses our thoughts and perceptions but also influences our perception of reality. According to the *Sapir–Whorf hypothesis,* **language shapes the view of reality of its speakers** (Whorf, 1956; Sapir, 1961). If people are able to think only through language, then language must precede thought. If language actually shapes the reality we perceive and experience, then some aspects of the world are viewed as important and others are virtually neglected because people know the world only in terms of the vocabulary and grammar of their own language.

If language does create reality, are we trapped by our language? Many social scientists agree that the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis overstates the relationship between language and our thoughts and behavior patterns. Although they acknowledge that language has many subtle meanings and that words used by people reflect their central concerns, most sociologists contend that language may *influence* our behavior and interpretation of social reality but does not *determine* it.

Language and Gender

What is the relationship between language and gender? What cultural assumptions about women and men does language

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table 2.1
Language and Gender

Male Term	Female Term	Neutral Term
Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Chairman	Chairwoman	Chair, chairperson
Congressman	Congresswoman	Representative
Policeman	Policewoman	Police officer
Fireman	Lady fireman	Firefighter
Airline steward	Airline stewardess	Flight attendant
Race car driver	Woman race car driver	Race car driver
Professor	Teacher/female professor	Professor
Doctor	Lady/woman doctor	Doctor
Bachelor	Old maid	Single person
Male prostitute	Prostitute	Prostitute
Welfare recipient	Welfare mother	Welfare recipient
Worker/employee	Working mother	Worker/employee
Janitor/maintenance man	Maid/cleaning lady	Custodial attendant

Sources: Adapted from Korsmeyer, 1981: 122; and Miller and Swift, 1991.

reflect? Scholars have suggested several ways in which language and gender are intertwined:

- The English language ignores women by using the masculine form to refer to human beings in general (Basow, 1992). For example, the word *man* is used generically in words such as *chairman* and *mankind,* which allegedly include both men and women.
- Use of the pronouns *he* and *she* affects our thinking about gender. Pronouns show the gender of the person we *expect* to be in a particular occupation. For instance, nurses, secretaries, and schoolteachers are usually referred to as *she,* but doctors, engineers, electricians, and presidents are usually referred to as *he* (Baron, 1986).
- Words have positive connotations when relating to male power, prestige, and leadership; when related to women, they carry negative overtones of weakness, inferiority, and immaturity (Epstein, 1988: 224). ■ Table 2.1 shows how gender-based language reflects the traditional acceptance of men and women in certain positions, implying that the jobs are different when filled by women rather than men.

- A language-based predisposition to think about women in sexual terms reinforces the notion that women are sexual objects. Women are often described by terms such as *fox, broad, bitch, babe,* or *doll,* which ascribe childlike or even petlike characteristics to them. By contrast, men have performance pressures placed on them by being defined in terms of their sexual prowess, such as *dude, stud,* and *hunk* (Baker, 1993).

Gender in language has been debated and studied extensively in recent years, and some changes have occurred. The preference of many women to be called *Ms.* (rather than *Miss* or *Mrs.* in reference to their marital status) has received a degree of acceptance in public life and the media. Many organizations and publications have established guidelines for the use of nonsexist language and have changed

language a set of symbols that expresses ideas and enables people to think and communicate with one another.

Sapir–Whorf hypothesis the proposition that language shapes the view of reality of its speakers.

lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds—and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds" (Benjamin Whorf).

• **Active Learning:** Ask the class to brainstorm and come up with exhaustive lists of words that are used to refer to men and to women. Analyze the two lists. How many of the terms are negative? How many of the terms are about age, objects, food, sex? Which terms are neutral? Which list has the most negative words? Which has the most positive?

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▲ Certain jobs are stereotypically considered to be "men's jobs"; others are "women's jobs." Is your perception of a male flight attendant the same as your perception of a female flight attendant?

titles such as *chairman* to *chair* or *chairperson.* "Men Working" signs in many areas have been replaced with "People Working." Some occupations have been given "genderless" titles, such as *firefighter* or *flight attendant.* Yet many people resist change, arguing that the English language is being ruined (Epstein, 1988). To develop a more inclusive and equitable society, many scholars suggest that a more inclusive language is needed (see Basow, 1992).

Language, Race, and Ethnicity Language may create and reinforce our perceptions about race and ethnicity by transmitting preconceived ideas about the superiority of one category of people over another. Let's look at a few images conveyed by words in the English language in regard to race/ethnicity:

- Words may have more than one meaning and create and/or reinforce negative images. Terms such as blackhearted (malevolent) and expressions such as a black mark (a detrimental fact) and Chinaman's chance of success (unlikely to succeed) associate the words black or Chinaman with negative associations and derogatory imagery. By contrast, expressions such as that's white of you and the good guys wear white hats reinforce positive associations with the color white.

- Overtly derogatory terms such as nigger, kike, gook, honkey, chink, spic, and other racial–ethnic slurs have been "popularized" in movies, music, comic routines, and so on. Such derogatory terms are often used in conjunction with physical threats against persons.
- Words are frequently used to create or reinforce perceptions about a group. For example, Native Americans have been referred to as "savage" and "primitive," and African Americans have been described as "uncivilized," "cannibalistic," and "pagan."
- The "voice" of verbs may minimize or incorrectly identify the activities or achievements of people of color. For example, the use of the passive voice in the statement "African Americans *were given* the right to vote" ignores how African Americans *fought* for that right. Active-voice verbs may also inaccurately attribute achievements to people or groups. Some historians argue that cultural bias is shown by the very notion that "Columbus discovered America"—given that America was already inhabited by people who later became known as Native Americans (see Stannard, 1992; Takaki, 1993).

In addition to these concerns about the English language, problems also arise when more than one language is involved. Across the nation, the question of whether or not the United States should have an "official" language continues to arise. Some people believe that there is no need to designate an official language; other people believe that English should be designated as the official language and that the use of any other language should be discouraged or negatively sanctioned. Recently, the city council in Farmers Branch—a suburb of Dallas, Texas—adopted a resolution declaring English as the official language of that city. According to the resolution, the use of a common language "removes barriers of misunderstanding and helps to unify the people of Farmers Branch, [the state of Texas,] and the United States and helps to enable the full economic and civic participation of all of its citizens . . ." (City of Farmers Branch, 2006). This resolution was passed

- **IRM:** Lecture Idea: Address the ways that subcultures engage in boundary maintenance using jargon to distinguish themselves from the dominant culture. Why is this important? What are some important examples?
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss and debate the pros and cons of this statement: "We have room for but one language in this country, and that is the English language, for we intend to see

that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house" (President Theodore Roosevelt).
- **Media Coverage:** In July 2008, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed an executive order requiring all city agencies to provide services in the city's six most commonly spoken languages: Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean, Italian, and French Creole.

▲ Rapid changes in language and culture in the United States are reflected in this sign at a shopping center. How do functionalist and conflict theorists' views regarding language differ?

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at the same time as a local law that banned "illegal immigrants" from renting apartments in Farmers Branch. Are deep-seated social and cultural issues embedded in social policy decisions such as these? Although the United States has always been a nation of immigrants, in recent decades this country has experienced rapid changes in population that have brought about greater diversity in languages and cultures. Recent data gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau (see "Census Profiles: Languages Spoken in U.S. Households," p.52) indicate that although more than 80 percent of the people in this country speak only English at home, almost 20 percent speak a language other than English. The largest portion (over 10 percent of the U.S. population) of non-English speakers speak Spanish at home.

Language is an important means of cultural transmission. Through language, children learn about their cultural heritage and develop a sense of personal identity in relationship to their group. For example, Latinos/as in New Mexico and south Texas use *dichos*—proverbs or sayings that are unique to the Spanish language—as a means of expressing themselves and as a reflection of their cultural heritage. Examples of *dichos* include *Anda tu camino sin ayuda de vecino* ("Walk your own road without the help of a neighbor") and *Amor de lejos es para pendejos* ("A long-distance romance is for fools"). *Dichos* are passed from generation to generation as a priceless verbal tradition whereby people can give advice or teach a lesson (Gandara, 1995).

Language is also a source of power and social control; language perpetuates inequalities between people and between groups because words are used (whether or not intentionally) to "keep people in their place." As the linguist Deborah Tannen (1993: B5) has suggested, "The devastating group hatreds that result in so much suffering in our own country and around the world are related in origin to the small intolerances in our everyday conversations—our readiness to attribute good intentions to ourselves and bad intentions to others." Language, then, is a reflection of our feelings and values.

Values

Values are collective ideas about what is right or wrong, good or bad, and desirable or undesirable in a particular culture (Williams, 1970). Values do not dictate which behaviors are appropriate and which ones are not, but they provide us with the criteria by which we evaluate people, objects, and events. Values typically come in pairs of positive and negative values, such as being brave or cowardly, hardworking or lazy. Because we use values to justify our behavior, we tend to defend them staunchly.

Core American Values   Do we have shared values in the United States? Sociologists disagree about the extent to which all people in this country share a core set of values. Functionalists tend to believe that shared values are essential for the maintenance of a society, and scholars using a functionalist approach have conducted most of the research on core values. Analysts who focus on the importance of core values maintain that the following ten values, identified

> **values** collective ideas about what is right or wrong, good or bad, and desirable or undesirable in a particular culture.

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census profiles

Languages Spoken in U.S. Households

Among the categories of information gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau is data on the languages spoken in U.S. households. As shown below, English is the only language spoken at home in more than 80 percent of U.S. households; however, in almost 20 percent of U.S. households, some other language is the primary language spoken at home.

Some other language 19.7%

English only 80.3%
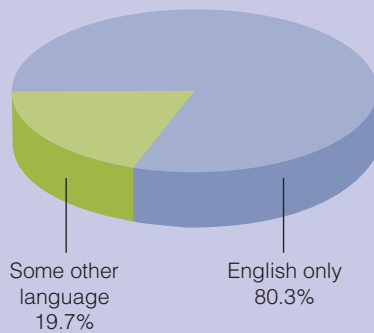
People who speak a language other than English at home are asked not only to indicate which other languages they speak but also how well they speak English. Approximately 44 percent of people who speak a language

other than English at home report that they speak English "less than well." The principal languages other than English that are most frequently spoken at home are shown in the following chart. Do you think that changes in the languages spoken in this country will bring about other significant changes in U.S. culture? Why or why not?.

Languages Spoken at Home Other Than English, by Percentage

Spanish 62.0%
Chinese 4.4%
French 2.7%
Tagalog 2.7%
German 2.2%
Vietnamese 2.2%
Korean 1.9%
Russian 1.6%
Italian 1.5%
Portuguese 1.3%
Arabic 1.3%
Polish 1.2%
Other 15.0%
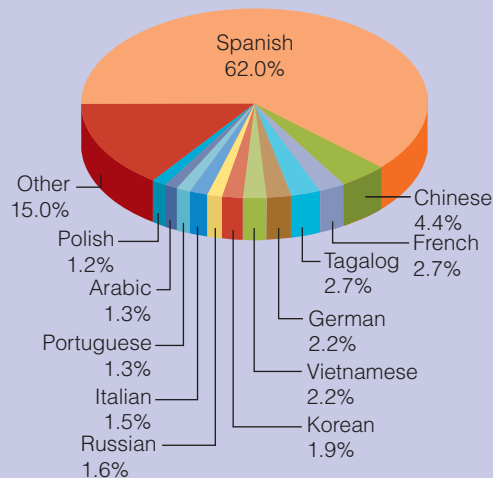
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

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forty years ago by sociologist Robin M. Williams, Jr. (1970), are still very important to people in the United States:

1. *Individualism.* People are responsible for their own success or failure. Individual ability and hard work are the keys to success. Those who do not succeed have only themselves to blame because of their lack of ability, laziness, immorality, or other character defects.
2. *Achievement and success.* Personal achievement results from successful competition with others. Individuals are encouraged to do better than others in school and to work in order to gain wealth, power, and prestige. Material possessions are seen as a sign of personal achievement.
3. *Activity and work.* People who are industrious are praised for their achievement; those perceived as lazy are ridiculed. From the time of the early Puritans, work has been viewed as important. Even during their leisure time, many people "work" in their play. For example, think of all the individuals who take exercise classes,

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Popular Culture:** *The Boy Scout Oath (or Promise):* "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight." What values are reflected in this oath? Have students discuss its contemporary significance.
- **IRM:** Questions for Discussion: How do you think members of various racial, ethnic, gender, and class categories subscribe to and internalize U.S. core values? How might they reinterpret or inflect those values?

run in marathons, garden, repair or restore cars, and so on in their spare time.

4. *Science and technology.* People in the United States have a great deal of faith in science and technology. They expect scientific and technological advances ultimately to control nature, the aging process, and even death.

5. *Progress and material comfort.* The material comforts of life include not only basic necessities (such as adequate shelter, nutrition, and medical care) but also the goods and services that make life easier and more pleasant.

6. *Efficiency and practicality.* People want things to be bigger, better, and faster. As a result, great value is placed on efficiency ("How well does it work?") and practicality ("Is this a realistic thing to do?").

7. *Equality.* Since colonial times, overt class distinctions have been rejected in the United States. However, "equality" has been defined as "equality of *opportunity*"—an assumed equal chance to achieve success—not as "equality of *outcome.* "

8. *Morality and humanitarianism.* Aiding others, especially following natural disasters (such as floods or hurricanes), is seen as a value. The notion of helping others was originally a part of religious teachings and tied to the idea of morality. Today, people engage in humanitarian acts without necessarily perceiving that it is the "moral" thing to do.

9. *Freedom and liberty.* Individual freedom is highly valued in the United States. The idea of freedom includes the right to private ownership of property, the ability to engage in private enterprise, freedom of the press, and other freedoms that are considered to be "basic" rights.

10. *Racism and group superiority.* People value their own racial or ethnic group above all others. Such feelings of superiority may lead to discrimination; slavery and segregation laws are classic examples. Many people also believe in the superiority of their country and that "the American way of life" is best.

Do you think that these values are still important today? Are there core values that you believe should be added to this list? Although sociologists have not agreed upon a specific list of emerging core values,

various social analysts have suggested that some additional shared values in the United States today include the following:

● Ecological sensitivity, with an increased awareness of global problems such as overpopulation and global warming.

● Emphasis on developing and maintaining relationships through honesty and with openness, fairness, and tolerance of others.

● Spirituality and a need for meaning in life that reaches beyond oneself.

Value Contradictions   All societies, including the United States, have value contradictions. *Value contradictions* **are values that conflict with one another or are mutually exclusive** (achieving one makes it difficult, if not impossible, to achieve another). Core values of morality and humanitarianism may conflict with values of individual achievement and success. For example, humanitarian values reflected in welfare and other government aid programs for people in need come into conflict with values emphasizing hard work and personal achievement.

Ideal Culture Versus Real Culture   What is the relationship between values and human behavior? Sociologists stress that a gap always exists between ideal culture and real culture in a society. *Ideal culture* refers to the values and standards of behavior that people in a society profess to hold. *Real culture* refers to the values and standards of behavior that people actually follow. For example, we may claim to be law-abiding (ideal cultural value) but smoke marijuana (real cultural behavior), or we may regularly drive over the speed limit but think of ourselves as "good citizens."

Most of us are not completely honest about how well we adhere to societal values. In a University of Arizona study known as the "Garbage Project," household waste was analyzed to determine the rate of alcohol consumption in Tucson. People were asked about their level of alcohol consumption, and in some areas of the city, they reported very low

> **value contradictions**   values that conflict with one another or are mutually exclusive.

• **For Discussion:** List some ways that the Protestant work ethic may have contributed to the U.S. values. Have students respond to Max Weber's statement that "The religious valuation of restless, continuous, systematic work in a worldly calling, as the highest means of asceticism, and at the same time the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine faith, must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expansion of . . . the spirit of capitalism."

levels of alcohol use. However, when these people's garbage was analyzed, researchers found that over 80 percent of those households consumed some beer, and more than half discarded eight or more empty beer cans a week (Haviland, 1993). Obviously, this study shows a discrepancy between ideal cultural values and people's actual behavior.

Norms

Values provide ideals or beliefs about behavior but do not state explicitly how we should behave. Norms, on the other hand, do have specific behavioral expectations. *Norms are established rules of behavior or standards of conduct.* *Prescriptive norms* state what behavior is appropriate or acceptable. For example, persons making a certain amount of money are expected to file a tax return and pay any taxes they owe. Norms based on custom direct us to open a door for a person carrying a heavy load. By contrast, *proscriptive norms* state what behavior is inappropriate or unacceptable. Laws that prohibit us from driving over the speed limit and "good manners" that preclude you from texting during class are examples. Prescriptive and proscriptive norms operate at all levels of society, from our everyday actions to the formulation of laws.

Formal and Informal Norms

Not all norms are of equal importance; those that are most crucial are formalized. *Formal norms* are written down and involve specific punishments for violators. Laws are the most common type of formal norms; they have been codified and may be enforced by sanctions. *Sanctions are rewards for appropriate behavior or penalties for inappropriate behavior.* Examples of *positive sanctions* include praise, honors, or medals for conformity to specific norms. *Negative sanctions* range from mild disapproval to the death penalty.

Norms considered to be less important are referred to as *informal norms*—unwritten standards of behavior understood by people who share a common identity. When individuals violate informal norms, other people may apply informal sanctions. *Informal sanctions* are not clearly defined and can be applied by any member of a group (such as frowning at someone or making a negative comment or gesture).

▲ Crowded conditions exist around the world, yet certain norms prevail in everyday life. Is the behavior of the people in this Osaka, Japan, train station a reflection of formal or informal norms?

Folkways

Norms are also classified according to their relative social importance. *Folkways are informal norms or everyday customs that may be violated without serious consequences within a particular culture* (Sumner, 1959/1906). They provide rules for conduct but are not considered to be essential to society's survival. In the United States, folkways include using underarm deodorant, brushing our teeth, and wearing appropriate clothing for a specific occasion. Often, folkways are not enforced; when they are enforced, the resulting sanctions tend to be informal and relatively mild.

Mores

Other norms are considered to be highly essential to the stability of society. *Mores are strongly held norms with moral and ethical connotations that may not be violated without serious consequences in a particular culture.* Because mores (pronounced MOR-ays) are based on cultural values and are considered to be crucial to the well-being of the group, violators are subject to more severe negative sanctions (such as ridicule, loss of employment, or imprisonment) than are those who fail to adhere to folkways. The strongest mores are referred to as taboos. *Taboos are mores so strong that their violation is considered to be extremely offensive and even unmentionable.* Violation of taboos is punishable by the group or even, according to certain belief systems, by a supernatural force. The incest taboo,

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **IRM:** Questions for Discussion: What values might be represented by the norm of attending this sociology class?
- **For Discussion:** Bring to class copies of your college/university student handbook. Have students find examples of rules and regulations. Which rules seem more important than others?

Which rules does it seem that no one really follows? What kinds of consequences are spelled out?
- **Active Learning:** Create a chart on the board, and ask your class to come up with examples of folkways, mores, and the values they reflect in their lives. Think of examples of social reactions to norm violations for each.

which prohibits sexual or marital relations between certain categories of kin, is an example of a nearly universal taboo.

Laws *Laws* **are formal, standardized norms that have been enacted by legislatures and are enforced by formal sanctions.** Laws may be either civil or criminal. *Civil law deals with disputes among persons or groups.* Persons who lose civil suits may encounter negative sanctions such as having to pay compensation to the other party or being ordered to stop certain conduct. *Criminal law, on the other hand, deals with public safety and well-being.* When criminal laws are violated, fines and prison sentences are the most likely negative sanctions, although in some states the death penalty is handed down for certain major offenses.

Technology, Cultural Change, and Diversity

Cultures do not generally remain static. There are many forces working toward change and diversity. Some societies and individuals adapt to this change, whereas others suffer culture shock and succumb to ethnocentrism.

Cultural Change

Societies continually experience cultural change at both material and nonmaterial levels. Changes in technology continue to shape the material culture of society. *Technology* **refers to the knowledge, techniques, and tools that allow people to transform resources into usable forms and the knowledge and skills required to use what is developed.** Although most technological changes are primarily modifications of existing technology, *new technologies* refers to changes that make a significant difference in many people's lives. Examples of new technologies include the introduction of the printing press more than 500 years ago and the advent of computers and electronic communications in the twentieth century. The pace of technological change has increased rapidly in the past 150 years, as contrasted with the 4,000 years
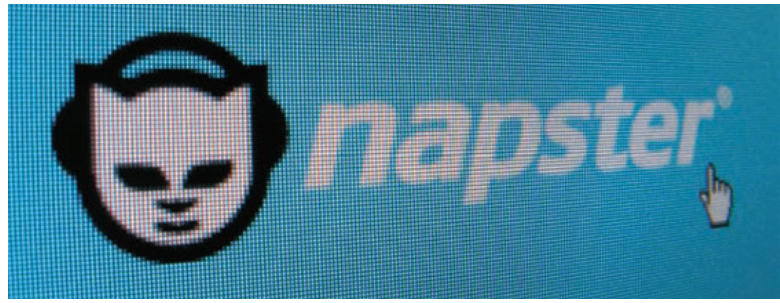
© AP Photo/Steve White

▲ In 1999 Napster began as an online service that allowed its users to share music for free. However, the music industry claimed that Napster was violating its copyrights and sued the company. Napster was in business until 2001, an example of cultural lag, as the courts took time coming to grips with the implications of the new technology.

prior to that, during which humans advanced from digging sticks and hoes to the plow.

All parts of culture do not change at the same pace. When a change occurs in the material culture of a society, nonmaterial culture must adapt to that change. Frequently, this rate of change is uneven, resulting in a gap between the two. Sociologist William F. Ogburn (1966/1922) referred to this disparity as *cultural lag*—**a gap between the technical**

norms established rules of behavior or standards of conduct.

sanctions rewards for appropriate behavior or penalties for inappropriate behavior.

folkways informal norms or everyday customs that may be violated without serious consequences within a particular culture.

mores strongly held norms with moral and ethical connotations that may not be violated without serious consequences in a particular culture.

taboos mores so strong that their violation is considered to be extremely offensive and even unmentionable.

laws formal, standardized norms that have been enacted by legislatures and are enforced by formal sanctions.

technology the knowledge, techniques, and tools that allow people to transform resources into a usable form and the knowledge and skills required to use what is developed.

cultural lag William Ogburn's term for a gap between the technical development of a society (material culture) and its moral and legal institutions (nonmaterial culture).

• **Pop Culture:** Have students analyze clips from popular comedy films that demonstrate norm violations. Why are these so often humorous? Is laughing about these violations a form of social control? How do we react to violations of specific mores such as incest or drug addiction?

• **For Discussion:** Ask the class this: What are other examples of cultural lag that we experience at a university? What are some possible examples that we might see in the future? What about the way we elect the nation's president and the information technology that now gives us instant access to data?

development of a society and its moral and legal institutions. In other words, cultural lag occurs when material culture changes faster than nonmaterial culture, thus creating a lag between the two cultural components. For example, at the material cultural level, the personal computer and electronic coding have made it possible to create a unique health identifier for each person in the United States. Based on available technology (material culture), it would be possible to create a national data bank that included everyone's individual medical records from birth to death. Using this identifier, health providers and insurance companies could rapidly transfer medical records around the globe, and researchers could access unlimited data on people's diseases, test results, and treatments. However, the availability of this technology does not mean that it will be accepted by people who believe (nonmaterial culture) that such a national data bank would constitute an invasion of privacy and could easily be abused by others. The failure of nonmaterial culture to keep pace with material culture is linked to social conflict and societal problems. As in the above example, such changes are often set in motion by discovery, invention, and diffusion.

Discovery is the process of learning about something previously unknown or unrecognized. Historically, discovery involved unearthing natural elements or existing realities, such as "discovering" fire or the true shape of the Earth. Today, discovery most often results from scientific research. For example, discovery of a polio vaccine virtually eliminated one of the major childhood diseases. A future discovery of a cure for cancer or the common cold could result in longer and more productive lives for many people.

As more discoveries have occurred, people have been able to reconfigure existing material and nonmaterial cultural items through invention. *Invention* is the process of reshaping existing cultural items into a new form. Guns, video games, airplanes, and First Amendment rights are examples of inventions that positively or negatively affect our lives today.

When diverse groups of people come into contact, they begin to adapt one another's discoveries, inventions, and ideas for their own use. *Diffusion* is the transmission of cultural items or social practices from one group or society to another through such means as exploration, war, the media, tourism, and immigration. Today, cultural diffusion moves at a very rapid pace in the global economy.

Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity refers to the wide range of cultural differences found between and within nations. Cultural diversity between countries may be the result of natural circumstances (such as climate and geography) or social circumstances (such as level of technology and composition of the population). Some nations—such as Sweden—are referred to as *homogeneous societies*, meaning that they include people who share a common culture and who are typically from similar social, religious, political, and economic backgrounds. By contrast, other nations—including the United States—are referred to as *heterogeneous societies*, meaning that they include people who are dissimilar in regard to social characteristics such as religion, income, or race/ethnicity (see ▶ Figure 2.2).

Immigration contributes to cultural diversity in a society. Throughout its history, the United States has been a nation of immigrants (see ▶ Map 2.1). Over the past 175 years, more than 55 million "documented" (legal) immigrants have arrived here; innumerable people have also entered the country as undocumented immigrants. Immigration can cause feelings of frustration and hostility, especially in people who feel threatened by the changes that large numbers of immigrants may produce (Mydans, 1993). Often, people are intolerant of those who are different from themselves. When societal tensions rise, people may look for others on whom they can place blame—or single out persons because they are the "other," the "outsider," the one who does not "belong." Ronald Takaki, an ethnic studies scholar, described his experience of being singled out as an "other":

> I had flown from San Francisco to Norfolk and was riding in a taxi to my hotel to attend a conference on multiculturalism. . . . My driver and I chatted about the weather and the tourists. . . . The rearview mirror reflected a white man in his forties. "How long have you been in this country?" he asked. "All my life," I replied, wincing. "I was born in the United States." With a strong southern drawl, he remarked: "I was wondering because your English is excellent!" Then, as I had many times before, I explained:

- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students examine the following critique of U.S. health care as a description of cultural lag: "The system must be reorganized to be patient-centered. For example, many people do not get sick 9–5, Monday through Friday. This limitation on access is for the convenience of providers and not patients" (Arthur Levin, Director of the Center for Medical Consumers in New York City).

- **Active Learning:** Have students use the Census's American FactFinder and the State and County QuickFacts portals to learn demographic information about the communities where they reside.
- **For Discussion:** Bring up the topic of multiculturalism and the concept of identity politics: the tendency to define one's political

Religious Affiliation

Jews 2.0% — Other 1.1%
Other Christians 3.3%
Black Protestants 7.8%
Mainline Protestants 18.0%
Evangelical Protestants 25.9%
Roman Catholics 23.4%
Nonreligious 18.5%

Household Income[a]

$10,000 to $24,999 20.0%
$25,000 to $49,999 29.2%
Under $9,999 9.6%
$50,000 to $74,999 19.1%
$75,000 and over 22.1%

Race and Ethnic Distribution

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders[c] 0.1%
Asian[b] 4.2%
American Indian[d] 0.8%
Latino/a 14.3%
African American (Non-Hispanic) 12.4%
White (Non-Hispanic) 68.2%
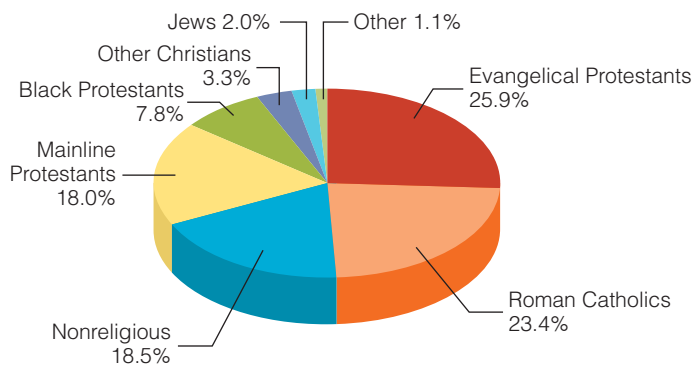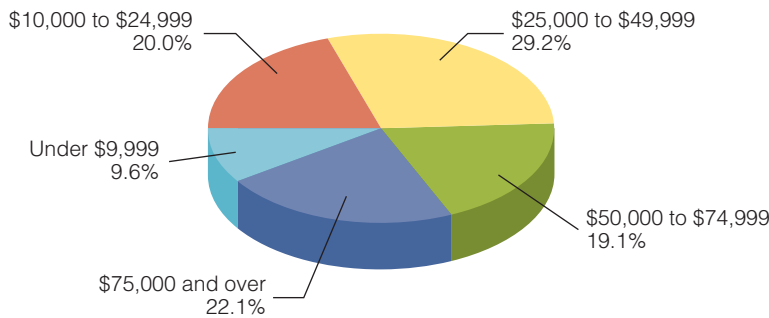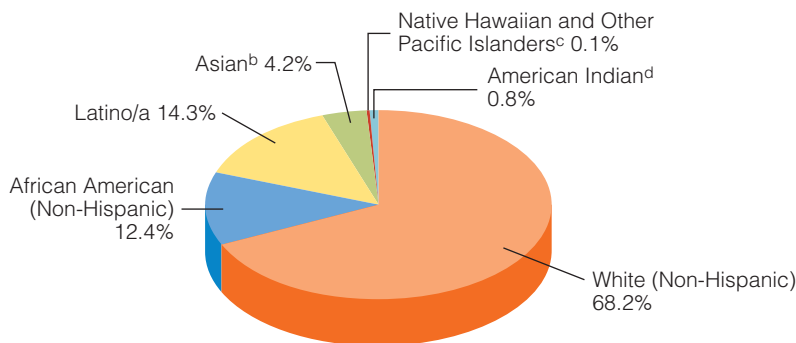
◀ **FIGURE 2.2 HETEROGENEITY OF U.S. SOCIETY**
Throughout history, the United States has been heterogeneous. Today, we represent a wide diversity of social categories, including our religious affiliations, income levels, and racial/ethnic categories.

[a]In Census Bureau terminology, a household consists of people who occupy a housing unit.
[b]Includes Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Asian, Indian, Korean, Vietnamese, and other Asians.
[c]Includes Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, and other Pacific Islanders.
[d]Includes American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

"My grandfather came here from Japan in the 1880s. My family has been here, in America, for over a hundred years." He glanced at me in the mirror. Somehow I did not look "American" to him; my eyes and complexion looked foreign. (Takaki, 1993: 1)

Have you ever been made to feel like an "outsider"? Each of us receives cultural messages that may make us feel good or bad about ourselves or may give us the perception that we "belong" or "do not belong." Can people overcome such feelings in a culturally diverse society such as the United States? Some analysts believe it is possible to communicate with others despite differences in race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation, religion, social class, occupation, leisure pursuits, regionalism, and so on (see the You Can Make a Difference box). People who differ from the dominant group may also find reassurance and social support in a subculture or a counterculture.

and social identity in terms of one's racial, ethnic, religious, or social class.
• **Research:** As defined in a March 2000 United Nations report, replacement migration is "the international migration that would be needed to offset declines in the size of the population, the declines in the population of working age, as well as to offset the overall aging of a population." Have students research the argument that the United States, like many other industrialized nations, has stopped reproducing at replacement level and is in need of such migration.
• **Extra Examples:** Ronald Takaki made a number of important contributions to sociology, including his theory that the idea that Asians are a model minority is really a myth.

Ancestry with largest population in state
see categories below

Ancestry with largest population in county

- African American
- Aleut/Eskimo
- American
- American Indian
- Dutch
- English
- Finnish
- French
- German
- Hispanic/Spanish
- Irish
- Italian
- Mexican
- Norwegian
- Puerto Rican
- Other

OTHER:
Chinese (San Francisco County, CA)
Cuban (Miami-Dade County, FL)
Dominican (New York County, NY)
Filipino (Kauai and Maui counties, HI)
French Canadian (Androskoggin County, ME)
Hawaiian (Kalawao County, HI)
Japanese (Hawaii State; Honolulu County, HI)
Polish (Luzerne County, PA)
Portugese (Bristol County, MA and Bristol County, RI)

▲ **MAP 2.1 CULTURAL DIVERSITY: A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation. American Factfinder at factfinder.census.gov provides census data and mapping tools.

Subcultures A *subculture* is a category of people who share distinguishing attributes, beliefs, values, and/or norms that set them apart in some significant manner from the dominant culture. Emerging from the functionalist tradition, this concept has been applied to distinctions ranging from ethnic, religious, regional, and age-based categories to those categories presumed to be "deviant" or marginalized from the larger society. In the broadest use of the concept, thousands of categories of people residing in the United States might be classified as participants in one or more subcultures, including Native Americans, Muslims, Generation Xers, and motorcycle enthusiasts. However, many sociological studies of subcultures have limited the scope of inquiry to more visible, distinct subcultures such as the Old Order

Amish and ethnic enclaves in large urban areas to see how subcultural participants interact with the dominant U.S. culture.

The Old Order Amish Having arrived in the United States in the early 1700s, members of the Old Order Amish have fought to maintain their distinct identity. Today, over 75 percent of the more than 100,000 Amish live in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, where they practice their religious beliefs and remain a relatively closed social network. According to sociologists, this religious community is a subculture because its members share values and norms that differ significantly from those of people who primarily identify with the dominant culture. The Amish have a strong faith in God and reject worldly concerns. Their

- **U.S. Diversity:** With more than 28 percent of U.S. adults leaving the faith of their childhoods to practice another religion—or no religion—the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey confirmed that "a remarkable amount of movement" is occurring. As a result, the Pew Forum concludes that Protestants are on the verge of becoming a minority among religious groups in the United States (Melody Merin, U.S. Department of State).

- **IRM:** Questions for Discussion: What aspects of your own definitions of reality have been challenged by interactions with people from different backgrounds?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis
- **Research:** Have students research Tom Shachtman's *Rumspringa: To Be or Not to Be Amish*. This study examines the Amish tradition

you can make a difference

Bonding with Others Through Food and Conversation

[A reader recently said] how meeting for lunch was central to her relationship with her friends. I think that's true for a lot of us. . . . [Food is a] medium through which connections [are] built. My new friends and I started getting together once a month for dinner to celebrate birthdays, with lots of food involved. Most of them were non-native English speakers, so deep discussion of intellectual topics was difficult. Functional English only goes so far, and my smattering of Arabic wasn't up to the challenge, either. So we'd spend hours over dinner in various restaurants, exchanging food off our plates. . . . There's something intimate about sharing food. . . . When we share food, we share ourselves. It bonds us in a way other things don't.

> —Terry, in a blog titled "Food as Bonding" (Dailytroll.com, 2006)

Terry's blog describes how sharing food (an important component of culture) can help us in bonding with and learning more about people from diverse cultures. However, simply meeting with people from other cultural backgrounds or sharing a meal with them is not the same thing as really getting to understand them and helping them to understand us. Daisy Kabagarama, a U.S. college professor who was born in Uganda, suggests in *Breaking the Ice* (1993) that the following techniques can help each of us in communicating across cultures:

- *Get acquainted.* Show genuine interest, have a sense of curiosity and appreciation, feel empathy for others, be nonjudgmental, and demonstrate flexibility.
- *Ask the right questions.* Ask general questions first and specific ones later, making sure that questions are clear and simple and are asked in a relaxed, nonthreatening manner.
- *Consider visual images.* Use compliments carefully; it is easy to misjudge other people based on their physical appearance alone, and appearance norms differ widely across cultures.
- *Deal with stereotypes.* Overcome stereotyping and myths about people from other cultures through sincere self-examination, searching for knowledge, and practicing objectivity.
- *Establish trust and cooperation.* Be available when needed. Give and accept criticism in a positive manner and be spontaneous in interactions with others, but remember that rules regarding spontaneity are different for each culture.

Electronic systems now link people around the world, making it possible for us to communicate with people from diverse racial–ethnic backgrounds and cultures without even leaving home or school. Try these websites for interesting information on multicultural issues and cultural diversity:

- *Multicultural Education Pavilion* provides resources on racism, sexism, and classism in the United States, as well as access to multicultural newsgroups, essays, and a large list of multicultural links on the Web: **www.edchange.org/multicultural**
- *MultiWorld* is a bilingual (Chinese and English) e-zine that includes information on culture, people, art, and nature, along with sites about nations such as the United States, Canada, Ireland, China, Belgium, and Brazil. You can access *MultiWorld* by going to the following address and clicking the Resources tab: **http://sunsite.nus.edu**

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core values include the joy of work, the primacy of the home, faithfulness, thriftiness, tradition, and humility. The Amish hold a conservative view of the family, believing that women are subordinate to men, birth control is unacceptable, and wives should remain at home. Children (about seven per family) are cherished and seen as an economic asset: They help with the farming and other work. Many of the Old Order Amish speak Pennsylvania Dutch (a dialect of German) as well as English. They dress in traditional clothing, live on farms, and rely on the horse and buggy for transportation.

> **subculture** a group of people who share a distinctive set of cultural beliefs and behaviors that differs in some significant way from that of the larger society.

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of adolescent "running around," or *rumspringa,* as a foil for understanding U.S. adolescence and identity formation in general (*Publishers Weekly*).

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Box Note/Active Learning:** Here students can find information for short writing assignments or even research papers. This box begins with a quotation from a blog. Students can work in smaller groups to conduct web searches for similar blogs and to research connections between food and social interaction.
- **Active Learning:** Ask some of your students to try out the website suggestions from this box. Bring a report back to share with the class. Project the web page on a screen, and walk the class through some of the resources. What are five important facts learned from one of these sites? Why is each important?

The Amish are aware that they share distinctive values and look different from other people; these differences provide them with a collective identity and make them feel close to one another (Schaefer and Zellner, 2007). The belief system and group cohesiveness of the Amish remain strong despite the intrusion of corporations and tourists, the vanishing farmlands, and increasing levels of government regulation in their daily lives (Schaefer and Zellner, 2007).

Ethnic Subcultures   Some people who have unique shared behaviors linked to a common racial, language, or nationality background identify themselves as members of a specific subculture, whereas others do not. Examples of ethnic subcultures include African Americans, Latinos/Latinas (Hispanic Americans), Asian Americans, and Native Americans. Some analysts include "white ethnics" such as Irish Americans, Italian Americans, and Polish Americans. Others also include Anglo Americans (Caucasians).

Although people in ethnic subcultures are dispersed throughout the United States, a concentration of members of some ethnic subcultures is visible in many larger communities and cities. For example, Chinatowns, located in cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, are one of the more visible ethnic subcultures in the United States. By living close to one another and

© Spencer Grant/PhotoEdit

▲ In heterogenous societies such as the United States, people from diverse cultures encourage their children to learn about their heritage. This East Indian mother and daughter in California are dancing with flower petals.

© AP Photo/Tony Dejak

▲ Although modernization and consumerism have changed the way of life of some subcultures, groups such as the Old Order Amish have preserved some of their historical practices, including traveling by horse-drawn carriage.

clinging to their original customs and language, first-generation immigrants can survive the abrupt changes they experience in material and nonmaterial cultural patterns. In New York City, for example, Korean Americans and Puerto Rican Americans constitute distinctive subcultures, each with its own food, music, and personal style. In San Antonio, Mexican Americans enjoy different food and music than do Puerto Rican Americans or other groups. Subcultures provide opportunities for expression of distinctive lifestyles, as well as sometimes helping people adapt to abrupt cultural change. Subcultures can also serve as a buffer against the discrimination experienced by many ethnic or religious groups in the United States. However, some people may be forced by economic or social disadvantage to remain in such ethnic enclaves.

• **Research:** The bitter conflict between Sunni and Shiite Muslim sects in Iraq has increased dramatically since the ouster of Saddam Hussein. Under Hussein, the minority Sunni sect dominated majority Shiite groups. The struggle between these two groups goes back to when Islam experienced a leadership split in the seventh century, culminating in brutal civil warfare. Ask students to research this schism as both a religious and ethnic difference.

Countercultures Some subcultures actively oppose the larger society. A *counterculture* is a group that strongly rejects dominant societal values and norms and seeks alternative lifestyles (Yinger, 1960, 1982). Young people are most likely to join countercultural groups, perhaps because younger persons generally have less invested in the existing culture. Examples of countercultures include the beatniks of the 1950s, the flower children of the 1960s, the drug enthusiasts of the 1970s, and contemporary members of nonmainstream religious sects, or cults.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is the disorientation that people feel when they encounter cultures radically different from their own and believe they cannot depend on their own taken-for-granted assumptions about life. When people travel to another society, they may not know how to respond to that setting. For example, Napoleon Chagnon (1992) described his initial shock at seeing the Yanomamö (pronounced yah-noh-MAH-mah) tribe of South America on his first trip in 1964.

The Yanomamö (also referred to as the "Yanomami") are a tribe of about 20,000 South American Indians who live in the rain forest. Although Chagnon traveled in a small aluminum motorboat for three days to reach these people, he was not prepared for the sight that met his eyes when he arrived:

> I looked up and gasped to see a dozen burly, naked, sweaty, hideous men staring at us down the shafts of their drawn arrows. Immense wads of green tobacco were stuck between their lower teeth and lips, making them look even more hideous, and strands of dark-green slime dripped from their nostrils—strands so long that they reached down to their pectoral muscles or drizzled down their chins and stuck to their chests and bellies. We arrived as the men were blowing ebene, a hallucinogenic drug, up their noses. . . . I was horrified. What kind of welcome was this for someone who had come to live with these people and learn their way of life—to become friends with them? But when they recognized Barker [a guide], they put their weapons down and returned to their chanting, while keeping a nervous eye on the village entrances. (Chagnon, 1992: 12–14)

© Victor Englebert/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images

▲ Even as global travel and the media make us more aware of people around the world, the distinctiveness of the Yanomamö in South America remains apparent. Are people today more or less likely than those in the past to experience culture shock upon encountering diverse groups of people such as these Yanomamö?

The Yanomamö have no written language, system of numbers, or calendar. They lead a nomadic lifestyle, carrying everything they own on their backs. They wear no clothes and paint their bodies; the women insert slender sticks through holes in the lower lip and through the pierced nasal septum. In other words, the Yanomamö—like the members of

counterculture a group that strongly rejects dominant societal values and norms and seeks alternative lifestyles.

culture shock the disorientation that people feel when they encounter cultures radically different from their own and believe they cannot depend on their own taken-for-granted assumptions about life.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** Ask students to bring in music that they feel reflects countercultural ideas. Listen to some of the songs, and talk about them with the class. Bring in some of your own music, and explain how these songs are (or were) countercultural.
- **Research:** Have students explore culture shock as a real feeling of disorientation. Dr. Carmen Guanipa has a more elaborate

description of this feeling and some suggestions for overcoming it: **http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/CGuanipa/cultshok.htm.**
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **IRM:** Questions for Discussion: Why do you think that the Americanization of other world cultures is taking place? In what ways is U.S. culture "better"? In what ways is U.S. culture so much

thousands of other cultures around the world—live in a culture very different from that of the United States.

Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

When observing people from other cultures, many of us use our own culture as the yardstick by which we judge their behavior. Sociologists refer to this approach as *ethnocentrism—the practice of judging all other cultures by one's own culture* (Sumner, 1959/1906). Ethnocentrism is based on the assumption that one's own way of life is superior to all others. For example, most schoolchildren are taught that their own school and country are the best. The school song, the pledge to the flag, and the national anthem are forms of *positive ethnocentrism*. However, *negative ethnocentrism* can also result from constant emphasis on the superiority of one's own group or nation. Negative ethnocentrism is manifested in derogatory stereotypes that ridicule recent immigrants whose customs, dress, eating habits, or religious beliefs are markedly different from those of dominant-group members. Long-term U.S. residents who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups, such as Native Americans, African Americans, and Latinas/os, have also been the target of ethnocentric practices by other groups.

An alternative to ethnocentrism is *cultural relativism—the belief that the behaviors and customs of any culture must be viewed and analyzed by the culture's own standards*. For example, the anthropologist Marvin Harris (1974, 1985) uses cultural relativism to explain why cattle, which are viewed as sacred, are not killed and eaten in India, where widespread hunger and malnutrition exist. From an ethnocentric viewpoint, we might conclude that cow worship is the cause of the hunger and poverty in India. However, according to Harris, the Hindu taboo against killing cattle is very important to their economic system. Live cows are more valuable than dead ones because they have more important uses than as a direct source of food. As part of the ecological system, cows consume grasses of little value to humans. Then they produce two valuable resources—oxen (the neutered offspring of cows) to power the plows and manure (for fuel and fertilizer)—as well as milk, floor covering, and leather.

As Harris's study reveals, culture must be viewed from the standpoint of those who live in a particular society.

Cultural relativism also has a downside. It may be used to excuse customs and behavior (such as cannibalism) that may violate basic human rights. Cultural relativism is a part of the sociological imagination; researchers must be aware of the customs and norms of the society they are studying and then spell out their background assumptions so that others can spot possible biases in their studies. However, according to some social scientists, issues surrounding ethnocentrism and cultural relativism may become less distinct in the future as people around the globe increasingly share a common popular culture. Others, of course, disagree with this perspective. Let's see what you think.

A Global Popular Culture?

Before taking this course, what was the first thing you thought about when you heard the term *culture*? In everyday life, culture is often used to describe the fine arts, literature, and classical music. When people say that a person is "cultured," they may mean that the individual has a highly developed sense of style or aesthetic appreciation of the "finer" things.

High Culture and Popular Culture

Some sociologists use the concepts of high culture and popular culture to distinguish between different cultural forms. *High culture* consists of classical music, opera, ballet, live theater, and other activities usually patronized by elite audiences, composed primarily of members of the upper-middle and upper classes, who have the time, money, and knowledge assumed to be necessary for its appreciation. In the United States, high culture is often viewed as being international in scope, arriving in this country through the process of diffusion, because many art forms originated in European nations or other countries of the world. By contrast, much of U.S. popular culture is often thought of as "homegrown" in this country. *Popular culture* consists of activities, products, and services that are assumed to appeal primarily to members of the middle and working classes. These include rock concerts, spectator sports, movies, and television

more influential in the world? In what ways is U.S. culture a product of other cultures?
- **For Discussion:** Explore the concept of ethnocentrism with your class, connecting it to globalization and democracy. Are there human values that transcend cultures? Where do these come from? The Declaration of Independence states that we are "endowed by our Creator." What do your students believe? What does the United

Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights say about this? Does cultural relativism prevent people from condemning slavery or human rights abuses in other societies?
- **Global Perspective:** "Bollywood is the name given to the huge film industry based in Bombay, India's movie capital. Some 1,200 films a year are produced in India. . . . So what, exactly, is a Bollywood movie? Well, they're usually long—about three hours—and chock

soap operas and situation comedies. Although we will distinguish between "high" and "popular" culture in our discussion, it is important to note that some social analysts believe that the rise of a consumer society in which luxury items have become more widely accessible to the masses has greatly reduced the great divide between activities and possessions associated with wealthy people or a social elite (see Huyssen, 1984; Lash and Urry, 1994).

However, most sociological examinations of high culture and popular culture focus primarily on the link between culture and social class. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) *cultural capital theory* views high culture as a device used by the dominant class to exclude the subordinate classes. According to Bourdieu, people must be trained to appreciate and understand high culture. Individuals learn about high culture in upper-middle- and upper-class families and in elite education systems, especially higher education. Once they acquire this trained capacity, they possess a form of cultural capital. Persons from poor and working-class backgrounds typically do not acquire this cultural capital. Because knowledge and appreciation of high culture are considered a prerequisite for access to the dominant class, its members can use their cultural capital to deny access to subordinate-group members and thus preserve and reproduce the existing class structure.

Forms of Popular Culture

Three prevalent forms of popular culture are fads, fashions, and leisure activities. A *fad* is a temporary but widely copied activity followed enthusiastically by large numbers of people. Most fads are short-lived novelties. According to the sociologist John Lofland (1993), fads can be divided into four major categories. First, *object fads* are items that people purchase despite the fact that they have little use or intrinsic value. Recent examples include Webkinz, Harry Potter wands, and SpongeBob SquarePants trading cards. Second, *activity fads* include pursuits such as body piercing, "surfing" the Internet, and the "free hugs" campaign, wherein individuals offer hugs to strangers in a public setting as a random act of kindness to make someone feel better. Third are *idea fads*, such as New Age ideologies. Fourth are *personality fads*—for example, those surrounding

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▲ Is this wristband an example of a fad or a fashion?

celebrities such as Lady Gaga, Tiger Woods, Snoop Dogg, and Brad Pitt.

A *fashion* is a currently valued style of behavior, thinking, or appearance that is longer lasting and more widespread than a fad. Examples of fashion are found in many areas, including child rearing, education, arts, clothing, music, and sports. Soccer is an example of a fashion in sports. Until recently, only schoolchildren played soccer in the United States. Now it has become a popular sport, perhaps in part because of immigration from Latin America and other areas of the world where soccer is widely played.

Like soccer, other forms of popular culture move across nations. In fact, popular culture is one of the United States' largest exports to other nations. Of the world's 100 most-attended films in the 1990s, for example, 88 were produced by U.S.-based film

ethnocentrism the practice of judging all other cultures by one's own culture.

cultural relativism the belief that the behaviors and customs of any culture must be viewed and analyzed by the culture's own standards.

high culture classical music, opera, ballet, live theater, and other activities usually patronized by elite audiences.

popular culture the component of culture that consists of activities, products, and services that are assumed to appeal primarily to members of the middle and working classes.

full of plot lines, music, dance—just about anything that can go in a movie" (Madhulika Sikka, *ABC News,* 2005). Have students watch and analyze a Bollywood film as a product of Indian and global culture.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** Hold a pop culture "show and tell." Ask students to bring to class examples of popular culture. Discuss the symbolic

significance of each item for different members of the class. Focus attention on the collective meanings that begin to emerge from the exercise.

- **For Discussion:** Compare Bourdieu's idea about cultural capital to ideas about social capital by Robert Putnam, who defines social capital as the collective value of all "social networks" and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other.

companies. Likewise, music, television shows, novels, and street fashions from the United States have become a part of many other cultures. In turn, people in this country continue to be strongly influenced by popular culture from other nations. For example, contemporary music and clothing in the United States reflect African, Caribbean, and Asian cultural influences, among others.

Will the spread of popular culture produce a homogeneous global culture? Critics argue that the world is not developing a global culture; rather, other cultures are becoming westernized. Political and religious leaders in some nations oppose this process, which they view as ==*cultural imperialism*—**the extensive infusion of one nation's culture into other nations.**== For example, some view the widespread infusion of the English language into countries that speak other languages as a form of cultural imperialism. On the other hand, the concept of cultural imperialism may fail to take into account various cross-cultural influences. For example, cultural diffusion of literature, music, clothing, and food has occurred on a global scale. A global culture, if it comes into existence, will most likely include components from many societies and cultures.

Sociological Analysis of Culture

Sociologists regard culture as a central ingredient in human behavior. Although all sociologists share a similar purpose, they typically see culture through somewhat different lenses as they are guided by different theoretical perspectives in their research. What do these perspectives tell us about culture?

Functionalist Perspectives

As previously discussed, functionalist perspectives are based on the assumption that society is a stable, orderly system with interrelated parts that serve specific functions. ==Anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) suggested that culture helps people meet their *biological needs* (including food and procreation), *instrumental needs* (including law and education), and *integrative needs* (including religion and art).== Societies in which people share a common language and core values are more likely to have consensus and harmony.

How might functionalist analysts view popular culture? According to many functionalist theorists, popular culture serves a significant function in society in that it may be the "glue" which holds society together. Regardless of race, class, sex, age, or other characteristics, many people are brought together (at least in spirit) to cheer teams competing in major sporting events such as the Super Bowl and the Olympic Games. Television and the Internet help integrate recent immigrants into the mainstream culture, whereas longer-term residents may become more homogenized as a result of seeing the same images and being exposed to the same beliefs and values (Gerbner et al., 1987).

However, functionalists acknowledge that all societies have dysfunctions which produce a variety of societal problems. When a society contains numerous subcultures, discord results from a lack of consensus about core values. In fact, popular culture may undermine core cultural values rather than reinforce them. For example, movies may glorify crime, rather than hard work, as the quickest way to get ahead. According to some analysts, excessive violence in music videos, movies, and television programs may be harmful to children and young people. From this perspective, popular culture can be a factor in antisocial behavior as seemingly diverse as hate crimes and fatal shootings in public schools.

A strength of the functionalist perspective on culture is its focus on the needs of society and the fact that stability is essential for society's continued survival. A shortcoming is its overemphasis on harmony and cooperation. This approach also fails to fully account for factors embedded in the structure of society—such as class-based inequalities, racism, and sexism—that may contribute to conflict among people in the United States or to global strife.

Conflict Perspectives

Conflict perspectives are based on the assumption that social life is a continuous struggle in which members of powerful groups seek to control scarce resources. According to this approach, values and norms help create and sustain the privileged position of the powerful in society while excluding others. As early conflict theorist Karl Marx stressed, ideas are *cultural creations* of a society's most powerful

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◄ The decision to hold the 2008 Summer Olympics in China was a controversial one, as demonstrated by the protests that popped up along the Olympic torch relay.

members. Thus, it is possible for political, economic, and social leaders to use *ideology*—an integrated system of ideas that is external to, and coercive of, people—to maintain their positions of dominance in a society. As Marx stated,

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is the ruling material force in society, is at the same time, its ruling intellectual force. The class, which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production. . . . The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas. (Marx and Engels, 1970/1845–1846: 64)

Many contemporary conflict theorists agree with Marx's assertion that ideas, a nonmaterial component of culture, are used by agents of the ruling class to affect the thoughts and actions of members of other classes. The role of the mass media in influencing people's thinking about the foods that they should—or should not—eat is an example of ideological control (see the Framing Culture in the Media box).

How might conflict theorists view popular culture? Some conflict theorists believe that popular culture, which originated with everyday people, has been largely removed from their domain and has become nothing more than a part of the capitalist economy in the United States (Gans, 1974; Cantor, 1980, 1987). From this approach, media conglomerates such as Time Warner, Disney, and Viacom create popular culture, such as films, television shows, and amusement parks, in the same way that they would produce any other product or service. Creating new popular culture also promotes consumption of *commodities*—objects outside ourselves that we purchase to satisfy our human needs or wants (Fjellman, 1992). According to contemporary social analysts, consumption—even of things that we do not necessarily need—has become prevalent at all social levels, and some middle- and lower-income individuals and families now use as their frame of reference the lifestyles of the more affluent in their communities. As a result, many families live on credit in order to purchase the goods and services that they would like to have or that keep them on the competitive edge with their friends, neighbors, and coworkers (Schor, 1999).

Other conflict theorists examine the intertwining relationship among race, gender, and popular culture. According to the sociologist K. Sue Jewell (1993), popular cultural images are often linked to negative stereotypes of people of color, particularly African American women. Jewell believes that cultural images depicting African American women as mammies or domestics—such as those previously used in Aunt Jemima Pancake ads and recent resurrections of films such as *Gone with the Wind*—affect contemporary black women's economic prospects in profound ways (Jewell, 1993).

cultural imperialism the extensive infusion of one nation's culture into other nations.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **IRM:** Questions for Discussion: What did Karl Marx mean by the statement that ideas are cultural creations of a society's most powerful members (ideological hegemony)?

framing culture in the media

You Are What You Eat?

The agonizing decision to pick Yale over Harvard didn't come down only to academics for Philip Gant. . . . It also came down to his tummy. And his eco-savvy. . . . When he chose Yale last year, Gant wasn't swayed by its running tab of presidential alumni: President Bush, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Gerald Ford and William Howard Taft. He was more impressed by Yale's leading-edge dedication to serving "sustainable" food. . . . In addition to wanting sustainable food, students such as Gant want it to be organic: grown without pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics or hormones.

    —*USA Today* reporting that "More University Students Call for Organic, 'Sustainable' Food" (Horovitz, 2006)

You may ask "What does a newspaper article about university cafeterias and organic food have to do with culture?" The answer is simple: Food is very much a part of all cultures. What we eat and how it is grown and prepared are a product of the culture of the society in which we live. Fads and fashions in food may come and go, but we often become aware of them as a result of mass media such as television, magazines, newspapers, and the Internet. Our ideas may be influenced by media framing of stories about food and eating habits. The term *media framing* refers to the process by which information and entertainment are packaged by the mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio and television networks and stations, and the Internet) before being presented to an audience. This process includes factors such as the amount of exposure given to a story, where it is placed, the positive or negative tone it conveys, and its accompanying headlines, photographs, or other visual or auditory effects (if any). Through framing, the media emphasize some beliefs and values over others and manipulate salience by directing people's attention to some ideas while ignoring others. As such, a frame constitutes a story line or an unfolding narrative about an issue. These narratives are organizations of experience that bring order to events. Consequently, such narratives wield power because they influence how we make sense of the world (Kendall, 2005).

Media framing of food takes place in television networks and magazines, some of which are devoted solely to the topic of food. There are stories and articles about food on an almost daily basis in the other forms of mass media.

So why did *USA Today* report on Philip Gant's concerns about campus food? At least in part, the article resulted from a recent emphasis on organic food reporting in the media. Organic food refers to crops that are grown without the use of artificial fertilizers or most pesticides and that are processed without ionizing radiation or food additives, and to meat that is raised without antibiotics or growth hormones.

What most of us know about the "good" and "bad" sides of organic foods comes from the media. According to some media analysts, organic foods contain some nutrients that are not present in commercial foods, and organic foods do not have certain toxins that may be present in commercial foods (Crinnion, 1995). As one journalist stated, organic food methods "honor the fragile complexity of our ecosystem, the health of those who work the land, and the long-term well-being of customers who enjoy [the] harvest . . ." (Shapin, 2006). However, not all media reports agree on this issue: Some sources note that pesticides *are* used on organic farms (Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts, 2004) and that organic foods typically cost the consumer more money.

How a story about food is framed has a major effect on how each of us feels about the subject of that story. When the media report that some type of food—spinach, packaged salads, or some brand of peanut butter—is being recalled by the manufacturer due to health concerns, for example, we may quit buying that particular product for a while.

Thinking specifically about the production of food, the media often use the term "Big Agra" to describe the major corporations around the globe that grow and market much of the food that we eat. These megacorporations own giant cultivated tracts that use procedures intended to maximize the crop yield, harvest that crop (whether plants or animals) at the lowest price possible, and distribute the crop to markets in the United States and other countries. Maximizing crop yield involves the use of chemicals and pesticides—and cheap labor. "Big Agra" obviously has a stake in the battle over how the media frame stories that compare its foods with organic foods; the organic food industry also has a stake in the battle. Accordingly, both sides attempt to influence how stories about their products are framed in the media because that can make a big difference in their respective profits. Whether it is fast food or fresh spinach, they want to have an impact on what you buy and where you buy it.

reflect & analyze

What factors affect your perceptions of what is "good" food and "bad" food? Are these factors influenced by advertising and media framing?

- **Research:** "The CNN Effect," the creation of a 24-hour news reporting cycle, has influenced U.S. foreign policy. Have students research the view of Steven Livingston (George Washington University) that the media may function alternately or simultaneously as (1) a policy agenda-setting agent, (2) an impediment to the achievement of desired policy goals, and (3) an accelerant to policy decision making.

- **Media Coverage:** ". . . [D]eregulation has paved the way for a few media companies to dominate the country's information distribution system. Over the past two decades the number of major U.S. media companies fell by more than one-half; most of the survivors are controlled by fewer than ten huge media conglomerates" (Rep. Maurice Hinchey, *The Nation,* 2006). Ask about the dangers and advantages of media conglomeration.

A strength of the conflict perspective is that it stresses how cultural values and norms may perpetuate social inequalities. It also highlights the inevitability of change and the constant tension between those who want to maintain the status quo and those who desire change. A limitation is its focus on societal discord and the divisiveness of culture.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives

Unlike functionalists and conflict theorists, who focus primarily on macrolevel concerns, symbolic interactionists engage in a microlevel analysis that views society as the sum of all people's interactions. From this perspective, people create, maintain, and modify culture as they go about their everyday activities. Symbols make communication with others possible because they provide us with shared meanings.

According to some symbolic interactionists, people continually negotiate their social realities. Values and norms are not independent realities that automatically determine our behavior. Instead, we reinterpret them in each social situation we encounter. However, the classical sociologist Georg Simmel warned that the larger cultural world—including both material culture and nonmaterial culture—eventually takes on a life of its own apart from the actors who daily re-create social life. As a result, individuals may be more controlled by culture than they realize. Simmel (1990/1907) suggested that money is an example of how people may be controlled by their culture. According to Simmel, people initially create money as a means of exchange, but then money acquires a social meaning that extends beyond its purely economic function. Money becomes an end in itself, rather than a means to an end. Today, we are aware of the relative "worth" not only of objects but also of individuals. Many people revere wealthy entrepreneurs and highly paid celebrities, entertainers, and sports figures for the amount of money they make, not for their intrinsic qualities. According to Simmel (1990/1907), money makes it possible for us to *relativize* everything, including our relationships with other people. When social life can be reduced to money, people become cynical, believing that anything—including people, objects, beauty, and truth—can be bought if we can pay the price. Although

Simmel acknowledged the positive functions of money, he believed that the social interpretations people give to money often produce individual feelings of cynicism and isolation.

A symbolic interactionist approach highlights how people maintain and change culture through their interactions with others. However, interactionism does not provide a systematic framework for analyzing how we shape culture and how it, in turn, shapes us. It also does not provide insight into how shared meanings are developed among people, and it does not take into account the many situations in which there is disagreement on meanings. Whereas the functional and conflict approaches tend to overemphasize the macrolevel workings of society, the interactionist viewpoint often fails to take these larger social structures into account.

Postmodernist Perspectives

Postmodernist theorists believe that much of what has been written about culture in the Western world is Eurocentric—that it is based on the uncritical assumption that European culture (including its dispersed versions in countries such as the United States, Australia, and South Africa) is the true, universal culture in which all the world's people ought to believe (Lemert, 1997). By contrast, postmodernists believe that we should speak of *cultures*, rather than *culture*.

However, Jean Baudrillard, one of the best-known French social theorists and key figures in postmodern theory, believes that the world of culture today is based on *simulation*, not reality. According to Baudrillard, social life is much more a spectacle that simulates reality than reality itself. Many U.S. children, upon entering school for the first time, have already watched more hours of television than the total number of hours of classroom instruction they will encounter in their entire school careers (Lemert, 1997). Add to this the number of hours that some children will have spent playing computer games or using the Internet, where they often find that it is more interesting to deal with imaginary heroes and villains than to interact with "real people" in real life. Baudrillard refers to this social creation as *hyperreality*—a situation in which the *simulation* of reality is more real than experiencing the event itself and having any actual connection with what is taking place. For Baudrillard, everyday life has been

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- **For Discussion:** According to Jean Baudrillard, "America is a desert. It is a vast cultural void where the real and the unreal are merged so completely that distinctions between them disappear. People's whole lives are played out as if part of a film or soap opera. The masses no longer make themselves evident as a class; they have been swamped by so much meaning that they have lost

all meaning." Do students find this assessment accurate, fair, and resonant?
- **Research:** Have the class examine whether Baudrillard's claims about Disney can be applied to other aspects of postmodern culture: "Disney wins at yet another level. It is not only interested in erasing the real by turning it into a three-dimensional virtual image with no depth, but it also seeks to erase time by synchronizing

◀ People of all ages are spending many hours each week using computers, playing video games, and watching television. How is this behavior different from the ways in which people enjoyed popular culture in previous generations?

captured by the signs and symbols generated to represent it, and we ultimately relate to simulations and models as if they were reality.

Baudrillard (1983) uses Disneyland as an example of a simulation—one that conceals the reality that exists outside rather than inside the boundaries of the artificial perimeter. According to Baudrillard, Disney-like theme parks constitute a form of seduction that substitutes symbolic (seductive) power for real power, particularly the ability to bring about social change. From this perspective, amusement park "guests" may feel like "survivors" after enduring the rapid speed and gravity-defying movements of the roller-coaster rides or see themselves as "winners" after surviving fights with hideous cartoon villains on the "dark rides." In reality, they have been made to *appear* to have power, but they do not actually possess any real power.

Similarly, the anthropologist Stephen M. Fjellman (1992) studied Disney World in Orlando, Florida, and noted that people may forget, at least briefly, that the outside world can be threatening while they stroll Disney World's streets without fear of crime or automobiles. Although this freedom may be temporarily empowering, it may also lull people into accepting a "worldview that presents an idealized

United States as heaven. . . . How nice if they could all be like us—with kids, a dog, and General Electric appliances—in a world whose only problems are avoiding Captain Hook, the witch's apple, and Toad Hall weasels" (Fjellman, 1992: 317).

In their examination of culture, postmodernist social theorists thus make us aware of the fact that no single perspective can grasp the complexity and diversity of the social world. There is no one, single, universal culture. They also make us aware that reality may not be what it seems. According to the postmodernist view, no one authority can claim to know social reality, and we should deconstruct—take apart and subject to intense critical scrutiny—existing beliefs and theories about culture in hopes of gaining new insights (Ritzer, 1997).

Although postmodern theories of culture have been criticized on a number of grounds, we will mention only three. One criticism is postmodernism's lack of a clear conceptualization of ideas. Another is the tendency to critique other perspectives as being "grand narratives," whereas postmodernists offer their own varieties of such narratives. Finally, some analysts believe that postmodern

all the periods, all the cultures, in a single traveling motion, by juxtaposing them in a single scenario."
• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

• **Research:** "Americans spent $22 billion on luxury bathrooms last year—about 10 times what the federal government spent on AIDS research" (*Washington Post*). How might this statistic reflect a culture of simulation?

[concept quick review 2.1]

Analysis of Culture

Components of Culture	Symbol	Anything that meaningfully represents something else.
	Language	A set of symbols that expresses ideas and enables people to think and communicate with one another.
	Values	Collective ideas about what is right or wrong, good or bad, and desirable or undesirable in a particular culture.
	Norms	Established rules of behavior or standards of conduct.
Sociological Analysis of Culture	Functionalist Perspectives	Culture helps people meet their biological, instrumental, and expressive needs.
	Conflict Perspectives	Ideas are a cultural creation of society's most powerful members and can be used by the ruling class to affect the thoughts and actions of members of other classes.
	Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives	People create, maintain, and modify culture during their everyday activities; however, cultural creations can take on a life of their own and end up controlling people.
	Postmodern Perspectives	Much of culture today is based on simulation of reality (e.g., what we see on television) rather than reality itself.

analyses of culture lead to profound pessimism about the future.

This chapter's Concept Quick Review summarizes the components of culture as well as how the four major perspectives view it.

◀ In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of immigrants who have become U.S. citizens. However, an upsurge in anti-immigrant sentiment has put pressure on the Border Patrol and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, which are charged with enforcing immigration laws.

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Culture in the Future

As we have discussed in this chapter, many changes are occurring in the United States. Increasing cultural diversity can either cause long-simmering racial and ethnic antagonisms to come closer to

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- **For Discussion:** Play the song by the Barenaked Ladies, "If I Had a Million Dollars." Ask your class to think about what's really *not* for sale these days. Focus on Simmel's idea that money makes everything relative. Does it? Have students make a list of what's *not* for sale in contemporary culture.

- **Active Learning:** Ask students this: In what kind of future would you like to live? Based on what they have read in Chapter 2, ask the class to write down their ideas about the future of our culture. Encourage students to balance any pessimistic ideas with optimistic hopes and dreams. What are some specific ways that they can become active participants in changing culture for the better?

sociology works!

Schools as Laboratories for Getting Along

Sociology makes us aware of the importance of culture in daily life. Research in sociology has also shown the significance of schools and friendship groups in exposing children and young people to cultures that are different from their own. Recent studies have shown that it may be easier for children to set aside their differences and get to know one another than it is for adults to do so. Consider what is happening among some children at International Community School, an innovative Decatur, Georgia, school where some students were born in the United States, but most are refugees from as many as forty war-torn countries: This school has become a "laboratory for getting along," particularly as some of the children have taken the initiative to befriend and help others (St. John, 2007). An excellent example is the friendship that developed between nine-year-old Dante Ramirez and Soung Oo Hlaing, an eleven-year-old Burmese refugee who spoke no English:

> The two boys met on the first day of school this year. Despite the language barrier, Dante managed to invite the newcomer to sit with him at lunch.
>
> "I didn't think he'd make friends at the beginning because he didn't speak that much English," Dante said. "So I thought I should be his friend."
>
> In the next weeks, the boys had a sleepover. They trick-or-treated on Soung's first Halloween. Soung, a gifted artist, gave Dante pointers on how to draw. And Dante helped

Soung with his English. "I use simple words that are easy to know and sometimes hand movements," Dante explained. "For 'huge,' I would make my hands bigger. And for 'big,' I would make my hands smaller than for huge." (St. John, 2007: A14)

Over time, as the boys got to know each other better, their mothers also developed a friendship and began to celebrate ethnic holidays together even though they largely relied on gestures (a form of nonverbal communication) to communicate with each other. Only time will tell how successful this "laboratory" will be in helping people from diverse cultures get along, but from a sociological perspective, community efforts such as this are clearly a right start.

Sociologists believe that it is important for cross-cultural communications and cooperation to develop among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds who now share common spaces. If a chance exists for greater understanding and cooperation in the twenty-first century, it may well originate in the small-group interactions of children in settings such as this school.

reflect & analyze

What examples can you provide that show how sociology works in regard to culture on your own college campus or in the community where you reside?

---

a boiling point or result in the creation of a truly "rainbow culture" in which diversity is respected and encouraged.

In the future, the issue of cultural diversity will increase in importance, especially in schools. Multicultural education that focuses on the contributions of a wide variety of people from different backgrounds will continue to be an issue of controversy from kindergarten through college. In the Los Angeles school district, for example, students speak more than 114 different languages and dialects. Schools will face the challenge of embracing widespread

cultural diversity while conveying a sense of community and national identity to students (see "Sociology Works!").

Technology will continue to have a profound effect on culture. Television and radio, films and videos, and electronic communications will continue to accelerate the flow of information and expand cultural diffusion throughout the world. Global communication devices will move images of people's lives, behavior, and fashions instantaneously among almost all nations. Increasingly, computers and cyberspace will become people's window on the

---

- **IRM:** Questions for Discussion: What will be the dominant cultural patterns in the United States and around the world in the twenty-first century? Include technology, global culture, and cultural imperialism in your discussion/debate.
- **Box Note:** Sociology Works! Ask students to work in small groups to discuss the Reflect & Analyze questions. This could also be a topic for a short reflective essay.

- **IRM:** Lecture Ideas: Journalist Thomas L. Friedman has written about the culture clash caused in part by globalization. There are a number of very clearly presented examples in his books that may enrich your presentation. He also has a blog site that you can use to keep up with his work: **thomaslfriedman.com**.

world and, in the process, promote greater integration or fragmentation among nations. Integration occurs when there is a widespread acceptance of ideas and items—such as democracy, rock music, blue jeans, and McDonald's hamburgers—among cultures. By contrast, fragmentation occurs when people in one culture disdain the beliefs and actions of other cultures. As a force for both cultural integration and fragmentation, technology will continue to revolutionize communications, but most of the world's population will not participate in this revolution.

From a sociological perspective, the study of culture helps us not only understand our own "tool kit" of symbols, stories, rituals, and world views but also expand our insights to include those of other people of the world, who also seek strategies for enhancing their own lives. If we understand how culture is used by people, how cultural elements constrain or further certain patterns of action, what aspects of our cultural heritage have enduring effects on our actions, and what specific historical changes undermine the validity of some cultural patterns and give rise to others, we can apply our sociological imagination not only to our own society but to the entire world as well (see Swidler, 1986).

chapter review

● What is culture?

Culture is the knowledge, language, values, and customs passed from one generation to the next in a human group or society. Culture can be either material or nonmaterial. Material culture consists of the physical creations of society. Nonmaterial culture is more abstract and reflects the ideas, values, and beliefs of a society.

● What are cultural universals?

Cultural universals are customs and practices that exist in all societies and include activities and institutions such as storytelling, families, and laws. However, specific forms of these universals vary from one cultural group to another.

● What are the four nonmaterial components of culture that are common to all societies?

These components are symbols, language, values, and norms. Symbols express shared meanings; through them, groups communicate cultural ideas and abstract concepts. Language is a set of symbols through which groups communicate. Values are a culture's collective ideas about what is acceptable or not acceptable. Norms are the specific behavioral expectations within a culture.

● What are the main types of norms?

Folkways are norms that express the everyday customs of a group, whereas mores are norms with strong moral and ethical connotations, and are essential to the stability of a culture. Laws are formal, standardized norms that are enforced by formal sanctions.

● What are high culture and popular culture?

High culture consists of classical music, opera, ballet, and other activities usually patronized by elite audiences. Popular culture consists of the activities, products, and services of a culture that appeal primarily to members of the middle and working classes.

● How is cultural diversity reflected in society?

Cultural diversity is reflected through race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion, occupation, and so forth. A diverse culture also includes subcultures and countercultures. A subculture has distinctive ideas and behaviors that differ from the larger society to which it belongs. A counterculture rejects the dominant societal values and norms.

● **What are culture shock, ethnocentrism, and cultural relativism?**

Culture shock refers to the anxiety that people experience when they encounter cultures radically different from their own. Ethnocentrism is the assumption that one's own culture is superior to others. Cultural relativism views and analyzes another culture in terms of that culture's own values and standards.

● **How do the major sociological perspectives view culture?**

A functionalist analysis of culture assumes that a common language and shared values help produce consensus and harmony. According to some conflict theorists, culture may be used by certain groups to maintain their privilege and exclude others from society's benefits. Symbolic interactionists suggest that people create, maintain, and modify culture as they go about their everyday activities. Postmodern thinkers believe that there are many cultures within the United States alone. In order to grasp a better understanding of how popular culture may simulate reality rather than be reality, postmodernists believe that we need a new way of conceptualizing culture and society.

key terms

beliefs 44	**folkways** 54	**sanctions** 54
counterculture 61	**high culture** 62	**Sapir–Whorf hypothesis** 48
cultural imperialism 64	**language** 48	**subculture** 58
cultural lag 55	**laws** 55	**symbol** 46
cultural relativism 62	**material culture** 43	**taboos** 54
cultural universals 44	**mores** 54	**technology** 55
culture 41	**nonmaterial culture** 43	**value contradictions** 53
culture shock 61	**norms** 54	**values** 51
ethnocentrism 62	**popular culture** 62	

questions for critical thinking

1. Would it be possible today to live in a totally separate culture in the United States? Could you avoid all influences from the mainstream popular culture or from the values and norms of other cultures? How would you be able to avoid any change in your culture?

2. Do fads and fashions reflect and reinforce or challenge and change the values and norms of a society? Consider a wide variety of fads and fashions: musical styles; computer and video games and other technologies; literature; and political, social, and religious ideas.

3. You are doing a survey analysis of recent immigrants to the United States to determine the effects of popular culture on their views and behavior. What are some of the questions you would use in your survey?

turning to video

Watch the ABC video *Best Ever? Healthy Nation* (running time 3:50), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video presents research findings showing that for the first time in fifty years, the average American's cholesterol level is in the healthy range. As you watch the video, think about your own diet (and cholesterol level, if you know it). After you've watched the video, consider these questions: In what ways is your diet influenced by cultural factors? How would you rate the overall healthfulness of your diet, especially those aspects of it that may be culturally influenced?

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Socialization

Nothing could have gone more wrong for me on my first day [as a student] at Penn State. I didn't know who Joe Paterno [the school's long-time, championship-winning football coach] is or why the library is named after him. I hadn't bought any of my books yet because I thought they would be passed out to me as was customary in high school, and, worst of all, I had never really read a map on my own before so finding the classrooms in the huge main campus was really hard. Avoid looking like an idiot on your first day of higher education by following a few pieces of advice, all of which revolve around the two most important things I learned about being a college student: stay organized and make friends whenever possible. . . . Good luck on your first day!

—As a student, Mdmse. Amelie (2010) found that she was completely unprepared for the first day of college, so she now helps other students with the socialization process by providing Web tips on how to survive in college.

▲ **For students attending college for the first time, the socialization process is complex and immediate. What socialization issues did you face during your first term in higher education?**

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The white coat ceremony . . . was intended to herald our introduction into the [Harvard Medical School] community on our first day of medical school. While not the long coat of a physician or resident, the white coat signaled our medical affiliation and differentiated us from the civilian visitors and volunteers.

This was not an affiliation I was ready to claim as a first-year medical student. Over the course of the year, after taking courses in anatomy, pharmacology, physiology, genetics, and embryology, I was more deeply impressed by how little I knew than by how much I had

learned. Yet every Monday in our Patient–Doctor course I found myself in my white coat interviewing still another patient.

Despite the uncertainty of my place in the medical world, my white coat ushered me into the foreign world of the patient–doctor dynamic. . . . These weekly interviews as part of our Patient–Doctor course were about learning the important questions, the right mannerisms, and the appropriate responses to our patients. Our instructors taught us to take a careful, methodical history, which I more or less skillfully replicated every week with a different patient. Although the goal of these weekly patient interactions was to discover a person's experience with illness, these interviews were more about my learning process than about the patient's story. . . .

When I interviewed patients, they saw my white coat. . . . The white coat masked my youth. It masked my inexperience. It masked my nervousness. Yet in the medical world my white coat did not offer the solace of anonymity but forced me to take on power that I was not ready to accept.

—Ellen Lerner Rothman, M.D. (1999: 2–3), describing the professional socialization process that she and most other medical students encounter in the early years of their training as they learn what is expected of them as doctors in training and how to communicate most effectively with patients

Chapter Focus Question

How does socialization occur throughout our lives, including our college years?

What do the comments by Mdmse. Amelie and Dr. Ellen Lerner Rothman have in common? Sociologically speaking, their statements express concern about the socialization process and how we learn to adapt when we join a new social organization. Many of us experience stress when we take on new and seemingly unfamiliar roles and find that we must learn the appropriate norms regarding how persons in a specific role should think, act, and communicate with others.

Look around in your classes at the beginning of each semester, and you will probably see other students who are trying to find out what is going to be expected of them as a student in a particular course. What is the course going to cover? What are the instructor's requirements? How should students communicate with the instructor and other students in the class? Some information of this type is learned through formal instruction, such as in a classroom, but much of what we know about school is learned informally through our observations of other people, by listening to what they say when we are in their physical presence, or through interacting with them by cell phone, e-mail, or text messaging when we are apart. Sociologists use the term *socialization* to refer to both the formal and informal processes by which people learn a new role and find out how to be a part of a group or organization. As we shall see in this chapter, this process takes place throughout our life.

In this chapter, we examine the process of socialization and identify reasons why socialization is crucial to the well-being of individuals, groups, and societies. We discuss both sociological and social psychological theories of human development. We look at the dynamics of socialization—how it occurs and what shapes it. Throughout the chapter, we focus on positive and negative aspects of the socialization process, including the daily stresses that may be involved in this process. Before reading on, test your knowledge about socialization and the college experience by taking the quiz in the Sociology and Everyday Life box.

Why Is Socialization Important Around the Globe?

Socialization is the lifelong process of social interaction through which individuals acquire a self-identity and the physical, mental, and social skills needed for survival in society. It is the essential link between the individual and society because it helps us to become aware of ourselves as a part of the larger groups and organizations of which we are a part. Socialization also helps us to learn how to communicate with other people and to have knowledge of how other people expect us to behave in a variety of social settings. Briefly stated, socialization enables us to develop our human potential and to learn the ways of thinking, talking, and acting that are necessary for social living.

Socialization is most crucial during childhood because it is essential for the individual's survival and for human development. The many people who met the early material and social needs of each of us were central to our establishing our own identity. During the first three years of our life, we begin to develop both a unique identity and the ability to manipulate things and to walk. We acquire sophisticated cognitive tools for thinking and for analyzing a wide variety of situations, and we learn effective communication skills. In the process, we begin a socialization process that takes place throughout our lives and through which we also have an effect on other people who watch us.

Socialization is also essential for the survival and stability of society. Members of a society must be socialized to support and maintain the existing social structure. From a functionalist perspective, individual conformity to existing norms is not taken for granted; rather, basic individual needs and desires must be balanced against the needs of the social structure. The socialization process is most effective when people conform to the norms of society because they believe that doing so is the best course of action. Socialization enables a society to "reproduce" itself by passing on its culture from one generation to the next.

Although the techniques used to teach newcomers the beliefs, values, and rules of behavior are somewhat similar in many nations, the *content* of socialization differs greatly from society to society. How people walk, talk, eat, make love, and wage war are all functions of the culture in which they are raised. At the same time, we are also influenced by our exposure to subcultures of class, race, ethnicity, religion, and gender. In addition, each of us has unique experiences in our family and friendship

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Socialization and the College Experience?

True	False	
T	**F**	1. Professors are the primary agents of socialization for college students.
T	**F**	2. In recent studies, few students report that they spend time studying with other students.
T	**F**	3. Many students find that taking college courses is stressful because it is an abrupt change from high school.
T	**F**	4. Law and medical students often report that they experience a high level of academic pressure because they know their classmates were top students during their undergraduate years.
T	**F**	5. Academic stress may be positive for students: It does not necessarily trigger psychological stress.
T	**F**	6. College students typically find the socialization process in higher education to be less stressful than the professional socialization process they experience when they enter an occupation or profession.
T	**F**	7. Students who have paid employment (outside of school) experience higher levels of stress than students who are not employed during their college years.
T	**F**	8. Getting good grades and completing schoolwork are the top sources of stress reported by college students.

Answers on page 78.

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groupings. The kind of human being that we become depends greatly on the particular society and social groups that surround us at birth and during early childhood. What we believe about ourselves, our society, and the world does not spring full-blown from inside ourselves; rather, we learn these things from our interactions with others.

Human Development: Biology and Society

What does it mean to be "human"? To be human includes being conscious of ourselves as individuals with unique identities, personalities, and relationships with others. As humans, we have ideas, emotions, and values. We have the capacity to think and to make rational decisions. But what is the source of "humanness"? Are we born with these human characteristics, or do we develop them through our interactions with others?

When we are born, we are totally dependent on others for our survival. We cannot turn ourselves over, speak, reason, plan, or do many of the things that are associated with being human. Although we can nurse, wet, and cry, most small mammals can also do those things. As discussed in Chapter 2, we

humans differ from nonhuman animals because we lack instincts and must rely on learning for our survival. Human infants have the potential to develop human characteristics if they are exposed to an adequate socialization process.

Every human being is a product of biology, society, and personal experiences—that is, of heredity and environment or, in even more basic terms, "nature" and "nurture." How much of our development can be explained by socialization? How much by our genetic heritage? Sociologists focus on how humans design their own culture and transmit it from generation to generation through socialization. By contrast, sociobiologists assert that nature, in the form of our genetic makeup, is a major factor in shaping human behavior. **Sociobiology is the systematic study of how biology affects social behavior** (Wilson, 1975). According to the zoologist Edward O. Wilson, who pioneered sociobiology,

> **socialization** the lifelong process of social interaction through which individuals acquire a self-identity and the physical, mental, and social skills needed for survival in society.
>
> **sociobiology** the systematic study of how biology affects social behavior.

- **Active Learning:** Ask your class members to make a short list of all the characteristics that make them human. Steer them away from biological characteristics and toward social ones. Which characteristics were taught and learned through socialization? Do all humans share in these characteristics?
- **Active Learning:** Class members should take the quiz in pairs. Wait and check answers together as a class. Which questions did most

members of the class seem to miss? Use these to shape your class discussions and presentations.
- **U.S. Census:** The 2000 Census data showed that among the 11.3 million children younger than five whose mothers were employed, 30 percent were cared for on a regular basis by a grandparent during their mother's working hours. A slightly greater percentage spent time in an organized care facility, such as a day-

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Socialization and the College Experience

1. **False.** Numerous studies have concluded that although professors are important in helping students learn about the academic side of the college experience, our friends and acquaintances help us adapt to higher education.

2. **False.** A recent study reported in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* found that 87.7 percent of first-year students at four-year colleges stated that they studied with other students. Similar data are not available for students at two-year schools. Would this percentage be higher, lower, or about the same at two-year and community colleges?

3. **True.** The college environment is stressful for many students who find that it is an abrupt change from high school because workloads increase, students are expected to manage their time independently and effectively, and grades are increasingly important for a person's career goals and other future endeavors.

4. **True.** The competitive nature of the admission process in law schools and medical schools virtually guarantees that new students will be surrounded by classmates who were exceptional students during their undergraduate years. However, this level of achievement may be a source of stimulation for some students rather than a source of discomfort and stress.

5. **True.** Some amount of academic stress may be positive in helping students reach their academic and career goals; however, excessive stress may be detrimental if it results in high levels of psychological stress or problematic behaviors such as alcohol abuse.

6. **False.** Recent studies that found that stress levels among college students are higher than those of people entering a new occupation or profession. For this reason, students are encouraged to develop good coping skills and build support networks of friends, family, and other individuals in the college community so that they have someone they can turn to if they believe that the pressure has become excessive.

7. **False.** Although numerous studies have been conducted to determine whether or not paid employment (outside of school) contributes to higher stress levels among college students, most research has not shown a significant relationship between the number of hours worked and levels of stress among students. Earning more money for school and personal expenses appears to offset additional time and responsibility in the workplace.

8. **True.** The two top stressors most frequently reported on college campuses are getting good grades and completing schoolwork. However, first-year college students also report that changes in eating and sleeping habits, increased workloads and new responsibilities, and going home for holidays and other breaks are major sources of stress for them.

Sources: *Campus Times,* 2008; *Chronicle of Higher Education,* 2009; Messenger, 2009; Reuters, 2008; Ross, Niebling, and Heckert, 1999; and Whitman, 1985.

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genetic inheritance underlies many forms of social behavior such as war and peace, envy of and concern for others, and competition and cooperation. Most sociologists disagree with the notion that biological principles can be used to explain all human behavior. Obviously, however, some aspects of our physical makeup—such as eye color, hair color, height, and weight—are largely determined by our heredity.

How important is social influence ("nurture") in human development? There is hardly a single behavior that is not influenced socially. Except for simple reflexes, most human actions are social, either in their causes or in their consequences. Even solitary actions such as crying or brushing our teeth are ultimately social. We cry because someone has hurt us. We brush our teeth because our parents (or dentist) told us it was important. Social environment probably has a greater effect than heredity on the way we develop and the way we act. However, heredity does provide the basic material from which other people help to mold an individual's human characteristics.

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care center, nursery, or preschool. Meanwhile, 25 percent received care from their fathers, 3 percent from siblings, and 8 percent from other relatives when mothers went to work.

- **Active Learning:** Have the class write for ten minutes. Ask each student to write about specific ways that he or she is a product of both nature and nurture. Do this before you present a lecture on the topic so that your class will be prepared to think about the subject.

Our biological and emotional needs are related in a complex equation. Children whose needs are met in settings characterized by affection, warmth, and closeness see the world as a safe and comfortable place and see other people as trustworthy and helpful. By contrast, infants and children who receive less-than-adequate care or who are emotionally rejected or abused often view the world as hostile and have feelings of suspicion and fear.

Problems Associated with Social Isolation and Maltreatment

Social environment, then, is a crucial part of an individual's socialization. Even nonhuman primates such as monkeys and chimpanzees need social contact with others of their species in order to develop properly. As we will see, appropriate social contact is even more important for humans.

Isolation and Nonhuman Primates Researchers have attempted to demonstrate the effects of social isolation on nonhuman primates raised without contact with others of their own species. In a series of laboratory experiments, the psychologists Harry and Margaret Harlow (1962, 1977) took infant rhesus monkeys from their mothers and isolated them in separate cages. Each cage contained two nonliving "mother substitutes" made of wire, one with a feeding bottle attached and the other covered with soft terry cloth but without a bottle. The infant monkeys instinctively clung to the cloth "mother" and would not abandon it until hunger drove them to the bottle attached to the wire "mother." As soon as they were full, they went back to the cloth "mother" seeking warmth, affection, and physical comfort.

The Harlows' experiments show the detrimental effects of isolation on nonhuman primates. When the young monkeys were later introduced to other members of their species, they cringed in the corner. Having been deprived of social contact with other monkeys during their first six months of life, they never learned how to relate to other monkeys or to become well-adjusted adults—they were fearful of

▶ As Harry and Margaret Harlow discovered, humans are not the only primates that need contact with others. Deprived of its mother, this infant monkey found a substitute.

or hostile toward other monkeys (Harlow and Harlow, 1962, 1977).

Because humans rely more heavily on social learning than do monkeys, the process of socialization is even more important for us.

Isolated Children Of course, sociologists would never place children in isolated circumstances so that they could observe what happened to them. However, some cases have arisen in which parents or other caregivers failed to fulfill their responsibilities, leaving children alone or placing them in isolated circumstances. From analysis of these situations, social scientists have documented cases in which children were deliberately raised in isolation. A look at the lives of two children who suffered such emotional abuse provides important insights into the importance of a positive socialization process and the negative effects of social isolation.

Anna Born in 1932 to an unmarried, mentally impaired woman, Anna was an unwanted child. She

© Martin Rogers/Getty Images

• **Research:** Americans are far more socially isolated today than they were two decades ago, and a sharply growing number of people say they have no one in whom they can confide, according to a comprehensive evaluation of the decline of social ties in the United States, based on research conducted by Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and Matthew E. Brashears (*American Sociological Review,* 2006).

• **Media Coverage:** A seven-year-old boy who can communicate only by chirping, after his mother raised him as a pet bird, has been rescued by Russian care workers. Reports in Russian media claim the child, suffering from "Mowgli syndrome," was found in a tiny two-room apartment that appeared to double as an aviary. Social worker Galina Volskaya told the newspaper *Pravda* that "the bird

was kept in an attic-like room in her grandfather's house. Her mother, who worked on the farm all day and often went out at night, gave Anna just enough care to keep her alive; she received no other care. Sociologist Kingsley Davis (1940) described Anna's condition when she was found in 1938:

> [Anna] had no glimmering of speech, absolutely no ability to walk, no sense of gesture, not the least capacity to feed herself even when the food was put in front of her, and no comprehension of cleanliness. She was so apathetic that it was hard to tell whether or not she could hear. And all of this at the age of nearly six years.

When she was placed in a special school and given the necessary care, Anna slowly learned to walk, talk, and care for herself. Just before her death at the age of ten, Anna reportedly could follow directions, talk in phrases, wash her hands, brush her teeth, and try to help other children (Davis, 1940).

Genie   About three decades later, Genie was found in 1970 at the age of thirteen. She had been locked in a bedroom alone, alternately strapped down to a child's potty chair or straitjacketed into a sleeping bag, since she was twenty months old. She had been fed baby food and beaten with a wooden paddle when she whimpered. She had not heard the sounds of human speech because no one talked to her and there was no television or radio in her room (Curtiss, 1977; Pines, 1981). Genie was placed in a pediatric hospital, where one of the psychologists described her condition:

> At the time of her admission she was virtually unsocialized. She could not stand erect, salivated continuously, had never been toilet-trained and had no control over her urinary or bowel functions. She was unable to chew solid food and had the weight, height and appearance of a child half her age. (Rigler, 1993: 35)

In addition to her physical condition, Genie showed psychological traits associated with neglect, as described by one of her psychiatrists:

> If you gave [Genie] a toy, she would reach out and touch it, hold it, caress it with her fingertips, as though she didn't trust her eyes. She would rub it against her cheek to feel it. So when I met her and

she began to notice me standing beside her bed, I held my hand out and she reached out and took my hand and carefully felt my thumb and fingers individually, and then put my hand against her cheek. She was exactly like a blind child. (Rymer, 1993: 45)

Extensive therapy was used in an attempt to socialize Genie and develop her language abilities (Curtiss, 1977; Pines, 1981). These efforts met with limited success: In the 1990s, Genie was living in a board-and-care home for retarded adults (see Angier, 1993; Rigler, 1993; Rymer, 1993).

Why do we discuss children who have been the victims of maltreatment in a chapter that looks at the socialization process? The answer lies in the fact that such cases are important to our understanding of the socialization process because they show the importance of this process and reflect how detrimental social isolation and neglect can be to the well-being of people.

▲ A victim of extreme child abuse, Genie was isolated from human contact and tortured until she was rescued at the age of thirteen. Subsequent attempts to socialize her were largely unsuccessful.

boy" was treated like another of his mother's many pet birds by his thirty-one-year-old mother (*Daily Mail,* 2/2008).
- **Historical Perspective:** Harry Harlow's experiments (1963–1968) added scientific legitimacy to two powerful arguments: against institutional child care and in favor of psychological parenthood. Both suggested that the permanence associated with adoption was far superior to other arrangements when it came to

safeguarding the future mental and emotional well-being of children in need of parents (Adoption History Project).
- **Extra Examples:** Learn more about Genie and obtain teaching resources at the *NOVA: Secret of the Wild Child* site: **www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/programs/2112_wildchil.html**.
- **Historical Perspective:** Dr. Susan Curtiss, one of the original Genie researchers, reported in 2001 that Genie is in an adult-care facility

Child Maltreatment   What do the terms *child maltreatment* and *child abuse* mean to you? When asked what constitutes child maltreatment, many people first think of cases that involve severe physical injuries or sexual abuse. However, neglect is the most frequent form of child maltreatment (Dubowitz et al., 1993). Child neglect occurs when children's basic needs—including emotional warmth and security, adequate shelter, food, health care, education, clothing, and protection—are not met, regardless of cause (Dubowitz et al., 1993: 12). Neglect often involves acts of omission (where parents or caregivers fail to provide adequate physical or emotional care for children) rather than acts of commission (such as physical or sexual abuse). Of course, what constitutes child maltreatment differs from society to society.

Social Psychological Theories of Human Development

Over the past hundred years, a variety of psychological and sociological theories have been developed not only to explain child abuse but also to describe how a positive process of socialization occurs. Let's look first at several social psychological theories that focus primarily on how the individual personality develops.

Freud and the Psychoanalytic Perspective

The basic assumption in Sigmund Freud's (1924) psychoanalytic approach is that human behavior and personality originate from unconscious forces within individuals. Freud (1856–1939), who is known as the founder of psychoanalytic theory, developed his major theories in the Victorian era, when biological explanations of human behavior were prevalent. It was also an era of extreme sexual repression and male dominance when compared to contemporary U.S. standards. Freud's theory was greatly influenced by these cultural factors, as reflected in the importance he assigned to sexual motives in explaining behavior. For example, Freud based his ideas on the belief that people have two basic tendencies: the urge to survive and the urge to procreate.

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◄ What are the consequences to children of isolation and physical abuse, as contrasted with social interaction and parental affection? Sociologists emphasize that social environment is a crucial part of an individual's socialization.

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that offers broad exposure to events and activities. Among other regular outings, Genie travels with her group to Las Vegas to play slot machines and explore. Unfortunately, Genie's language skills have deteriorated as has her ability to sign. Despite these setbacks, Dr. Curtiss said that Genie still has "a powerhouse of zest for life."

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #10 The Intellectual Connections Between Sociology and Other Fields
- **Research:** Research suggests that children who are repeatedly abused, or are abused by a member of their immediate family, are at higher risk of attempting suicide in later life. Sexual abuse, and to a lesser extent physical abuse in childhood, have both

According to Freud (1924), human development occurs in three states that reflect different levels of the personality, which he referred to as the *id, ego,* and *superego.* The ***id* is the component of personality that includes all of the individual's basic biological drives and needs that demand immediate gratification.** For Freud, the newborn child's

▼ Sigmund Freud, founder of the psychoanalytic perspective.
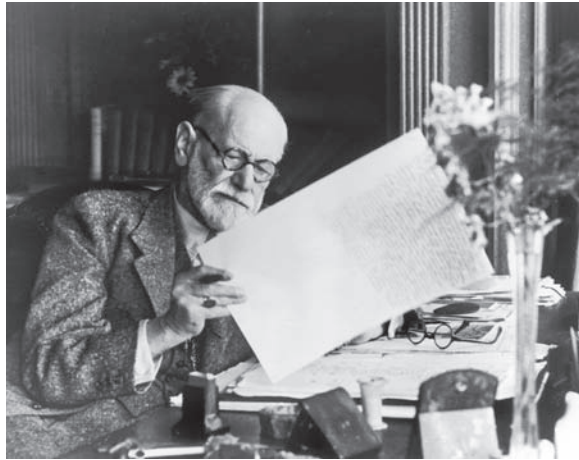
© Mary Evans/The Image Works

personality is all id, and from birth the child finds that urges for self-gratification—such as wanting to be held, fed, or changed—are not going to be satisfied immediately. However, id remains with people throughout their life in the form of *psychic energy,* the urges and desires that account for behavior. By contrast, the second level of personality—the *ego*—develops as infants discover that their most basic desires are not always going to be met by others. The ***ego* is the rational, reality-oriented component of personality that imposes restrictions on the innate pleasure-seeking drives of the id.** The ego channels the desire of the id for immediate gratification into the most advantageous direction for the individual. The third level of personality—the *superego*—is in opposition to both the id and the ego. The ***superego,* or conscience, consists of the moral and ethical aspects of personality.** It is first expressed as the recognition of parental control and eventually matures as the child learns that parental control is a reflection of the values and moral demands of the larger society. When a person is well adjusted, the ego successfully manages the opposing forces of the id and the superego. ▶ Figure 3.1 illustrates Freud's theory of personality.

Although subject to harsh criticism, Freud's theory made people aware of the importance of early childhood experiences, including abuse and neglect. His theories have also had a profound influence on contemporary mental health

CONSCIOUS

Ego
"I guess I'll have to wait until I have the money to buy that candy bar."

UNCONSCIOUS

Superego
"It's wrong to steal."

Id
"I want that candy bar, no matter what!"
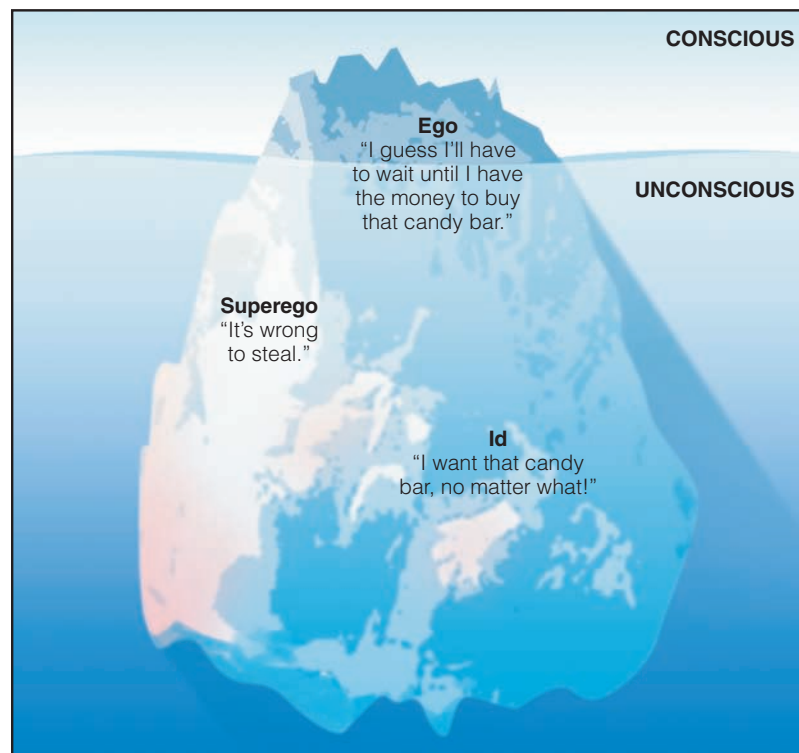
◀ **FIGURE 3.1** **FREUD'S THEORY OF PERSONALITY**
This illustration shows how Freud might picture a person's internal conflict over whether to commit an antisocial act such as stealing a candy bar. In addition to dividing personality into three components, Freud theorized that our personalities are largely unconscious—hidden from our normal awareness. To dramatize his point, Freud compared conscious awareness (portions of the ego and superego) to the visible tip of an iceberg. Most of personality—including the id, with its raw desires and impulses—lies submerged in our subconscious.

been associated with a tendency toward suicide (*British Journal of Psychiatry,* 8/2008).
• **Active Learning:** Have students evaluate Freud's theory of personality from personal experience. Do the id, ego, and superego resonate with their childhood and later experiences? Does it leave out important parts of experience and personality? Ask them to back up their responses with specific examples.

• **Historical Perspective:** "A new report by the American Psychoanalytic Association has found that while psychoanalysis or what purports to be psychoanalysis is alive and well in literature, film, history, and just about every other subject in the humanities, psychology departments and textbooks treat it as 'desiccated and dead,' a historical artifact instead of 'an ongoing movement and a

practitioners and on other human development theories.

Piaget and Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget (1896–1980), a Swiss psychologist, was a pioneer in the field of cognitive (intellectual) development. Cognitive theorists are interested in how people obtain, process, and use information—that is, in how we think. Cognitive development relates to changes over time in how we think.

Piaget (1954) believed that in each stage of development (from birth through adolescence), children's activities are governed by their perception of the world around them. His four stages of cognitive development are organized around specific tasks that, when mastered, lead to the acquisition of new mental capacities, which then serve as the basis for the next level of development. Piaget emphasized that all children must go through each stage in sequence

▼ Jean Piaget, a pioneer in the field of cognitive development.

© AFP/Getty Images

before moving on to the next one, although some children move through them faster than others.

1. *Sensorimotor stage* (birth to age two). During this period, children understand the world only through sensory contact and immediate action because they cannot engage in symbolic thought or use language. Toward the end of the second year, children comprehend *object permanence;* in other words, they start to realize that objects continue to exist even when the items are out of sight.

2. *Preoperational stage* (age two to seven). In this stage, children begin to use words as mental symbols and to form mental images. However, they still are limited in their ability to use logic to solve problems or to realize that physical objects may change in shape or appearance while still retaining their physical properties. For example, Piaget showed children two identical beakers filled with the same amount of water. After the children agreed that both beakers held the same amount of water, Piaget poured the water from one beaker into a taller, narrower beaker and then asked them about the amounts of water in each beaker. Those still in the preoperational stage believed that the taller beaker held more water because the water line was higher than in the shorter, wider beaker.

3. *Concrete operational stage* (age seven to eleven). During this stage, children think in terms of tangible objects and actual events. They can draw conclusions about the likely physical consequences of an action without always having to try the action out. Children begin to take the role of others and start to empathize with the viewpoints of others.

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id Sigmund Freud's term for the component of personality that includes all of the individual's basic biological drives and needs that demand immediate gratification.

ego according to Sigmund Freud, the rational, reality-oriented component of personality that imposes restrictions on the innate pleasure-seeking drives of the id.

superego Sigmund Freud's term for the conscience, consisting of the moral and ethical aspects of personality.

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living, evolving process'" (*New York Times,* 11/2007). Have students research this split and why it might have developed.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Extra Examples:** Direct students to a four-minute online video on Piaget's theory, narrated by David Elkind and available at Google Videos under the title *Piaget's Developmental*

Theory: An Overview (**http://video.google.com/videoplay? docid=-9014865592046332725**).
- **Applied Sociology:** Have students examine the work of Professor Thomas E. Wartenberg of Mount Holyoke College in teaching abstract, philosophical reasoning to second graders. Do they agree that his work contradicts Piaget's stages? For more information, see

4. *Formal operational stage* (age twelve through adolescence). By this stage, adolescents are able to engage in highly abstract thought and understand places, things, and events they have never seen. They can think about the future and evaluate different options or courses of action.

Piaget provided useful insights on the emergence of logical thinking as the result of biological

▼ Psychologist Jean Piaget identified four stages of cognitive development, including the preoperative stage, in which children have limited ability to realize that physical objects may change in shape or appearance. Piaget poured liquid from one beaker into a taller, narrower beaker and then asked children about the amounts of liquid in each beaker.

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maturation and socialization. However, critics have noted several weaknesses in Piaget's approach to cognitive development. For one thing, the theory says little about individual differences among children, nor does it provide for cultural differences. For another, as the psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982) has noted, Piaget did not take into account how gender affects the process of social development.

Kohlberg and the Stages of Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987) elaborated on Piaget's theories of cognitive reasoning by conducting a series of studies in which children, adolescents, and adults were presented with moral dilemmas that took the form of stories. Based on his findings, Kohlberg (1969, 1981) classified moral reasoning into three sequential levels:

1. *Preconventional level* (age seven to ten). Children's perceptions are based on punishment and obedience. Evil behavior is that which is likely to be punished; good conduct is based on obedience and avoidance of unwanted consequences.
2. *Conventional level* (age ten through adulthood). People are most concerned with how they are perceived by their peers and with how one conforms to rules.
3. *Postconventional level* (few adults reach this stage). People view morality in terms of individual rights; "moral conduct" is judged by principles based on human rights that transcend government and laws.

Although Kohlberg presents interesting ideas about the moral judgments of children, some critics have challenged the universality of his stages of moral development. They have also suggested that the elaborate "moral dilemmas" he used are too abstract for children. In one story, for example, a husband contemplates stealing for his critically ill wife medicine that he cannot afford. When questions are made simpler, or when children and adolescents are observed in natural (as opposed to laboratory) settings, they often demonstrate sophisticated levels of moral reasoning (Darley and Shultz, 1990; Lapsley, 1990).

the article on Wartenberg's methods by Abby Goodnough in the *New York Times* (4/18/2010).
- **Quote, Unquote:** "If you want to be creative, stay in part a child, with the creativity and invention that characterizes children before they are deformed by adult society" (Jean Piaget). Ask your class to submit suggestions for accomplishing this goal.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Research:** A new study conducted by researchers at the University of Utah, one of the first studies to consider how growing up in a war zone affects children's moral development, appears in the July/August 2008 issue of the journal *Child Development*. Ask students to consider these findings in light of Kohlberg's stages.

◀ How do these teenagers' perceptions of the world differ from their perceptions ten years earlier, according to Piaget?

compassion and care is an important contribution to our knowledge about moral reasoning.

Sociological Theories of Human Development

Although social scientists acknowledge the contributions of psychoanalytic and psychologically based explanations of human development, sociologists believe that it is important to bring a sociological perspective to bear on how people develop an awareness of self and learn about the culture in which they live. According to a sociological perspective, we cannot form a sense of self or personal identity without intense social contact with others. The self represents the sum total of perceptions and feelings that an individual has of being a distinct, unique person—a sense of who and what one is. When we speak of the "self," we typically use words such as *I, me, my, mine,* and *myself* (Cooley, 1998/1902). This sense of self (also referred to *self-concept*) is not present at birth; it arises in the process of social experience. **Self-concept is the totality of our beliefs and feelings about ourselves.** Four components make up our self-concept: (1) the physical self ("I am tall"), (2) the active self ("I am good at soccer"), (3) the social self ("I am nice to others"), and (4) the psychological self ("I believe in world peace"). Between early and late childhood, a child's focus tends to shift from the physical and active dimensions of self toward the social and psychological aspects. Self-concept is the foundation for communication with others; it continues to develop and change throughout our lives.

Our *self-identity* is our perception about what kind of person we are. As we have seen, socially isolated children do not have typical self-identities because they have had no experience of "humanness." According to symbolic interactionists, we do not know who we are until we see ourselves as we

Gilligan's View on Gender and Moral Development

Psychologist Carol Gilligan (b. 1936) is one of the major critics of Kohlberg's theory of moral development. According to Gilligan (1982), Kohlberg's model was developed solely on the basis of research with male respondents, and women and men often have divergent views on morality based on differences in socialization and life experiences. Gilligan believes that men become more concerned with law and order but that women tend to analyze social relationships and the social consequences of behavior. For example, in Kohlberg's story about the man who is thinking about stealing medicine for his wife, Gilligan argues that male respondents are more likely to use *abstract standards* of right and wrong, whereas female respondents are more likely to be concerned about what *consequences* his stealing the drug might have for the man and his family. Does this constitute a "moral deficiency" on the part of either women or men? Not according to Gilligan.

Subsequent research that directly compared women's and men's reasoning about moral dilemmas has supported some of Gilligan's assertions but not others. For example, some other researchers have not found that women are more compassionate than men (Tavris, 1993). Overall, however, Gilligan's argument that people make moral decisions according to both abstract principles of justice and principles of

> **self-concept** the totality of our beliefs and feelings about ourselves.

believe that others see us. The perspectives of symbolic interactionists Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead help us understand how our self-identity is developed through our interactions with others.

Cooley and the Looking-Glass Self

According to the sociologist Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929), the *looking-glass self* **refers to the way in which a person's sense of self is derived from the perceptions of others.** Our looking-glass self is based on our perception of *how* other people think of us (Cooley, 1998/1902). As ▶ Figure 3.2 shows, the looking-glass self is a self-concept derived from a three-step process:

1. We imagine how our personality and appearance will look to other people.
2. We imagine how other people judge the appearance and personality that we think we present.
3. We develop a self-concept. If we think the evaluation of others is favorable, our self-concept is enhanced. If we think the evaluation is unfavorable, our self-concept is diminished. (Cooley, 1998/1902)

The self develops only through contact with others, just as social institutions and societies do not exist independently of the interaction of individuals (Schubert, 1998).

Mead and Role-Taking

George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) extended Cooley's insights by linking the idea of self-concept to *role-taking—***the process by which a person mentally assumes the role of another person or group in order to understand the world from that person's or group's point of view.** Role-taking often occurs through play and games, as children try out different roles (such as being mommy, daddy, doctor, or teacher) and gain an

appreciation of them. First, people come to take the role of the other (role-taking). By taking the roles of others, the individual hopes to ascertain the intention or direction of the acts of others. Then the person begins to construct his or her own roles (role-making) and to anticipate other individuals' responses. Finally, the person plays at her or his particular role (role-playing).

According to Mead (1934), in the early months of life, children do not realize that they are separate from others. However, they do begin early on to see a mirrored image of themselves in others. Shortly after birth, infants start to notice the faces of those around them, especially the significant others, whose faces start to have meaning because they are associated with experiences such as feeding and cuddling. *Significant others* **are those persons whose care, affection, and approval are especially desired and who are most important in the development of the self.** Gradually, we distinguish ourselves from our caregivers and begin to perceive ourselves in contrast to them. As we develop language skills and learn to understand symbols, we begin to develop a self-concept. When we can represent ourselves in our minds as objects distinct from everything else, our self has been formed.

We imagine how we appear to other people.

We imagine how other people judge the appearance that we think we present.

If we think the evaluation is favorable, our self-concept is enhanced.

If we think the evaluation is unfavorable, our self-concept is diminished.

▶ **FIGURE 3.2 HOW THE LOOKING-GLASS SELF WORKS**

Source: Based on Katzer, Cook, and Crouch, 1991.
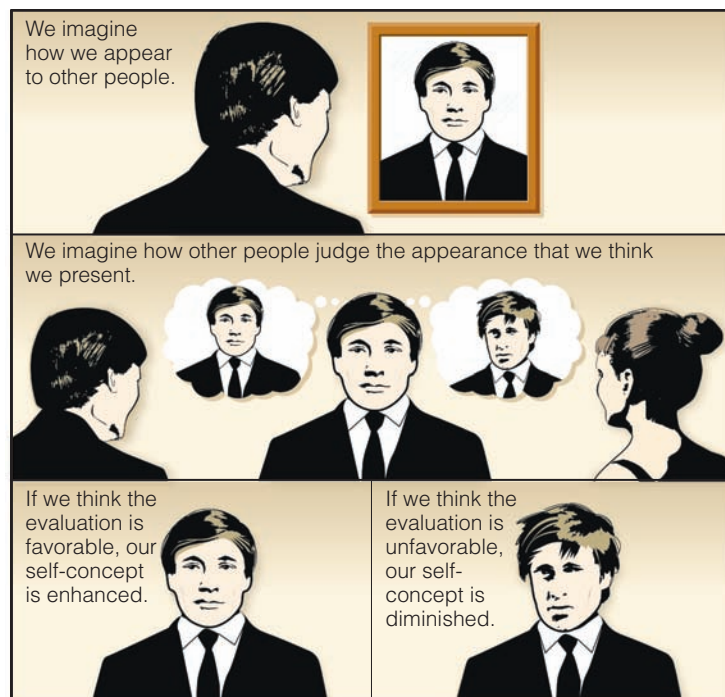
psychological). How do they identify themselves and how do they identify others in their day-to-day interactions?
- **Figure Note:** It is sometimes easier for students to grasp the concept behind the looking-glass self if they will remember this: "I am *not* who I think I am; I am *not* who you think I am; I *am* who I think you think I am." We don't view ourselves as others see us; we construct a self-image out of our interpretations from others.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Extra Examples:** Students will be familiar with Freud's dimensions of human personality from the earlier discussion. Use this familiarity as a starting point to go into more detail about Mead's ideas about the "I" and the "me."

Mead (1934) divided the self into the "I" and the "me." The "I" is the subjective element of the self and represents the spontaneous and unique traits of each person. The "me" is the objective element of the self, which is composed of the internalized attitudes and demands of other members of society and the individual's awareness of those demands. Both the "I" and the "me" are needed to form the social self. The unity of the two constitutes the full development of the individual. According to Mead, the "I" develops first, and the "me" takes form during the three stages of self-development:

1. During the *preparatory stage,* up to about age three, interactions lack meaning, and children largely imitate the people around them. At this stage, children are preparing for role-taking.
2. In the *play stage,* from about age three to five, children learn to use language and other symbols, thus enabling them to pretend to take the roles of specific people. At this stage, they begin to see themselves in relation to others, but they do not see role-taking as something they have to do.
3. During the *game stage,* which begins in the early school years, children understand not only their own social position but also the positions of others around them. In contrast to play, games are structured by rules, are often competitive, and involve a number of other "players." At this time, children become concerned about the demands and expectations of others and of the larger

looking-glass self Charles Horton Cooley's term for the way in which a person's sense of self is derived from the perceptions of others.

role-taking the process by which a person mentally assumes the role of another person in order to understand the world from that person's point of view.

significant others those persons whose care, affection, and approval are especially desired and who are most important in the development of the self.

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◀ According to sociologist George Herbert Mead, the self develops through three stages. In the preparatory stage, children imitate others; in the play stage, children pretend to take the roles of specific people; and in the game stage, children become aware of the "rules of the game" and the expectations of others.

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- **Active Learning:** Students should examine Mead's stage theory of development and reflect on their own movement through these stages. Have them focus on the social interactions and personal discoveries that took place along the way.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **Active Learning:** Have students discuss or write in response to this question: What were some of the earliest messages about yourself that you internalized from your significant other(s)? Continue the activity by quoting Karl Menninger's remark that "What's done to children, they will do to society." Ask students to consider the ways they began to interpret messages about themselves from society as a whole—from what Mead called "the generalized other."

sociology works!

"Good Job!": Mead's Generalized Other and the Issue of Excessive Praise

Hang out at a playground, visit a school, or show up at a child's birthday party, and there's one phrase you can count on hearing repeatedly: "Good job!" Even tiny infants are praised for smacking their hands together ("Good clapping!"). Many of us blurt out these judgments of our children to the point that it has become almost a verbal tic. (Kohn, 2001)

Educational analyst Alfie Kohn describes the common practice of praising children for practically everything they say or do. According to Kohn, excessive praise or unearned compliments may be problematic for children because, rather than bolstering their self-esteem, such praise may increase a child's dependence on adults. As children increasingly rely on constant praise and on significant others to identify what is good or bad about their performance, they may not develop the ability to make meaningful judgments about what they have done. As Kohn suggests (2001), "Sadly, some of these kids will grow into adults who continue to need someone to pat them on the head and tell them whether what they did was OK."

Kohn's ideas remind us of the earlier sociological insights of George Herbert Mead, who described how children learn to take into account the expectations of the larger society and to balance the "I" (the subjective element of the self: the spontaneous and unique traits of each person) with the "me" (the objective element of the self: the internalized attitudes and demands of other members of society and the individual's awareness of those demands). As Mead (1934: 160) stated, "What goes on in the game goes on in the life of the child at all times. He is continually taking the attitudes of those about him, especially the roles of those who in some sense control him and on whom he depends." According to Mead, role-taking is vital to the formation of a mature sense of self as each individual learns to visualize the intentions and expectations of other people and groups. Excessively praising children may make it more difficult for them to develop a positive self-concept and visualize an accurate picture of what is expected of them as they grow into young adulthood.

Does this mean that children should not be praised? Definitely not! It means that we should think about when and how to praise children. What children may need sometimes is not praise, but encouragement. As child development specialist Docia Zavitkovsky has stated,

> I sometimes say that praise is fine "when praise is due." We get into the habit of praising when it isn't praise that is appropriate but encouragement. For example, we're always saying to young children: "Oh, what a beautiful picture," even when their pictures aren't necessarily beautiful. So why not really look at each picture? Maybe a child has painted a picture with many wonderful colors. Why don't we comment on that—on the reality of the picture? (qtd. in *Scholastic Parent & Child*, 2007)

From this perspective, positive feedback can have a very important influence on a child's self-esteem because he or she can learn how to do a "good job" when engaging in a specific activity or accomplishing a task rather than simply being praised for any effort expended. Mead's concept of the *generalized other* makes us aware of the importance of other people's actions in how self-concept develops.

reflect & analyze

What effect does receiving praise when we are young have on us when we are college students? Also, when we are dealing with our peers, how might we thoughtfully use the phrase "Good job!" without making it into an overworked expression?

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society. Mead used the example of a baseball game to describe this stage because children, like baseball players, must take into account the roles of all the other players at the same time. Mead's concept of the **generalized other refers to the child's awareness of the demands and expectations of the society as a whole or of the child's subculture.**

How useful are symbolic interactionist perspectives in enhancing our understanding of the socialization process? Certainly, this approach contributes to our understanding of how the self develops (see "Sociology Works!"). However, this approach has certain limitations. Sociologist Anne Kaspar (1986) suggests that Mead's ideas about the social self may be more applicable to men than to women

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- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Research:** Have students research the cultural critic Neal Postman's arguments in the *Disappearance of Childhood* (1982). The concept of childhood is a relatively recent invention, Postman argues, but its distortion by mass media threatens the integrity of adulthood, as well.

- **Quote, Unquote:** "All children wear the sign: 'I want to be important NOW.' Many of our juvenile delinquency problems arise because nobody reads the sign" (Dan Pursuit, California's Delinquency Control Institute). What kinds of social problems can your class trace back to poor childhood socialization?

[concept quick review 3.1]

Psychological and Sociological Theories of Human Development

Social Psychological Theories of Human Development	Freud's psychoanalytic perspective	Children first develop the id (drives and needs), then the ego (restrictions on the id), and then the superego (moral and ethical aspects of personality).
	Piaget's cognitive development	Children go through four stages of cognitive (intellectual) development, going from understanding only through sensory contact to engaging in highly abstract thought.
	Kohlberg's stages of moral development	People go through three stages of moral development, from avoidance of unwanted consequences to viewing morality based on human rights.
	Gilligan: gender and moral development	Women go through stages of moral development from personal wants to the greatest good for themselves and others.
Sociological Theories of Human Development	Cooley's looking-glass self	A person's sense of self is derived from his or her perception of how others view him or her.
	Mead's three stages of self-development	In the preparatory stage, children imitate the people around them; in the play stage, children pretend to take the roles of specific people; and in the game stage, children learn the demands and expectations of roles.

because women are more likely to experience inherent conflicts between the meanings they derive from their personal experiences and those they take from the culture, particularly in regard to balancing the responsibilities of family life and paid employment. (This chapter's Concept Quick Review summarizes the major theories of human development.)

Recent Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives

The symbolic interactionist approach emphasizes that socialization is a collective process in which children are active and creative agents, not just passive recipients of the socialization process. From this view, childhood is a *socially constructed* category (Adler and Adler, 1998). Children are capable of actively constructing their own shared meanings as they acquire language skills and accumulate interactive experiences (Qvortrup, 1990). According to the "orb web model" of the sociologist William A. Corsaro (1985, 1997), children's cultural knowledge reflects not only the beliefs of the adult world but also the unique interpretations and aspects of the children's own peer culture. Corsaro (1992:

162) states that *peer culture* is "a stable set of activities or routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share." This peer culture emerges through interactions as children "borrow" from the adult culture but transform it so that it fits their own situation. In fact, Corsaro (1992) believes that the peer group is the most significant arena in which children and young people acquire cultural knowledge.

Agents of Socialization

Agents of socialization **are the persons, groups, or institutions that teach us what we need to know in order to participate in society.** We are exposed to many agents of socialization throughout our

generalized other George Herbert Mead's term for the child's awareness of the demands and expectations of the society as a whole or of the child's subculture.

agents of socialization the persons, groups, or institutions that teach us what we need to know in order to participate in society.

lifetime; in turn, we have an influence on those socializing agents and organizations. Here, we look at the most pervasive ones in childhood—the family, the school, peer groups, and the mass media.

The Family

The family is the most important agent of socialization in all societies. From our infancy onward, our families transmit cultural and social values to us. As discussed later in this book, families vary in size and structure. Some families consist of two parents and their biological children, whereas others consist of a single parent and one or more children. Still other families reflect changing patterns of divorce and remarriage, and an increasing number are made up of same-sex partners and their children. Over time, patterns have changed in some two-parent families so that fathers, rather than mothers, are the primary daytime agents of socialization for their young children.

Theorists using a functionalist perspective emphasize that families serve important functions in society because they are the primary locus for the procreation and socialization of children. Most of us form an emerging sense of self and acquire most of our beliefs and values within the family context. We also learn about the larger dominant culture (including language, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms) and the primary subcultures to which our parents and other relatives belong.

Families are also the primary source of emotional support. Ideally, people receive love, understanding, security, acceptance, intimacy, and companionship within families. The role of the family is especially significant because young children have little social experience beyond the family's boundaries; they have no basis for comparing or evaluating how they are treated by their own family.

To a large extent, the family is where we acquire our specific social position in society. From birth, we are a part of the specific racial, ethnic, class, religious, and regional subcultural grouping of our family. Studies show that families socialize their children somewhat differently based on race, ethnicity, and class (Kohn, 1977; Kohn et al., 1990; Harrison et al., 1990). For example, sociologist Melvin Kohn (1977; Kohn et al., 1990) has suggested that social class (as measured by parental occupation) is one of the strongest influences on what and how parents teach their children. On the one hand, working-class parents, who are closely supervised and expected to follow orders at work, typically emphasize to their children the importance of obedience and conformity. On the other hand, parents from the middle and professional classes, who have more freedom and flexibility at work, tend to give their children more freedom to make their own decisions and to be creative. Kohn concluded that differences in the parents' occupations are a better predictor of child-rearing practices than is social class itself.

Whether or not Kohn's findings are valid today, the issues he examined make us aware that not everyone has the same family experiences. Many factors—including our cultural background, nation of origin, religion, and gender—are important in determining how we are socialized by family members and others who are a part of our daily life.

Conflict theorists stress that socialization contributes to false consciousness—a lack of awareness and a distorted perception of the reality of class as it affects all aspects of social life. As a result, socialization reaffirms and reproduces the class structure in the next generation rather than challenging the conditions that presently exist. For example, children in low-income families may be unintentionally socialized to believe that acquiring an education and aspiring to lofty ambitions are pointless because

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▲ As this celebration attended by three generations of family members illustrates, socialization enables society to "reproduce" itself.

- **Research:** A recent *Money* magazine article reports that 58 percent of mothers with children age 5 and under work outside the home. That number rises to 74 percent for women with children ages 6 to 17. Ninety percent of fathers are employed.
- **Quote, Unquote:** "The mother–child relationship is paradoxical and, in a sense, tragic. It requires the most intense love on the mother's side, yet this very love must help the child grow away from the mother, and to become fully independent" (Erich Fromm). Ask your students to share in small groups some of the ways they may have experienced this phenomenon.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Writing Assignment:** Ask your class to address this question in a brief essay: What were the most important cultural and social values that were transmitted to you by your family? Or what do you

of existing economic conditions in the family. By contrast, middle- and upper-income families typically instill ideas of monetary and social success in children while encouraging them to think and behave in "socially acceptable" ways.

The School

As the amount of specialized technical and scientific knowledge has expanded rapidly and as the amount of time that children are in educational settings has increased, schools continue to play an enormous role in the socialization of young people. For many people, the formal education process is an undertaking that lasts up to twenty years.

As the number of one-parent families and families in which both parents work outside the home

▲ Students are sent to school to be educated. However, what else will they learn in school beyond the academic curriculum? Sociologists differ in their responses to this question.

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has increased dramatically, the number of children in day-care and preschool programs has also grown rapidly. Currently, about 60 percent of all U.S. preschool children are in day care, either in private homes or institutional settings, and this percentage continues to climb (Children's Defense Fund, 2009). Generally, studies have found that quality day-care and preschool programs have a positive effect on the overall socialization of children. These programs provide children with the opportunity to have frequent interactions with teachers and to learn how to build their language and literacy skills. High-quality programs also have a positive effect on the academic performance of children, particularly those from low-income families. Today, however, the cost of child-care programs has become a major concern for many families.

Although schools teach specific knowledge and skills, they also have a profound effect on children's self-image, beliefs, and values. As children enter school for the first time, they are evaluated and systematically compared with one another by the teacher. A permanent, official record is kept of each child's personal behavior and academic activities. From a functionalist perspective, schools are responsible for (1) socialization, or teaching students to be productive members of society; (2) transmission of culture; (3) social control and personal development; and (4) the selection, training, and placement of individuals on different rungs in the society (Ballantine and Hammack, 2009).

In contrast, conflict theorists assert that students have different experiences in the school system depending on their social class, their racial–ethnic background, the neighborhood in which they live, their gender, and other factors. According to the sociologists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976), much of what happens in school amounts to teaching a hidden curriculum in which children learn to be neat, to be on time, to be quiet, to wait their turn, and to remain attentive to their work. Thus, schools do not socialize children for their own well-being but rather for their later roles in the workforce, where it is important to be punctual and to show deference to supervisors. Students who are destined for leadership or elite positions acquire different skills and knowledge than those who will enter working-class and middle-class occupations (see Cookson and Persell, 1985).

believe to be the most important values that you want to transmit to your own family?
- **IRM:** Internet Activities: Home Schooling and Socialization

- **For Discussion:** Can your students recall some of the things they learned through the "hidden" curriculum during their elementary and secondary school years? How have these lessons helped or hindered their college educations?

Peer Groups

As soon as we are old enough to have acquaintances outside the home, most of us begin to rely heavily on peer groups as a source of information and approval about social behavior. A ***peer group*** **is a group of people who are linked by common interests, equal social position, and (usually) similar age.** In early childhood, peer groups are often composed of classmates in day care, preschool, and elementary school. Recent studies have found that preadolescence—the latter part of the elementary school years—is an age period in which children's peer culture has an important effect on how children perceive themselves and how they internalize society's expectations (Adler and Adler, 1998). In adolescence, peer groups are typically made up of people with similar interests and social activities. As adults, we continue to participate in peer groups of people with whom we share common interests and comparable occupations, income, and/or social position.

Peer groups function as agents of socialization by contributing to our sense of "belonging" and our feelings of self-worth. As early as the preschool years, peer groups provide children with an opportunity for successful adaptation to situations such as gaining access to ongoing play, protecting shared activities from intruders, and building solidarity and mutual trust during ongoing activities (Corsaro, 1985; Rizzo and Corsaro, 1995). Unlike families and schools, peer groups provide children and adolescents with

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▲ The pleasure of participating in activities with friends is one of the many attractions of adolescent peer groups. What groups have contributed the most to your sense of belonging and self-worth?

some degree of freedom from parents and other authority figures (Corsaro, 1992). Although peer groups afford children some degree of freedom, they also teach cultural norms such as what constitutes "acceptable" behavior in a specific situation. Peer groups simultaneously reflect the larger culture and serve as a conduit for passing on culture to young people. As a result, the peer group is both a product of culture and one of its major transmitters (Elkin and Handel, 1989).

Is there such a thing as "peer pressure"? Individuals must earn their acceptance with their peers by conforming to a given group's norms, attitudes, speech patterns, and dress codes. When we conform to our peer group's expectations, we are rewarded; if we do not conform, we may be ridiculed or even expelled from the group. Conforming to the demands of peers frequently places children and adolescents at cross-purposes with their parents. For example, young people are frequently under pressure to obtain certain valued material possessions (such as toys, clothing, athletic shoes, or cell phones); they then pass the pressure on to their parents through emotional pleas to purchase the desired items.

Mass Media

An agent of socialization that has a profound impact on both children and adults is the ***mass media,*** **composed of large-scale organizations that use print or electronic means (such as radio, television, film, and the Internet) to communicate with large numbers of people.** The media function as socializing agents in several ways: (1) they inform us about events; (2) they introduce us to a wide variety of people; (3) they provide an array of viewpoints on current issues; (4) they make us aware of products and services that, if we purchase them, will supposedly help us to be accepted by others; and (5) they entertain us by providing the opportunity to live vicariously (through other people's experiences). Although most of us take for granted that the media play an important part in contemporary socialization, we frequently underestimate the enormous influence this agent of socialization may have on children's attitudes and behavior.

Recent studies have shown that U.S. children, on average, are spending more time each year in front of TV sets, computers, and video games.

- **Active Learning:** Bring to class a variety of popular magazines, and ask students to look specifically at adult male and female models in advertisements. What are the age ranges on display? Typically, there will be a wider range of age for men and a narrower range for women. What kinds of advertisements are older women typically found in? What about for men?

- **For Discussion:** How are the Internet and information technology changing the ways that we are being socialized? What are some of the positive contributions?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

▲ For decades, analysts have been concerned about the effects of television viewing on the young. However, the relatively recent advent of video games, the Internet, cellular phones, and texting devices have exacerbated the problem. Today, it is possible—*and common*—for every spare minute of a young person's day to be spent on audiovisual and digital entertainment.

According to the Annenberg Public Policy Center (University of Pennsylvania) study on media in the home, "The introduction of new media continues to transform the environment in American homes with children. . . . Rather than displacing television as the dominant medium, new technologies have supplemented it, resulting in an aggregate increase in electronic media penetration and use by America's youth" (qtd. in Dart, 1999: A5). Recent research indicates that children between the ages of 2 and 5 spend about 24.85 hours per week watching television. Add to that an additional 7 hours per week that children spend playing video games, watching DVDs, and TiVo-style time-shifted television, and more time than ever is spent with electronic media. Here is a pattern of viewing for 2–5-year-olds as reported by one researcher: "[Children begin] heavy viewing around 9 A.M., when, perhaps, an older sibling leaves for school; an early afternoon dip; then a rise in the after-school hours, consonant with older children's viewing patterns, and a second peak around 8 P.M. . . . For better or worse, TV is a frequent companion to our lives" (Mindlin, 2009: B3). Consider the fact that U.S. children spend about 1,000 hours per year in school. If we think of television-watching time alone, by the time that students graduate from high school, they will have spent more time in front of the television set than sitting in the classroom.

Parents, educators, social scientists, and public officials have widely debated the consequences of young people watching that much television. Television has been praised for offering numerous positive experiences to children. Some scholars suggest that television (when used wisely) can enhance children's development by improving their language abilities, concept-formation skills, and reading skills and by encouraging prosocial development (Winn, 1985). However, other studies have shown that children and adolescents who spend a lot of time watching television often have lower grades in school, read fewer books, exercise less, and are overweight (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 1997).

Of special concern to many people is the issue of television violence. It is estimated that the typical young person who watches 28 hours of television per week will have seen 16,000 simulated murders and 200,000 acts of violence by the time he or she reaches age 18. A report by the American Psychological Association states that about 80 percent of all television programs contain acts of violence and that commercial television for children is 50 to 60 times more violent than prime-time television for adults. For example, some cartoons average more than 80 violent acts per hour (APA Online, 2000). The violent content of media programming and the marketing and advertising practices of mass media industries that routinely target children under age 17 have come under the scrutiny of government agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission due to concerns raised by parents and social analysts.

In addition to concerns about violence in television programming, motion pictures, and electronic games, television shows have been criticized for projecting negative images of women and people of color. Although the mass media have changed some of the roles that they depict women as playing, some newer characters tend to reinforce existing stereotypes of women as sex objects even when they are in professional roles such as doctors or lawyers.

peer group a group of people who are linked by common interests, equal social position, and (usually) similar age.

mass media large-scale organizations that use print or electronic means (such as radio, television, film, and the Internet) to communicate with large numbers of people.

Throughout this text, we will look at additional examples of how the media socialize us in ways that we may or may not realize.

Gender and Racial–Ethnic Socialization

Gender socialization is the aspect of socialization that contains specific messages and practices concerning the nature of being female or male in a specific group or society. Through the process of gender socialization, we learn about what attitudes and behaviors are considered to be appropriate for girls and boys, men and women, in a particular society. Different sets of gender norms are appropriate for females and males in the United States and most other nations.

One of the primary agents of gender socialization is the family. In some families, this process begins even before the child's birth. Parents who learn the sex of the fetus through ultrasound or amniocentesis often purchase color-coded and gender-typed clothes, toys, and nursery decorations in anticipation of their daughter's or son's arrival. After birth, parents may respond differently toward male and female infants; they often play more roughly with boys and talk more lovingly to girls. Throughout childhood and adolescence, boys and girls are typically assigned different household chores and given different privileges (such as how late they may stay out at night).

When we look at the relationship between gender socialization and social class, the picture becomes more complex. Although some studies have found less-rigid gender stereotyping in higher-income families (Seegmiller, Suter, and Duviant, 1980; Brooks-Gunn, 1986), others have found more (Bardwell, Cochran, and Walker, 1986). One study found that higher-income families are more likely than low-income families to give "male-oriented" toys (which develop visual spatial and problem-solving skills) to children of both sexes (Serbin et al., 1990). Working-class families tend to adhere to more-rigid gender expectations than do middle-class families (Canter and Ageton, 1984; Brooks-Gunn, 1986).

We are limited in our knowledge about gender socialization practices among racial–ethnic groups because most studies have focused on white,

middle-class families. In a study of African American families, the sociologist Janice Hale-Benson (1986) found that children typically are not taught to think of gender strictly in "male–female" terms. Both daughters and sons are socialized toward autonomy, independence, self-confidence, and nurturance of children (Bardwell, Cochran, and Walker, 1986). Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1990) has suggested that "othermothers" (women other than a child's biological mother) play an important part in the gender socialization and motivation of African American children, especially girls. Othermothers often serve as gender role models and encourage women to become activists on behalf of their children and community (Collins, 1990). By contrast, studies of Korean American and Latino/a families have found more traditional gender socialization (Min, 1988), although some evidence indicates that this pattern may be changing (Jaramillo and Zapata, 1987).

Like the family, schools, peer groups, and the media also contribute to our gender socialization. From kindergarten through college, teachers and peers reward gender-appropriate attitudes and behavior. Sports reinforce traditional gender roles through a rigid division of events into male and female categories. The media are also a powerful source of gender socialization; starting very early in childhood, children's books, television programs, movies, and music provide subtle and not-so-subtle messages about how boys and girls should act (see Chapter 10, "Sex and Gender").

In addition to gender-role socialization, we receive racial socialization throughout our lives. *Racial socialization* is the aspect of socialization that contains specific messages and practices concerning the nature of one's racial or ethnic status as it relates to our identity, interpersonal relationships, and location in the social hierarchy. Racial socialization includes direct statements regarding race, modeling behavior (wherein a child imitates the behavior of a parent or other caregiver), and indirect activities such as exposure to an environment that conveys a specific message about a racial or ethnic group ("We are better than they are," for example).

The most important aspects of racial identity and attitudes toward other racial–ethnic groups are passed down in families from generation to generation. As the sociologist Martin Marger (1994: 97) notes, "Fear of, dislike for, and antipathy toward one

- **Extra Examples:** Introduce the idea of gender socialization to your class, getting them ready for Chapter 10 ("Sex and Gender"). Help students to begin to think about gender as a social construct. Talk about children's toys as agents of gender socialization.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss the following, from cultural critic Susan Sontag: "What is most beautiful in virile men is something feminine; what is most beautiful in feminine women is something masculine."
- **For Discussion:** In what ways have the arrival and success of Condoleezza Rice, Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, and Sarah Palin affected gender socialization in America?

group or another is learned in much the same way that people learn to eat with a knife or fork rather than with their bare hands or to respect others' privacy in personal matters." These beliefs can be transmitted in subtle and largely unconscious ways; they do not have to be taught directly or intentionally. Scholars have found that ethnic values and attitudes begin to crystallize among children as young as age four (Van Ausdale and Feagin, 2001). By this age, the society's ethnic hierarchy has become apparent to the child. Some minority parents feel that racial socialization is essential because it provides children with the skills and abilities they will need to survive in the larger society.

Socialization Through the Life Course

Why is socialization a lifelong process? Throughout our lives, we continue to learn. Each time we experience a change in status (such as becoming a college student or getting married), we learn a new set of rules, roles, and relationships. Even before we achieve a new status, we often participate in *anticipatory socialization—the process by which knowledge and skills are learned for future roles.* Many societies organize social activities according to age and gather data regarding the age composition of the people who live in that society. Some societies have distinct *rites of passage,* based on age or other factors, that publicly dramatize and validate changes in a person's status. In the United States and other industrialized societies, the most common categories of age are childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (often subdivided into young adulthood, middle adulthood, and older adulthood).

Childhood

Some social scientists believe that a child's sense of self is formed at a very early age and that it is difficult to change this self-perception later in life. Symbolic interactionists emphasize that during infancy and early childhood, family support and guidance are crucial to a child's developing self-concept. In some families, children are provided with emotional warmth, feelings of mutual trust, and a sense of security. These families come closer to our ideal cultural

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▲ Do you believe that what this child is learning here will have an influence on her actions in the future? What other childhood experiences might offset early negative racial socialization?

belief that childhood should be a time of carefree play, safety, and freedom from economic, political, and sexual responsibilities. However, other families reflect the discrepancy between cultural ideals and reality—children grow up in a setting characterized by fear, danger, and risks that are created by parental neglect, emotional maltreatment, or premature economic and sexual demands (Knudsen, 1992). Abused children often experience low self-esteem, an inability to trust others, feelings of isolationism and powerlessness, and denial of their feelings.

gender socialization the aspect of socialization that contains specific messages and practices concerning the nature of being female or male in a specific group or society.

racial socialization the aspect of socialization that contains specific messages and practices concerning the nature of one's racial or ethnic status.

anticipatory socialization the process by which knowledge and skills are learned for future roles.

- **Research:** Have students examine *Racial Identity and Racial Socialization Attitudes of African American Parents,* a study by Anita Jones Thomas (1999), which explores racial socialization messages used by African American parents, specific messages according to the gender of children, and the relationship between racial socialization and racial identity attitudes.

- **Active Learning:** Ask your students to work in groups of three to four to talk about some of the ways that college can be a form of anticipatory socialization.
- **Research:** Child care allows families to earn more than one income—which is economically what many families need today to survive. For families with income under $60,000 annually, a mother's income accounts for more than half of household income.

Adolescence

In industrialized societies, the ==adolescent (or teenage) years represent a buffer between childhood and adulthood.== In the United States, no specific rites of passage exist to mark children's move into adulthood; therefore, young people have to pursue their own routes to self-identity and adulthood (Gilmore, 1990). Anticipatory socialization is often associated with adolescence, during which many young people spend much of their time planning or being educated for future roles they hope to occupy. Rites of passage may be used to mark the transition between childhood and adolescence or adolescence and adulthood. A celebration known as a Bar Mitzvah is held for some Jewish boys on their thirteenth birthday, and a Bat Mitzvah is held for some Jewish girls on their twelfth birthday; these events mark the occasion upon which young people accept moral responsibility for their own actions and the fact that they are now old enough to own personal property. Similarly, some Latinas are honored with the *quinceañera*—a celebration of their fifteenth birthday that marks their passage into young womanhood. Although it is not officially designated as a rite of passage, many of us think of the time when we get our first driver's license or graduate from high school as another way in which we mark the transition from one period of our life to the next.

Adolescence is often characterized by emotional and social unrest. In the process of developing their own identities, some young people come into

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▲ An important rite of passage for many Latinas is the *quinceañera*—a celebration of their fifteenth birthday and their passage into womanhood. Can you see how this occasion might also be a form of anticipatory socialization?

conflict with parents, teachers, and other authority figures who attempt to restrict their freedom. Adolescents may also find themselves caught between the demands of adulthood and their own lack of financial independence and experience in the job market. The experiences of individuals during adolescence vary according to race, class, and gender.

Based on their family's economic situation and personal choices, some young people leave high school and move directly into the world of work while others pursue a college education and may continue to receive advice and financial support from their parents. Others are involved in both the world of work and the world of higher education as they seek to support themselves and to acquire more years of formal education or vocational/career training. In the twenty-first century, more college students are exploring international study programs as part of their adult socialization to help them gain new insights on the world around them (see the Sociology in Global Perspective box).

Adulthood

One of the ==major differences between child socialization and adult socialization is the degree of freedom of choice.== If young adults are able to support themselves financially, they gain the ability to make more choices about their own lives. In early adulthood (usually until about age forty), people work toward their own goals of creating meaningful relationships with others, finding employment, and seeking personal fulfillment. Of course, young adults continue to be socialized by their parents, teachers, peers, and the media, but they also learn new attitudes and behaviors. For example, when we marry or have children, we learn new roles as partners or parents. Adults often learn about fads and fashions in clothing, music, and language from their children.

Workplace (occupational) socialization is one of the most important types of early adult socialization. This type of socialization tends to be most intense immediately after a person makes the transition from school to the workplace; however, this process may continue throughout our years of employment. Many people experience continuous workplace socialization as a result of having more than one career in their lifetime.

As income declines, the share of the mother's income as part of the total family income rises (National Association of Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies).

• **Active Learning:** To get students to think about the major socializing experiences during their life course thus far (childhood, adolescence, and adulthood), ask them to come to class with notes about some of these experiences and to be prepared to make connections to the text and your lecture/presentation.

sociology in global perspective

Open Doors: Study Abroad and Global Socialization

As I had been told, the first month or so of the study abroad experience feels like a vacation in that everything is exciting and new. After this "honeymoon" period, the experience becomes something other than merely a vacation or fleeting visit. You start to relate to the people, the culture, and life in that country not from the eyes of a tourist passing through, but progressively from the eyes of those around you—the citizens who were born and raised there. That is the perspective which is unattainable without actually *living* in another country, and a perspective which I have come to appreciate and understand more fully as I settle back into life here back at home.

> —John R. R. Howie (2010), a Boston College economics and Mandarin Chinese major, explaining what studying abroad at Peking University, in Beijing, meant to him

Although we may read and hear about what goes on in other countries, it is quite different to be able to see and experience those cultures firsthand. Perhaps this is why a record number of U.S. students are choosing to study abroad: Studying in another country is an important part of the college socialization process for preparing to live and work in an interconnected world. According to recent reports, more than 260,000 students annually participate in study-abroad programs, and this number continues to increase each year. China, India, and the Middle East have become increasingly popular destinations for study abroad; however, the leading destinations continue to be in Europe, with the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and France leading the list (Institute of International Education, 2010). More than half (56.3 percent) of study-abroad students remain in their host country for a short-term stay (summer, January term, or eight weeks or less during the academic year). About 40 percent of all study-abroad students remain for one or two quarters or one semester. Some analysts believe that longer periods of study abroad provide students with greater opportunities to learn the language and way of life of people in other nations (Institute of International Education, 2010).

Sociologists are interested in studying the profile of U.S. study-abroad students because the data provide interesting insights on differences in students' participation by classification, gender, race, and class. Based on the latest figures available (2007/2008), most students participating in study-abroad programs are classified as juniors (35.9 percent) or seniors (21.3 percent). Women make up 65.1 percent of all study-abroad students while men make up 34.9 percent. White students make up the vast majority of study-abroad students (81.8 percent). Other groups include Asian or Pacific Islander (6.6 percent), Hispanic or Latino(a) (5.9 percent), and black or African American (4.0 percent).

Community college students have the fewest opportunities to study abroad because of a shortage of programs and lack of support for programs that do exist. Studies have found that many community college students would like to participate in study-abroad programs but that institutional barriers and prevailing beliefs by school officials about students' personal barriers (such as inability to afford study abroad, conflicting work and family obligations, and lack of understanding about the importance of possible cultural capital that might be gained from such an experience) would keep students from participating if such programs were offered (Raby, 2010).

Socialization for life in the global community is necessary to all students because of the increasing significance of international understanding and the need to learn how to live and work in a diversified nation and world. Even more important may be the opportunity for each student to gain direction and meaning in his or her own life, as John R. R. Howie (2010), the study-abroad student, explains:

> In a sense, the opportunity to live away from my life as I knew it made my future aspirations more apparent to me. As I came back to my life at Boston College, that clarity gave direction and more meaning to what I was doing now. The months abroad definitely weren't always easy—I remember how hard it was adjusting to the food, being away from my girlfriend, friends, and family, and seemingly being out of place in every way—but it was undoubtedly one of the most rewarding and meaningful experiences I have ever had.

reflect & analyze

What are the positive aspects of study-abroad programs in the college socialization process? What are the limitations of such programs? If you are unable to participate in a study-abroad program, what other methods and resources might you use to gain "global socialization," which could be beneficial in helping you meet your goals for the future?

- **Active Learning:** Have students choose articles to read from *Global Study* magazine (**www.globalstudymagazine.com**), and then connect them to the trends and statistics discussed in the box. What kinds of socialization are described in the articles?
- **Research:** Although studying abroad is increasing, it is a very old, even ancient phenomenon. Have students research the history of global intellectual exchange, from the scholars of the Middle Ages to the colonial interactions of the nineteenth century. They may want to focus on cities such as ancient Cordoba and nineteenth-century Hong Kong as centers of global interchange. Have them consider ways in which globalization is both a new and an old process.
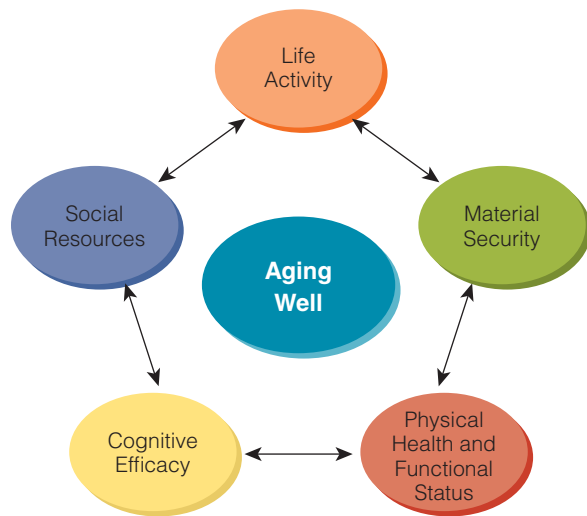
▲ **FIGURE 3.3 KEYS TO AGING WELL**
Graphic from the Global Aging Initiative–Aging Research Project at Indiana University. Reprinted by permission of Barbara Hawkins, Indiana University.

In middle adulthood—between the ages of forty and sixty-five—people begin to compare their accomplishments with their earlier expectations. This is the point at which people either decide that they have reached their goals or recognize that they have attained as much as they are likely to achieve.

Late adulthood may be divided into three categories: (1) the "young-old" (ages sixty-five to seventy-four), (2) the "old-old" (ages seventy-five to eighty-five), and (3) the "oldest-old" (over age eighty-five). Although these are somewhat arbitrary divisions, the "young-old" are less likely to suffer from disabling illnesses, whereas some of the "old-old" are more likely to suffer such illnesses. Increasingly, studies in gerontology and the sociology of medicine have come to question these arbitrary categories and show that some persons defy the expectations of their age grouping based on individual genetic makeup, lifestyle choices, and a zest for living. Perhaps "old age" is what we make it!

Late Adulthood and Ageism

In older adulthood, some people are quite happy and content; others are not (see ▶ Figure 3.3). Erik Erikson noted that difficult changes in adult attitudes and behavior occur in the last years of life,

when people experience decreased physical ability, lower prestige, and the prospect of death. Older adults in industrialized societies may experience *social devaluation—wherein a person or group is considered to have less social value than other persons or groups.* Social devaluation is especially acute when people are leaving roles that have defined their sense of social identity and provided them with meaningful activity.

Negative images regarding older persons reinforce *ageism—prejudice and discrimination against people on the basis of age, particularly against older persons.* Ageism is reinforced by stereotypes, whereby people have narrow, fixed images of certain groups. Older persons are often stereotyped as thinking and moving slowly; as being bound to themselves and their past, unable to change and grow; as being unable to move forward and often moving backward.

Negative images also contribute to the view that women are "old" ten or fifteen years sooner than men (Bell, 1989). The multibillion-dollar cosmetics industry helps perpetuate the myth that age reduces the "sexual value" of women but increases it for men. Men's sexual value is defined more in terms of personality, intelligence, and earning power than by physical appearance. For women, however, sexual attractiveness is based on youthful appearance. By idealizing this "youthful" image of women and playing up the fear of growing older, sponsors sell thousands of products and services that claim to prevent or fix the "ravages" of aging.

Although not all people act on appearances alone, Patricia Moore, an industrial designer, found that many do. At age twenty-seven, Moore disguised herself as an eighty-five-year-old woman by donning age-appropriate clothing and placing baby oil in her eyes to create the appearance of cataracts. With the help of a makeup artist, Moore supplemented the "aging process" with latex wrinkles, stained teeth, and a gray wig. For three years, "Old Pat Moore" went to various locations, including a grocery store, to see how people responded to her:

> When I did my grocery shopping while in character, I learned quickly that the Old Pat Moore behaved— and was treated—differently from the Young Pat Moore. When I was 85, people were more likely to jockey ahead of me in the checkout line. And even more interesting, I found that when it happened,

- **For Discussion:** Brainstorm for examples from television and film of social devaluation of people as they age. In what ways does these important agents of socialization convey messages about the value of women as they age, senior adults, and aging parents?
- **IRM:** Extra Example: Social Placement and Status
- **Research:** Americans don't devalue old people. Americans love old people. This according to Harris Interactive: "These findings show that two widely held views are false—that America is riddled with ageism and that younger people have no respect for older people. While there is surely some prejudice against older people, which sometimes leads to age discrimination, the two oldest generations—the Silent and the Greatest Generations—are much more admired than any other generation" (*Washington Times*, 8/26/2008).

I didn't say anything to the offender, as I certainly would at age 27. It seemed somehow, even to me, that it was okay for them to do this to the Old Pat Moore, since they were undoubtedly busier than I was anyway. And further, they apparently thought it was okay, too! After all, little old ladies have plenty of time, don't they? And then when I did get to the checkout counter, the clerk might start yelling, assuming I was deaf, or becoming immediately testy, assuming I would take a long time to get my money out, or would ask to have the price repeated, or somehow become confused about the transaction. What it all added up to was that people feared I would be trouble, so they tried to have as little to do with me as possible. And the amazing thing is that I began almost to believe it myself. . . . I think perhaps the worst thing about aging may be the overwhelming sense that everything around you is letting you know that you are not terribly important any more. (Moore with Conn, 1985: 75–76)

If we apply our sociological imagination to Moore's study, we find that "Old Pat Moore's" experiences reflect what many older persons already know—it is other people's *reactions* to their age, not their age itself, that place them at a disadvantage.

Many older people buffer themselves against ageism by continuing to view themselves as being in middle adulthood long after their actual chronological age would suggest otherwise. Other people begin a process of resocialization to redefine their own identity as mature adults.

▲ Throughout life, our self-concept is influenced by our interactions with others.

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Resocialization

Resocialization **is the process of learning a new and different set of attitudes, values, and behaviors from those in one's background and previous experience.** Resocialization may be voluntary or involuntary. In either case, people undergo changes that are much more rapid and pervasive than the gradual adaptations that socialization usually involves.

Voluntary Resocialization

Resocialization is voluntary when we assume a new status (such as becoming a student, an employee, or a retiree) of our own free will. Sometimes, voluntary resocialization involves medical or psychological treatment or religious conversion, in which case the person's existing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors must undergo strenuous modification to a new regime and a new way of life. For example, resocialization for adult survivors of emotional/physical child abuse includes extensive therapy in order to form new patterns of thinking and action, somewhat like Alcoholics Anonymous and its twelve-step program, which has become the basis for many other programs dealing with addictive behavior (Parrish, 1990).

Involuntary Resocialization

Involuntary resocialization occurs against a person's wishes and generally takes place within a *total institution—a place where people are isolated from the rest of society for a set period of time and come under the control of the officials who run the institution* (Goffman, 1961a). Military

> **social devaluation** a situation in which a person or group is considered to have less social value than other individuals or groups.
>
> **ageism** prejudice and discrimination against people on the basis of age, particularly against older people.
>
> **resocialization** the process of learning a new and different set of attitudes, values, and behaviors from those in one's background and experience.
>
> **total institution** Erving Goffman's term for a place where people are isolated from the rest of society for a set period of time and come under the control of the officials who run the institution.

- **Popular Culture:** Remind your students of the famous Tyra Banks fat-suit experiment. *Good Morning America* did a story about the supermodel wearing a suit that made her look as if she weighed 350 pounds when she went on a blind date. Use this example to start the discussion about social devaluation.
- **Extra Examples:** If possible, pull up in class some of the websites for state and local correctional facilities in your area. Many

have information about programs that are aimed specifically at resocializing prisoners. Although the recidivism rate in the United States is very high, many programs for juvenile offenders have had success at helping young people relearn positive social skills.
- **Extra Examples:** Go back and read again the work of Erving Goffman on total institutions. Specifically try and work these important concepts into your class: the breakdown of barriers

boot camps, jails and prisons, concentration camps, and some mental hospitals are total institutions. Resocialization is a two-step process. First, people are totally stripped of their former selves—or depersonalized—through a degradation ceremony (Goffman, 1961a). For example, inmates entering prison are required to strip, shower, and wear assigned institutional clothing. In the process, they are searched, weighed, fingerprinted, photographed, and given no privacy even in showers and restrooms. Their official identification becomes not a name but a number. In this abrupt break from their former existence, they must leave behind their personal possessions and their family and friends. The depersonalization process continues as they are required to obey rigid rules and to conform to their new environment.

The second step in the resocialization process occurs when the staff at an institution attempt to build a more compliant person. A system of rewards and punishments (such as providing or withholding television or exercise privileges) encourages conformity to institutional norms.

Individuals respond to resocialization in different ways. Some people are rehabilitated; others become angry and hostile toward the system that has taken away their freedom. Although the assumed purpose of involuntary resocialization is to reform persons so that they will conform to societal standards of conduct after their release, the ability of total institutions to modify offenders' behavior in a meaningful manner has been widely questioned. In many prisons, for example, inmates may conform to

▲ New inmates are taught how to order their meals. Two fingers raised means two portions. There is no talking in line. Inmates must eat all their meal. This "ceremony" suggests how much freedom and dignity an inmate loses when beginning the resocialization process.

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the norms of the prison or of other inmates but have little respect for the norms and the laws of the larger society.

Socialization in the Future

What will socialization be like in the future? The family is likely to remain the institution that most fundamentally shapes and nurtures people's personal values and self-identity. However, other institutions, including education, religion, and the media, will continue to exert a profound influence on individuals of all ages. A central value-oriented issue facing parents and teachers as they attempt to socialize children is the growing dominance of television, the Internet, and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Gmail, which make it possible for children and young people to experience many things outside their own homes and schools and to communicate routinely with people around the world.

The socialization process in colleges and universities will become more diverse as students have an even wider array of options in higher education, including attending traditional classes in brick-and-mortar buildings, taking independent-study courses, enrolling in online courses and degree programs, participating in study-abroad programs, and facing additional options that are unknown at this time. However, it remains to be seen whether newer approaches to socialization in higher education will be more stressful or less stressful than current methods. (See the You Can Make a Difference box to learn how some students are working to reduce stress in their current college environment.)

It is very likely that socialization in the future will be vastly different in the world of global instant communication than it has been in the past. We are already bombarded with massive quantities of information that vary widely in usefulness and quality. If analysts are correct in their assumption that we are moving toward a paperless society in the future, the flow of information will increasingly shift to the Web and intensify the amount of data with which we are bombarded. At the same time, we will find it difficult to discern what information is useful and what is entertainment or trivia. One thing remains clear: The socialization process will continue to be a dynamic and important part of our life as we assume various roles throughout our life span.

you can make a difference

Don't Be Stressed Out in College: Helping Yourself and Others

- MTV/Associated Press Survey on What Stresses Out College Students Finds That While Two-Thirds of College Students Say They're Generally Happy, 80% Feel Day-to-Day Stress! (Ypulse.com, 2010).
- A study in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* reports that stresses from the daily routine of college life keep 68 percent of students awake at night, with 20 percent of them reporting being sleepless for some period of time at least once a week (Messenger, 2009).

The college experience is an important socialization process for young people and adults. The economic and social benefits from achieving additional years of education beyond high school are great; however, some students are concerned that the price (not only in terms of dollars and cents) of such an education is also great because of academic and psychological stress. Is there anything that you can do to reduce stress? Do you have tips for coping that you might pass on to other students?

Here are a few thoughts on how to reduce stress in college:

- *Don't stress about being stressed.* Sometimes we worry even more when we realize that we are feeling pressure to succeed, to get along well with others, and to fit into new surroundings, particularly during our early college years. For students taking classes online, a whole new experience occurs as you learn how to interact with professors and others in the virtual community. Sometimes it is best to quickly admit that we are stressed out and then to set up a plan for handling the problem. Don't wait to seek help from others if the worries seem overwhelming.
- *Get more sleep.* This may sound odd when you are already concerned about there not being enough hours in your day; however, this is sound advice. One of the major stressors of college students (and others!) is a chronic lack of sleep. Although professionals suggest that college students should get a minimum of eight hours of sleep each night, 70 percent of students surveyed in one study reported that they slept far less than eight hours per night. If we are organized, we can often do more work in a shorter period of time, and this gives us more time for rest and relaxation.
- *Stay well.* Getting sick is one of the major ways in which college students get behind in their studies, work, and personal life. Cold and flu are among the key types of illnesses that affect students' studies and class attendance. As simple as it may seem, Mother's adage about washing your hands regularly is excellent advice for reducing the likelihood of becoming sick.

Hand sanitizers have become increasingly popular on college campuses since the outbreak of the H1N1 flu virus. Make use of receptacles dispensing sanitizer on campus and elsewhere. Dress warmly in cold weather, cultivate good eating habits (despite the 24-hour-a-day availability of pizza and junk food), and squeeze in time for some exercise even when you think you definitely don't have time to exercise.

- *Plan some quiet time and some fun time.* Many of us get immersed in our work projects and forget that we need some time to ourselves to think, meditate, and engage in activities we find relaxing. We need some personal space, and if you are attending a brick-and-mortar college, you may have to look around to find a place where you can have a few moments for quality quiet time without other people around. If you are taking classes away from a traditional college campus, you may have to carve out a space in which to do your studies and to spend time without interruptions from other family members or coworkers.
- *Gain a new perspective on stress by helping other people cope with their own stress.* Sometimes the surest way to learn new information or to develop a new pattern is to share ideas with another individual. If you know someone who appears to be stressing out, pass on positive suggestions about how you have coped with a similar situation. This may be especially helpful if you have been in college for several years and can give insights from your own experience to a first-year student or someone else who is new to your college. Although colleges offer orientation and advising programs, many students like to turn to peers to find out how to cope with problematic situations. Often, the individuals we meet in college—and with whom we share our stresses and coping mechanisms—are the same people we later identify as our best friends (based on Lynn, 2010). Sharing helps us to talk aloud about our problems and coping strategies; it also provides us with an opportunity to learn from other people about their life experiences and strategies for remaining calm even in seemingly stressful circumstances.

What other suggestions do you have for dealing with stress in college? At home? At work?

Interested in learning more online? Use keywords such as "college student stress" and "tips for preventing stress" to search for sources of information and assistance.

chapter review

- **What is socialization, and why is it important for human beings?**

Socialization is the lifelong process through which individuals acquire their self-identity and learn the physical, mental, and social skills needed for survival in society. The kind of person we become depends greatly on what we learn during our formative years from our surrounding social groups and social environment.

- **How much of our unique human characteristics comes from heredity and how much from our social environment?**

As individual human beings, we have unique identities, personalities, and relationships with others. Each of us is a product of two forces: (1) heredity, referred to as "nature," and (2) the social environment, referred to as "nurture." Whereas biology dictates our physical makeup, the social environment largely determines how we develop and behave.

- **Why is social contact essential for human beings?**

Social contact is essential in developing a self, or self-concept, which represents an individual's perceptions and feelings of being a distinct or separate person. Much of what we think about ourselves is gained from our interactions with others and from what we perceive that others think of us.

- **What are the main social psychological theories on human development?**

According to Sigmund Freud, the self emerges from three interrelated forces: the id, the ego, and the superego. When a person is well adjusted, the three forces act in balance. Jean Piaget identified four cognitive stages of development; each child must go through each stage in sequence before moving on to the next one, although some children move through them faster than others.

- **How do sociologists believe that we develop a self-concept?**

According to Charles Horton Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self, we develop a self-concept as we see ourselves through the perceptions of others. Our initial sense of self is typically based on how families perceive and treat us. George Herbert Mead suggested that we develop a self-concept through role-taking and learning the rules of social interaction. According to Mead, the self is divided into the "I" and the "me." The "I" represents the spontaneous and unique traits of each person. The "me" represents the internalized attitudes and demands of other members of society.

- **What are the primary agents of socialization?**

The agents of socialization include the family, schools, peer groups, and the media. Our families, which transmit cultural and social values to us, are the most important agents of socialization in all societies, serving these functions: (1) procreating and socializing children, (2) providing emotional support, and (3) assigning social position. Schools primarily teach knowledge and skills but also have a profound influence on the self-image, beliefs, and values of children. Peer groups contribute to our sense of belonging and self-worth, and are a key source of information about acceptable behavior. The media function as socializing agents by (1) informing us about world events, (2) introducing us to a wide variety of people, and (3) providing an opportunity to live vicariously through other people's experiences.

- **When does socialization end?**

Socialization is ongoing throughout the life course. We learn knowledge and skills for future roles through anticipatory socialization. Parents are socialized by their own children, and adults learn through workplace socialization. Resocialization is the process of learning new attitudes, values, and behaviors, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

key terms

ageism 98

agents of socialization 89

anticipatory socialization 95

ego 82

gender socialization 94

generalized other 88

id 82

looking-glass self 86

mass media 92

peer group 92

racial socialization 94

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role-taking 86

self-concept 85

significant others 86

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superego 82

total institution 99

questions for critical thinking

1. Consider the concept of the looking-glass self. How do you think others perceive you? Do you think most people perceive you correctly?
2. What are your "I" traits? What are your "me" traits? Which ones are stronger?
3. What are some different ways that you might study the effect of toys on the socialization of children? How could you isolate the toy variable from other variables that influence children's socialization?
4. Is the attempted rehabilitation of criminal offenders—through boot camp programs, for example—a form of socialization or resocialization?

turning to video

Watch the ABC video *Student Stress: Dark Side of College* (running time 2:25), available through **CengageBrain.com**. In this video, students discuss the pressures of college that can lead to excessive stress and depression. As you watch the video, think about your own experience as a college student. After you've watched the video, consider these questions: Which of the stressors discussed in the video do you experience or have you experienced? What resources are available on your campus or through your school to help you manage stress? What, if any, additional resources would be helpful?

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● Alternatively, you may search by this book's title to locate its complimentary resources.

Social Structure and Interaction in Everyday Life

I began Dumpster diving [scavenging in a large garbage bin] about a year before I became homeless. . . . The area I frequent is inhabited by many affluent college students. I am not here by chance; the Dumpsters in this area are very rich. Students throw out many good things, including food. In particular they tend to throw everything out when they move at the end of a semester, before and after breaks, and around midterm, when many of them despair of college. So I find it advantageous to keep an eye on the academic calendar. I learned to scavenge gradually, on my own. Since then I have initiated several companions into the trade. I have learned that there is a predictable series of stages a person goes through in learning to scavenge.

▲ **All activities in life—including scavenging in garbage bins and living "on the streets"—are social in nature.**

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At first the new scavenger is filled with disgust and self-loathing. He is ashamed of being seen and may lurk around, trying to duck behind things, or he may dive at night. (In fact, most people instinctively look away from a scavenger. By skulking around, the novice calls attention to himself and arouses suspicion. Diving at night is ineffective and needlessly messy.) . . . That stage passes with experience. The scavenger finds a pair of running shoes that fit and look and smell brand-new. . . . He begins to understand: People throw away perfectly good stuff, a lot of perfectly good stuff.

At this stage, Dumpster shyness begins to dissipate. The diver, after all, has the last laugh. He is finding all manner of good things that are his for the taking. Those who disparage his profession are the fools, not he.

—Author Lars Eighner recalls his experiences as a Dumpster diver while living under a shower curtain in a stand of bamboo in a public park. Eighner became homeless when he was evicted from his "shack" after being unemployed for about a year. (Eighner, 1993: 111–119)

Chapter Focus Question

How is homelessness related to the social structure of a society?

Eighner's "diving" activities reflect a specific pattern of social behavior. All activities in life—including scavenging in garbage bins and living "on the streets"—are social in nature. Homeless persons and domiciled persons (those with homes) live in social worlds that have predictable patterns of social interaction. *Social interaction* **is the process by which people act toward or respond to other people and is the foundation for all relationships and groups in society.** In this chapter, we look at the relationship between social structure and social interaction. In the process, homelessness is used as an example of how social problems occur and how they may be perpetuated within social structures and patterns of interaction.

Social structure **is the complex framework of societal institutions (such as the economy, politics, and religion) and the social practices (such as rules and social roles) that make up a society and that organize and establish limits on people's behavior.** This structure is essential for the survival of society and for the well-being of individuals because it provides a social web of familial support and social relationships that connects each of us to the larger society. Many homeless people have lost this vital linkage. As a result, they often experience a loss of personal dignity and a sense of moral worth because of their "homeless" condition (Snow and Anderson, 1993).

Homeless persons such as Eighner come from all walks of life. They include full-time and part-time workers, parolees, runaway youths and children, veterans, and the elderly. They live in cities, suburbs, and rural areas. Contrary to popular myths, most of the homeless are not on the streets by choice or because they are mentally ill. Before reading on, learn more about homeless persons and the pressing national problem of homelessness by taking the quiz in the Sociology and Everyday Life box.

Social Structure: The Macrolevel Perspective

Social structure provides the framework within which we interact with others. This framework is an orderly, fixed arrangement of parts that together make up the whole group or society (see ▶ Figure 4.1). As defined in Chapter 1, a *society* is a large social grouping that shares the same geographical territory and is subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. At the macrolevel, the social structure of a society has several essential elements: social institutions, groups, statuses, roles, and norms.

Functional theorists emphasize that social structure is essential because it creates order and predictability in a society (Parsons, 1951). Social structure

▶ **FIGURE 4.1 SOCIAL STRUCTURE FRAMEWORK**
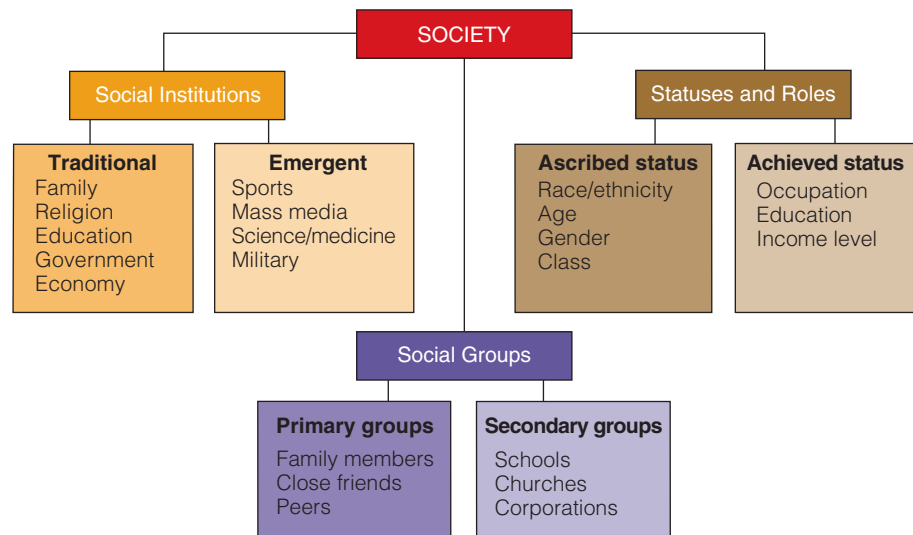
is also important for our human development. As discussed in Chapter 2, we develop a self-concept as we learn the attitudes, values, and behaviors of the people around us. When these attitudes and values are part of a predictable structure, it is easier to develop that self-concept.

Social structure gives us the ability to interpret the social situations we encounter. For example, we expect our families to care for us, our schools to educate us, and our police to protect us. When our circumstances change dramatically, most of us feel an acute sense of anxiety because we do not know what to expect or what is expected of us. For example, newly homeless individuals may feel disoriented because they do not know how to function in their new setting. The person is likely to ask questions: "How will I survive on the streets?" "Where do I go to get help?" "Should I stay at a shelter?" "Where can I get a job?" Social structure helps people make sense out of their environment even when they find themselves on the streets.

However, conflict theorists maintain that there is more to social structure than is readily visible and that we must explore the deeper, underlying structures that determine social relations in a society. For example, Karl Marx suggested that the way economic production is organized is the most important structural aspect of any society. In capitalistic societies, where a few people control the labor of many, the social structure reflects a system of relationships of domination among categories of people (for example, owner–worker and employer–employee).

Social structure creates boundaries that define which persons or groups will be the "insiders" and which will be the "outsiders." *Social marginality* is the state of being part insider and part outsider in the social structure. Sociologist Robert Park (1928) coined this term to refer to persons (such as immigrants) who simultaneously share the life and traditions of two distinct groups. Social marginality results in stigmatization. A *stigma* is any physical or social attribute or sign that so devalues a person's social identity that it disqualifies that person from full social acceptance (Goffman, 1963b). A convicted criminal, wearing a prison uniform, is an example of a person who has been stigmatized; the uniform says that the person has done something wrong and should not be allowed unsupervised outside the prison walls. The stigmatization of homelessness is discussed later in this chapter.

Components of Social Structure

The social structure of a society includes its social positions, the relationships among those positions, and the kinds of resources attached to each of the positions. Social structure also includes all the groups

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Homeless Persons?

True	False	
T	**F**	1. A significant increase in family homelessness has occurred in the United States in recent years.
T	**F**	2. Alcoholism and domestic violence are the primary factors that bring about family homelessness.
T	**F**	3. Many homeless people have full-time employment.
T	**F**	4. Many homeless people are mentally ill.
T	**F**	5. Homeless people typically panhandle (beg for money) so that they can buy alcohol or drugs.
T	**F**	6. Shelters for the homeless consistently have clients who sleep on overflow cots, in chairs, in hallways, and other nonstandard sleeping arrangements.
T	**F**	7. There have always been homeless persons throughout the history of the United States.
T	**F**	8. In large urban areas such as Los Angeles, many homeless people live in tent cities or other large encampments.

Answers on page 108.

that make up society and the relationships among those groups (Smelser, 1988). We begin by examining the social positions that are closest to the individual.

Status

A *status* is a socially defined position in a group or society characterized by certain expectations, rights, and duties. Statuses exist independently of the specific people occupying them (Linton, 1936); the statuses of professional athlete, rock musician, professor, college student, and homeless person all exist exclusive of the specific individuals who occupy these social positions. For example, although thousands of new students arrive on college campuses each year to occupy the status of first-year student, the status of college student and the expectations attached to that position have remained relatively unchanged for the past century.

Does the term *status* refer only to high-level positions in society? No, not in a sociological sense. Although many people equate the term *status* with high levels of prestige, sociologists use it to refer to all socially defined positions—high rank and low rank. For example, both the position of director of the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C., and that of a homeless person who is paid about five dollars a week (plus bed and board) to clean up the dining room at a homeless shelter are social statuses (see Snow and Anderson, 1993).

Take a moment to answer the question "Who am I?" To determine who you are, you must think about your social identity, which is derived from the statuses you occupy and is based on your status set. A *status set* comprises all the statuses that a person occupies at a given time. For example, Maria may be a psychologist, a professor, a wife, a mother, a Catholic, a school volunteer, a Texas resident, and

> **social interaction** the process by which people act toward or respond to other people; the foundation for all relationships and groups in society.
>
> **social structure** the stable pattern of social relationships that exists within a particular group or society.
>
> **status** a socially defined position in a group or society characterized by certain expectations, rights, and duties.
>
> **status set** all the statuses that a person occupies at a given time.

- **Active Learning:** Ask students to create a chart linking their own statuses and roles. Use these to talk about concepts such as role strain and role conflict that are common to today's college student.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** As students come in to class, ask them to take the quiz on the subject of homelessness. If possible, project the correct answers on a screen for all to see. What were some of the most common misconceptions? Ask about any experiences with community service projects aimed at helping people who are homeless.

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Homelessness and Homeless Persons

1. **True.** Recently, a significant increase has occurred in the number of homeless families while there has been a decrease or leveling in the number of homeless single adults, partly due to policies aimed at ending chronic homelessness among single adults with disabilities.

2. **False.** Primary causes of family homelessness are as follows: job loss, foreclosures on homes brought about by the recession, and a lack of affordable housing in many cities.

3. **True.** Many homeless people do have full-time employment, but they are among the working poor. The minimum-wage jobs they hold do not pay enough for them to support their families and pay the high rents that are typical in many cities.

4. **False.** Most homeless people are not mentally ill; estimates suggest that about one-fourth of the homeless are emotionally disturbed.

5. **False.** Many homeless persons panhandle to pay for food, a bed at a shelter, or other survival needs.

6. **True.** Overcrowded shelters throughout the nation often attempt to accommodate as many homeless people as possible on a given night, particularly when the weather is bad. As a result, any available spaces—including offices, closets, and hallways—are used as sleeping areas until the individuals can find another location or weather conditions improve.

7. **True.** Scholars have found that homelessness has always existed in the United States. However, the number of homeless persons has increased or decreased with fluctuations in the national economy.

8. **False.** Although media reports frequently show homeless individuals and families living in tent cities or other large homeless encampments in major U.S. cities, official studies by the U.S. Conference of Mayors (2009) have found that only ten large U.S. cities have tent cities and that these cities hold only a very small percentage of people who are homeless.

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2009.

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a Mexican American. All of these socially defined positions constitute her status set.

Ascribed Status and Achieved Status

Statuses are distinguished by the manner in which we acquire them. An *ascribed status* is a social position conferred at birth or received involuntarily later in life, based on attributes over which the individual has little or no control, such as race/ethnicity, age, and gender. For example, Maria is a female born to Mexican American parents; she was assigned these statuses at birth. She is an adult and—if she lives long enough—will someday become an "older adult," which is an ascribed status received involuntarily later in life. An *achieved status* is a social position a person assumes voluntarily as a result of personal choice, merit, or direct effort. Achieved statuses (such as occupation, education, and income) are thought to be gained as a result of personal ability or successful competition. Most occupational positions in modern societies are achieved statuses. For instance, Maria voluntarily assumed the statuses of psychologist, professor, wife, mother, and school volunteer. However, not all achieved statuses are positions most people would want to attain; for example, being a criminal, a drug addict, or a homeless person is a negative achieved status.

Ascribed statuses have a significant influence on the achieved statuses that we occupy. Race/ethnicity,

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- **For Discussion:** According to the *Princeton Review,* these are the five top party schools in the country: 1. Penn State, 2. University of Florida, 3. University of Mississippi, 4. University of Georgia, 5. Ohio University. Have students listen to and discuss the *This American Life* podcast on partying at Penn State (**thisamericanlife.org**, episode 396, "#1 Party School").

- **Research:** Have students research and explore the work of Anthony Appiah on identity in a global community, in works such as *Cosmopolitanism* (2006). How might Appiah's idea of multiple allegiances and identity roles complement the idea of a status set?

- **Active Learning:** Have students create charts mapping their own status sets, using different colors to indicate their ascribed, achieved, and master statuses.

▲ In the past, a person's status was primarily linked to his or her family background, education, occupation, and other sociological attributes. Today, some sociologists believe that celebrity status has overtaken the more traditional social indicators of status. The rock star Bono, shown here performing at a concert, is an example of celebrity status.

gender, and age affect each person's opportunity to acquire certain achieved statuses. Those who are privileged by their positive ascribed statuses are more likely to achieve the more prestigious positions in a society. Those who are disadvantaged by their ascribed statuses may more easily acquire negative achieved statuses.

Master Status If we occupy many different statuses, how can we determine which is the most important? Sociologist Everett Hughes has stated that societies resolve this ambiguity by determining master statuses. A *master status* is the most important status a person occupies; it dominates all the individual's other statuses and is the overriding ingredient in determining a person's general social position (Hughes, 1945). Being poor or rich is a master status that influences many other areas of life, including health, education, and life opportunities. Historically, the most common master statuses for women have related to positions in the family, such as daughter, wife, and mother. For men, occupation has usually been the most important status, although occupation is increasingly a master status for many women as well. "What do you do?" is one of the first questions most people ask when meeting another. Occupation provides important clues to a person's educational level, income, and family background. An individual's race/ethnicity may also constitute a master status in a society in which dominant-group members single out members of other groups as "inferior" on the basis of real or alleged physical, cultural, or nationality characteristics (see Feagin and Feagin, 2003).

Master statuses confer high or low levels of personal worth and dignity on people. These are not characteristics that we inherently possess; they are derived from the statuses we occupy. For those who have no residence, being a homeless person readily becomes a master status regardless of the person's other attributes. Homelessness is a stigmatized master status that confers disrepute on its occupant because domiciled people often believe that a homeless person has a "character flaw." Sometimes this assumption is supported by how the media frame stories about homeless people (see the Framing Homelessness in the Media box). The circumstances under which someone becomes homeless determine the extent to which that person is stigmatized

ascribed status a social position conferred at birth or received involuntarily later in life based on attributes over which the individual has little or no control, such as race/ethnicity, age, and gender.

achieved status a social position that a person assumes voluntarily as a result of personal choice, merit, or direct effort.

master status the most important status that a person occupies.

• **Sociological Imagination:** Have students analyze the federal government's definition of *homelessness:* "an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings" (HUD).

framing homelessness in the media

Thematic and Episodic Framing

They live—and die—on a traffic island in the middle of a busy downtown street, surviving by panhandling drivers or turning tricks. Everyone in their colony is hooked on drugs or alcohol. They are the harsh face of the homeless in San Francisco.

The traffic island where these homeless people live is a 40-by-75 foot triangle chunk of concrete just west of San Francisco's downtown. . . . The little concrete divider wouldn't get a second glance, or have a name—if not for the colony that lives there in a jumble of shopping carts loaded with everything they own. It's called Homeless Island by the shopkeepers who work near it and the street sweepers who clean it; to the homeless, it is just the Island. The inhabitants live hand-to-mouth, sleep on the cement and abuse booze and drugs, mostly heroin. There are at least 3,000 others like them in San Francisco, social workers say. They are known as the "hard core," the people most visible on the streets, the most difficult to help. . . . (Fagan, 2003)

This news article is an example of typical media framing of stories about homeless people. The full article includes statements about how the homeless of San Francisco use drugs, lack ambition, and present a generally disreputable appearance on the streets. This type of framing of stories about the homeless is not unique. According to the media scholar Eung-jun Min (1999: ix), media images typically portray the homeless as "drunk, stoned, crazy, sick, and drug abusers." Such representations of homeless people limit our understanding of the larger issues surrounding the problem of homelessness in the United States.

Most media framing of newspaper articles and television reports about the problem of homelessness can be classified into one of two major categories: *thematic framing* and *episodic framing*. Thematic framing refers to news stories that focus primarily on statistics about the homeless population

(see Figure ▶ 4.2). Snow and Anderson (1993: 199) observed the effects of homelessness as a master status:

It was late afternoon, and the homeless were congregated in front of [the Salvation Army shelter] for dinner. A school bus approached that was packed with Anglo junior high school students being bused from an eastside barrio school to their upper-middle and upper-class homes in the city's northwest neighborhoods. As the bus rolled by, a fusillade of coins came flying out the windows, as the students made obscene gestures and shouted, "Get a job." Some of the homeless gestured back, some scrambled for the scattered coins—mostly pennies—others angrily threw the coins at the bus, and a few seemed oblivious to the encounter. For the passing junior high schoolers, the exchange was harmless fun, a way to work off the restless energy built up in school; but for the homeless it was a stark reminder of their stigmatized status and of the extent to which they are the objects of negative attention.
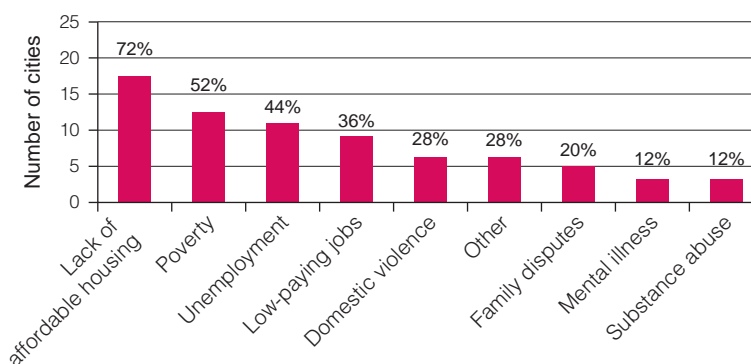
▶ FIGURE 4.2 **CAUSES OF FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN 25 CITIES**

U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2008.

- **Extra Examples:** Have students listen to podcasts from *The Homelessness Marathon,* an annual radio show featuring voices and stories of homeless people across the country (**homelessnessmarathon.org**). What kinds of framing take place in these podcasts? How does this framing compare to that discussed above?

and recent trends in homelessness. Examples include stories about changes in the U.S. poverty rate and articles about states and cities that have had the largest increases in poverty. Most articles of this type are abstract and impersonal, primarily presenting data and some expert's interpretation of what those data mean. Media representations of this type convey a message to readers that "the poor and homeless are faceless." According to some analysts, thematic framing of poverty is often dehumanizing because it "ignores the human tragedy of poverty—the suffering, indignities, and misery endured by millions of children and adults" (Mantsios, 2003: 101).

By contrast, *episodic framing* presents public issues such as poverty and homelessness as concrete events, showing them to be specific instances that occur more or less in isolation. For example, a news article may focus on the problems of one homeless family, describing how the parents and kids live in a car and eat meals from a soup kitchen. Often, what is not included is the *big picture of homelessness:* How many people throughout the city or nation are living in their cars or in shelters? What larger structural factors (such as reductions in public and private assistance to the poor, or high rates of unemployment in some regions) contribute to or intensify the problem of homelessness in this country?

For many years, the poor have been a topic of interest to journalists and social commentators. How stories about the poor and homeless are framed in the media has been and remains an important concern for each of us because these reports influence how we view the less fortunate in our society. If we come to see the problem of homelessness as nothing more than isolated statistical data or as marginal situations that affect only a few people, then we are unable to make a balanced assessment of the larger social problems involved.

reflect & analyze

How are the poor and homeless represented in the news reports and television entertainment shows you watch? Are the larger social issues surrounding homelessness discussed within the context of these shows? Should they be?

Status Symbols When people are proud of a particular social status that they occupy, they often choose to use visible means to let others know about their position. **Status symbols are material signs that inform others of a person's specific status.** For example, just as wearing a wedding ring proclaims that a person is married, owning a Rolls-Royce announces that one has "made it." As we saw in Chapter 2, achievement and success are core U.S. values. For this reason, people who have "made it" tend to want to display symbols to inform others of their accomplishments.

Status symbols for the domiciled and for the homeless may have different meanings. Among affluent persons, a full shopping cart in the grocery store and bags of merchandise from expensive department stores indicate a lofty financial position. By contrast, among the homeless, bulging shopping bags and overloaded grocery carts suggest a completely different status. Carts and bags are essential to street life; there is no other place to keep things, as shown by this description of Darian, a homeless woman in New York City:

The possessions in her postal cart consist of a whole house full of things, from pots and pans to books, shoes, magazines, toilet articles, personal papers and clothing, most of which she made herself. . . .

Because of its weight and size, Darian cannot get the cart up over the curb. She keeps it in the street near the cars. This means that as she pushes it slowly up and down the street all day long, she is living almost her entire life directly in traffic. She stops off along her route to sit or sleep for awhile and to be both stared at as a spectacle and to stare back. Every aspect of her life including sleeping, eating, and going to the bathroom is constantly in public view. . . . [S]he has no space to call her own and she never has a moment's privacy. Her privacy, her home, is her cart with all its possessions. (Rousseau, 1981: 141)

For homeless women and men, possessions are not status symbols as much as they are a link with the

> **status symbol** a material sign that informs others of a person's specific status.

- **For Discussion:** What are the most popular status symbols of today? Ask students to talk about and even demonstrate some of the current symbols that display status. Ask students to identify examples of conspicuous consumption, along with other kinds of status.
- **Active Learning:** Ask students to write a note to a high school freshman about the strategies necessary for survival in college.

Then ask your students to try and write a letter about what kind of survival strategies are needed to live on the streets as a homeless person. Address the two different kinds of cultural knowledge necessary to live these two different kinds of lives.
- **Popular Culture:** The official gift basket for celebrities attending the 2006 Emmy Awards was worth approximately $30,000 and included pearls, certificates to spa treatments, designer luggage,

▲ Sociologists believe that being rich or poor may be a master status in the United States. How do the lifestyles of these two men differ based on their master statuses?

past, a hope for the future, and a potential source of immediate cash. As Snow and Anderson (1993: 147) note, selling personal possessions is not uncommon among most social classes; members of the working and middle classes hold garage sales, and those in the upper classes have estate sales. However, when homeless persons sell their personal possessions, they do so to meet their immediate needs, not because they want to "clean house."

Role

A role is the dynamic aspect of a status. Whereas we occupy a status, we play a role. A *role* is a set of behavioral expectations associated with a given status. For example, a carpenter (employee) hired to remodel a kitchen is not expected to sit down uninvited and join the family (employer) for dinner.

Role expectation is a group's or society's definition of the way a specific role *ought* to be played. By contrast, *role performance* is how a person *actually* plays the role. Role performance does not always match role expectation. Some statuses have role expectations that are highly specific, such as that of surgeon or college professor. Other statuses, such as friend or significant other, have less-structured expectations. The role expectations tied to the status of student are more specific than those of being a friend. Role expectations are typically based on a range of acceptable behavior rather than on strictly defined standards.

Our roles are relational (or complementary); that is, they are defined in the context of roles performed by others. We can play the role of student because someone else fulfills the role of professor. Conversely, to perform the role of professor, the teacher must have one or more students.

Role ambiguity occurs when the expectations associated with a role are unclear. For example, it is not always clear when the provider–dependent aspect of the parent–child relationship ends. Should it end at age eighteen or twenty-one? When a person is no longer in school? Different people will answer these questions differently depending on their experiences and socialization, as well as on the parents' financial capability and psychological willingness to continue contributing to the welfare of their adult children.

Role Conflict and Role Strain   Most people occupy a number of statuses, each of which has numerous role expectations attached. For example, Charles is a student who attends morning classes at the university, and he is an employee at a fast-food restaurant, where he works from 3:00 to 10:00 P.M. He is also Stephanie's boyfriend, and she would like to see him more often. On December 7, Charles has a final exam at 7:00 P.M., when he is supposed to be working. Meanwhile, Stephanie is pressuring him to take her to a movie. To top it off, his mother calls, asking him to fly home because his father is going to have emergency surgery. How can Charles be in all

▲ Parents sometimes experience role conflict when they are faced with societal expectations that they will earn a living for their family and that they will also be good parents to their children. Obviously, this father needs to leave for work; however, his son has other needs.

these places at once? Such experiences of role conflict can be overwhelming.

Role conflict occurs when incompatible role demands are placed on a person by two or more statuses held at the same time. When role conflict occurs, we may feel pulled in different directions. To deal with this problem, we may prioritize our roles and first complete the one we consider to be most important. Or we may compartmentalize our lives and "insulate" our various roles (Merton, 1968). That is, we may perform the activities linked to one role for part of the day and then engage in the activities associated with another role in some other time period or elsewhere. For example, under routine circumstances, Charles would fulfill his student role for part of the day and his employee role for another part of the day. In his current situation, however, he is unable to compartmentalize his roles.

Role conflict may occur as a result of changing statuses and roles in society. Research has found that

women who engage in behavior that is gender-typed as "masculine" tend to have higher rates of role conflict than those who engage in traditional "feminine" behavior (Basow, 1992). According to the sociologist Tracey Watson (1987), role conflict can sometimes be attributed not to the roles themselves but to the pressures that people feel when they do not fit into culturally prescribed roles. In her study of women athletes in college sports programs, Watson found role conflict in the traditionally incongruent identities of being a woman and being an athlete. Even though the women athletes in her study wore makeup and presented a conventional image when they were not on the basketball court, their peers in school still saw them as "female jocks," thus leading to role conflict.

Whereas role conflict occurs between two or more statuses (such as being homeless and being a temporary employee of a social service agency), role strain takes place within one status. *Role strain occurs when incompatible demands are built into a single status that a person occupies* (Goode, 1960). For example, many women experience role strain in the labor force because they hold jobs that are "less satisfying and more stressful than men's jobs since they involve less money, less prestige, fewer job openings, more career roadblocks, and so forth" (Basow, 1992: 192). Similarly, married women may experience more role strain than married men because of work overload, marital inequality with their spouse, exclusive parenting responsibilities, unclear expectations, and lack of emotional support.

Recent social changes may have increased role strain for men. In the family, men's traditional position of dominance has eroded as more women have entered the paid labor force and demanded

> **role** a set of behavioral expectations associated with a given status.
>
> **role expectation** a group's or society's definition of the way that a specific role *ought* to be played.
>
> **role performance** how a person *actually* plays a role.
>
> **role conflict** a situation in which incompatible role demands are placed on a person by two or more statuses held at the same time.
>
> **role strain** a condition that occurs when incompatible demands are built into a single status that a person occupies.

• **Active Learning:** Have students write a short paragraph on the following: What might cause role ambiguity? Give examples of times when you have had this experience. How might this experience be a part of a process that leads to role conflict and then role distancing?

Role Expectation: a group's or society's definition of the way a specific role *ought* to be played.

Role Performance: how a person *actually* plays a role.

Role Conflict: occurs when incompatible demands are placed on a person by two or more statuses held at the same time.

Role Strain: occurs when incompatible demands are built into a single status that a person holds.
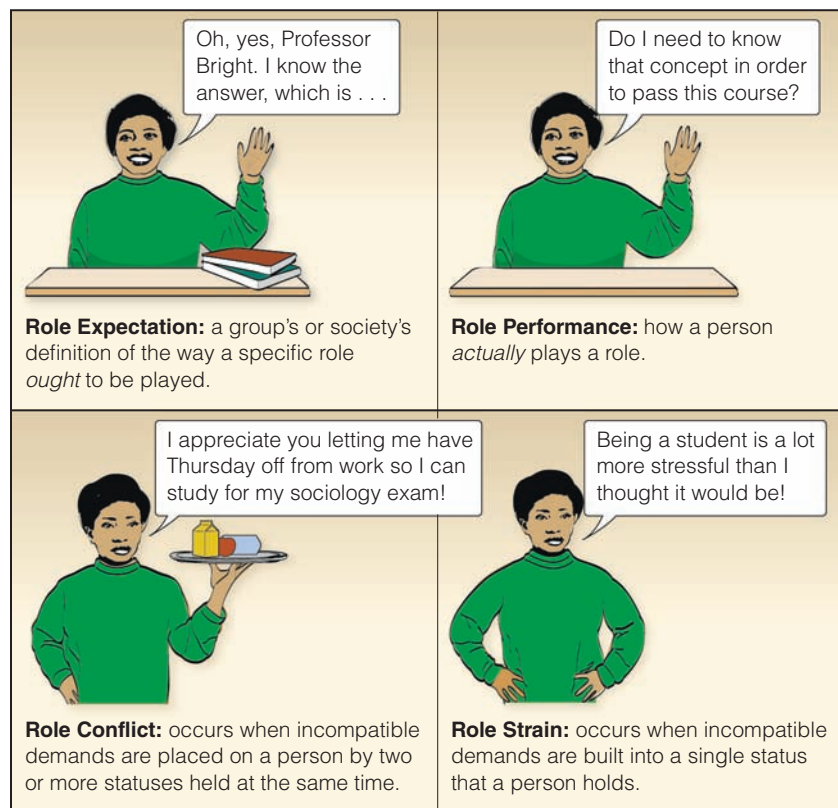
▶ **FIGURE 4.3 ROLE EXPECTATION, PERFORMANCE, CONFLICT, AND STRAIN**
When playing the role of "student," do you sometimes personally encounter these concepts?

more assistance in child-rearing and homemaking responsibilities. The concepts of role expectation, role performance, role conflict, and role strain are illustrated in ▶ Figure 4.3.

Individuals frequently distance themselves from a role they find extremely stressful or otherwise problematic. *Role distancing* occurs when people consciously foster the impression of a lack of commitment or attachment to a particular role and merely go through the motions of role performance (Goffman, 1961b). People use distancing techniques when they do not want others to take them as the "self" implied in a particular role, especially if they think the role is "beneath them." While Charles is working in the fast-food restaurant, for example, he does not want people to think of him as a "loser in a dead-end job." He wants them to view him as a college student who is working there just to "pick up a few bucks" until he graduates. When customers from the university come in, Charles talks to them about what courses they are taking, what they are majoring in, and what professors they have. He

does not discuss whether the bacon cheeseburger is better than the chili burger. When Charles is really involved in role distancing, he tells his friends that he "works there but wouldn't eat there."

Role Exit *Role exit* occurs when people disengage from social roles that have been central to their self-identity (Ebaugh, 1988). Sociologist Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh studied this process by interviewing ex-convicts, ex-nuns, retirees, divorced men and women, and others who had exited voluntarily from significant social roles. According to Ebaugh, role exit occurs in four stages. The first stage is doubt, in which people experience frustration or burnout when they reflect on their existing roles. The second stage involves a search for alternatives; here, people may take a leave of absence from their work or temporarily separate from their marriage partner. The third stage is the turning point at which people realize that they must take some final action, such as quitting their job or getting a divorce. The fourth and final stage involves the creation of a new identity.

- **For Discussion:** If you had students create a chart of their statuses and roles, now ask them to discuss possible sources of role strain, role conflict, and role exit. Ask students to share some of their own experiences since becoming college students. How many of your students are also married, have children, work full time, or are nontraditional (older) students?

- **U.S. Census:** Have students discuss homelessness in light of the following statistics: In 2005, 13.3 percent of the U.S. population, or 38,231,521 million people, lived in poverty. Both the poverty rate and the number of poor people have increased in recent years, up from 12.5 percent or 1.1 million in 2003 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

Exiting the "homeless" role is often very difficult. The longer a person remains on the streets, the more difficult it becomes to exit this role. Personal resources diminish over time. Possessions are often stolen, lost, sold, or pawned. Work experience and skills become outdated, and physical disabilities that prevent individuals from working are likely to develop.

Groups

Groups are another important component of social structure. To sociologists, a *social group* consists of two or more people who interact frequently and share a common identity and a feeling of

▲ For many years, capitalism has been dominated by powerful "old-boy" social networks. Professional women have increasingly created their own social networks to enhance their business opportunities.

interdependence. Throughout our lives, most of us participate in groups, from our families and childhood friends, to our college classes, to our work and community organizations, and even to society.

Primary and secondary groups are the two basic types of social groups. A *primary group* is a small, less specialized group in which members engage in face-to-face, emotion-based interactions over an extended period of time. Primary groups include our family, close friends, and school- or work-related peer groups. By contrast, a *secondary group* is a larger, more specialized group in which members engage in more impersonal, goal-oriented relationships for a limited period of time. Schools, churches, and corporations are examples of secondary groups. In secondary groups, people have few, if any, emotional ties to one another. Instead, they come together for some specific, practical purpose, such as getting a degree or a paycheck. Secondary groups are more specialized than primary ones; individuals relate to one another in terms of specific roles (such as professor and student) and more limited activities (such as course-related endeavors). Primary and secondary groups are further discussed in Chapter 5 ("Groups and Organizations").

Social solidarity, or cohesion, refers to a group's ability to maintain itself in the face of obstacles. Social solidarity exists when social bonds, attractions, or other forces hold members of a group in interaction over a period of time (Jary and Jary, 1991). For example, if a local church is destroyed by fire and congregation members still worship

role exit a situation in which people disengage from social roles that have been central to their self-identity.

social group a group that consists of two or more people who interact frequently and share a common identity and a feeling of interdependence.

primary group Charles Horton Cooley's term for a small, less specialized group in which members engage in face-to-face, emotion-based interactions over an extended period of time.

secondary group a larger, more specialized group in which members engage in more-impersonal, goal-oriented relationships for a limited period of time.

- **For Discussion:** In what specific ways do race/ethnicity, gender, and social class play a part in the meanings we give to our interactions with others? These interactions are always performed through roles defined by our complex status set.
- **Media Coverage:** "Online volunteering is growing as Internet access improves worldwide, particularly among African and Latin American organizations needing assistance. Instead of building

homes, volunteers can build websites. Or translate documents. Or prepare training manuals. Or mentor teens. All from a computer hundreds or thousands of miles away" (Associated Press). Have students discuss comparable experiences with online groups and communities.
- **Extra Examples:** Provide students with a visual representation of your own social network. Help students to understand some of

together in a makeshift setting, then they have a high degree of social solidarity.

Many of us build social networks that involve our personal friends in primary groups and our acquaintances in secondary groups. A *social network* is a series of social relationships that links an individual to others. Social networks work differently for men and women, for different races/ethnicities, and for members of different social classes. Traditionally, people of color and white women have been excluded from powerful "old-boy" social networks. At the middle- and upper-class levels, individuals tap social networks to find employment, make business deals, and win political elections. However, social networks typically do not work effectively for poor and homeless individuals. Snow and Anderson (1993) found that homeless men have fragile social networks that are plagued with instability. Most of the avenues for exiting the homeless role and acquiring housing are intertwined with the large-scale, secondary groups that sociologists refer to as formal organizations.

A *formal organization* is a highly structured group formed for the purpose of completing certain tasks or achieving specific goals. Many of us spend most of our time in formal organizations such as colleges, corporations, or the government. In Chapter 5 ("Groups and Organizations"), we analyze the characteristics of bureaucratic organizations; however, at this point we should note that these organizations are a very important component of social structure in all industrialized societies. We expect such organizations to educate us, solve our social problems (such as crime and homelessness), and provide us work opportunities.

Today, formal organizations such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty work with groups around the country to make people aware that homelessness must be viewed within the larger context of poverty and to educate the public on the nature and extent of homelessness among various categories of people in the United States (see ▶ Figure 4.4 for statistics on homelessness).

Social Institutions

At the macrolevel of all societies, certain basic activities routinely occur—children are born and socialized, goods and services are produced and distributed, order is preserved, and a sense of purpose is maintained (Aberle et al., 1950; Mack and

The Statistics on Homelessness Demographics
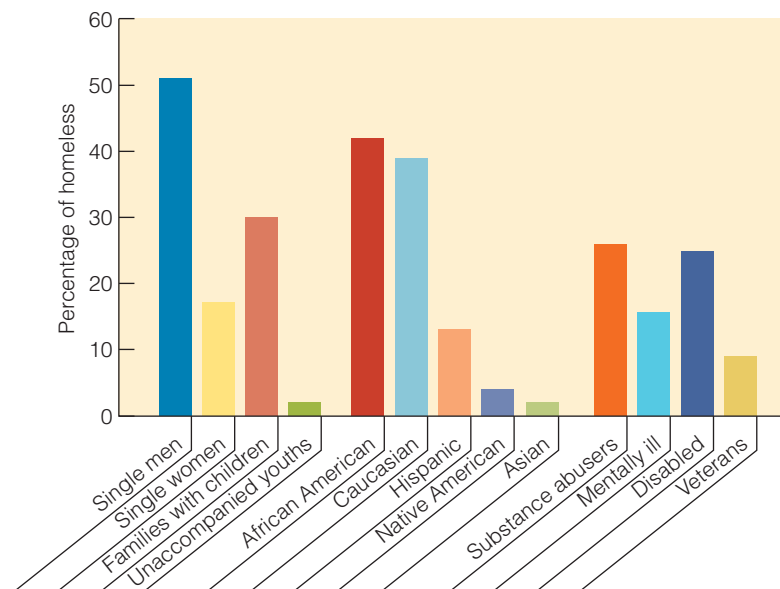
▶ **FIGURE 4.4 WHO ARE THE HOMELESS?**

Source: National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2004. Reprinted courtesy of HowStuffWorks.com.

the complexities of life after graduation, and use this opportunity to give concrete examples of abstract concepts such as primary group, secondary group, and formal organization.

• **For Discussion:** Ethnomethodologists suggest that interaction is based on assumptions of shared experiences. When your students attend this class, what are the expectations that they have and

that they bring with them from past experiences? Where do these shared expectations overlap? What purposes do they serve?

• **Research:** "Two trends are largely responsible for the rise in homelessness over the past 20–25 years: a growing shortage of affordable rental housing and a simultaneous increase in poverty. Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked. Being poor

Bradford, 1979). Social institutions are the means by which these basic needs are met. A *social institution* is a set of organized beliefs and rules that establishes how a society will attempt to meet its basic social needs. In the past, these needs have centered around five basic social institutions: the family, religion, education, the economy, and the government or politics. Today, mass media, sports, science and medicine, and the military are also considered to be social institutions.

What is the difference between a group and a social institution? A group is composed of specific, identifiable people; an institution is a standardized way of doing something. The concept of "family" helps to distinguish between the two. When we talk about "your family" or "my family," we are referring to a specific family. When we refer to the family as a social institution, we are talking about ideologies and standardized patterns of behavior that organize family life. For example, the family as a social institution contains certain statuses organized into well-defined relationships, such as husband–wife, parent–child, and brother–sister. Specific families do not always conform to these ideologies and behavior patterns.

Functional theorists emphasize that social institutions exist because they perform five essential tasks:

1. *Replacing members.* Societies and groups must have socially approved ways of replacing members who move away or die.
2. *Teaching new members.* People who are born into a society or move into it must learn the group's values and customs.
3. *Producing, distributing, and consuming goods and services.* All societies must provide and distribute goods and services for their members.
4. *Preserving order.* Every group or society must preserve order within its boundaries and protect itself from attack by outsiders.
5. *Providing and maintaining a sense of purpose.* In order to motivate people to cooperate with one another, a sense of purpose is needed.

Although this list of functional prerequisites is shared by all societies, the institutions in each society perform these tasks in somewhat different ways depending on their specific cultural values and norms.

▲ As a formal organization, the Salvation Army completes certain tasks and achieves certain goals that otherwise might not be fulfilled in contemporary societies, such as providing meals for the homeless.

Conflict theorists agree with functionalists that social institutions are originally organized to meet basic social needs. However, they do not believe that social institutions work for the common good of everyone. For example, some conflict theorists might point out that families may be a source of problems (rather than solutions) for young people. Some children are abused or neglected; others have arguments with their parents or other authority figures in the household that contribute to a decision to run away from home and try their luck living on the streets. Traumatic incidents in families may trigger fear, anxiety, and dread that contribute to homelessness among young people. See Photo Essay.

Conflict theorists might also emphasize that homeless persons across age categories are largely powerless in the face of failing social institutions and large-scale bureaucracies in contemporary societies. For example, the homeless lack the power and resources to promote their own interests when they are opposed by dominant social groups.

formal organization a highly structured group formed for the purpose of completing certain tasks or achieving specific goals.

social institution a set of organized beliefs and rules that establishes how a society will attempt to meet its basic social needs.

means being an illness, an accident, or a paycheck away from living on the streets" (National Coalition for the Homeless).
• **Quote, Unquote:** "Man's characteristic privilege is that the bond he accepts is not physical but moral; that is, social. He is governed not by a material environment brutally imposed on him, but by a conscience superior to his own, the superiority of which he feels. Because the greater, better part of his existence transcends the body, he escapes the body's yoke, but is subject to that of society" (Emile Durkheim). Have students translate this statement into their own words.

Trying to Go It Alone: Runaway Adolescents and Teens

*H*ome. Family. The ideal is that these words evoke a sense of well-being—feelings such as love, understanding, acceptance, and security. However, the reality is that for many of us, especially adolescents and teens, these words trigger negative feelings—fear, anxiety, dread—and an urgent desire to escape. Recent statistics indicate that between 1.6 million and 2.8 million young people run away each year in the United States and that approximately 1.3 million homeless youths live unsupervised on the streets, in abandoned buildings, with friends, or with strangers. Young people between the ages of twelve and seventeen are more at risk of homelessness than are adults (NSCL, 2010).

One out of every seven children between the ages of ten and eighteen will run away before their eighteenth birthday. Included in these numbers are not just runaway but also "throwaway" children, youths who have been forced out of their homes by parents or guardians, or, because they have turned eighteen, forced out of a foster care system.

Many young people run away because the family—an important social institution in societies—has failed them: Problems in the home include physical and sexual abuse, mental health disorders of a family member, substance abuse and addiction of a family member, and parental neglect (NSCL, 2010). It is estimated that over 70 percent of runaway and throwaway youths are endangered, either having already been harmed or being potentially at risk of being harmed, most commonly physically or sexually. Youths' substance dependency is the second most common source of being at risk for harm. Consider the following additional statistics:

- Thirty-two percent of runaway and homeless youth have attempted suicide at some point in their lives.
- Approximately 48.2 percent of female youths living on the street and 33.2 percent of female youths living in a shelter reported having been pregnant at least once.
- Fifty percent of homeless youths age sixteen or older reported having dropped out of school, having been expelled, or having been suspended.
- Seventy-five percent of runaways who are on the street for two or more weeks will become involved in theft, drugs, or pornography, while one out of every three teens on the street will be lured into prostitution within forty-eight hours of leaving home.

© SW Productions/Getty Images

◀ WHY THEY LEAVE

Forty-seven percent of runaway and homeless youths indicate that conflict between them and a parent or guardian is a major problem. Thirty-four percent of runaways (girls and boys) report sexual abuse, and 43 percent report physical abuse before leaving home, abuse that increases youths' risk of being assaulted and/or raped on the street. Other problems that runaways report include alcohol and drug use, sexual orientation issues, and mental and physical health issues.

© Jeff Greenberg/The Image Works

◀ LIFE ON THE STREET IS HARD

This homeless girl on a sidewalk in Manhattan reflects the reality that youths ages twelve to seventeen are at higher risk for homelessness than are adults. Available data show that 12 percent of runaway and homeless youths spend at least one night outside in a park, on a street, under a bridge or overhang, or on a rooftop. Seven percent of youths in runaway and homeless shelters and 14 percent of youths on the street surveyed in 1995 reported having traded sex for money, food, shelter, or drugs in the previous twelve months. Other means of survival include shelters and soup kitchens, panhandling, and stealing.

What happens to the socialization process (described in Chapter 3) when youths must fend for themselves to meet their own physical and emotional needs? How is the social structure of a society (discussed in this chapter) related to problems of runaway adolescents and homeless teenagers? The images in this essay give you a chance to look at the lives of runaways, from risk factors and precipitating events to means of survival and resources, and the longer-term effects that running away or being thrown away has on individuals and their communities. This essay also provides a glimpse of homeless children in global perspective. As you look at these images, consider the short- and long-term impact on a society of persons ages twelve (and sometimes younger) to eighteen attempting self-sufficiency.
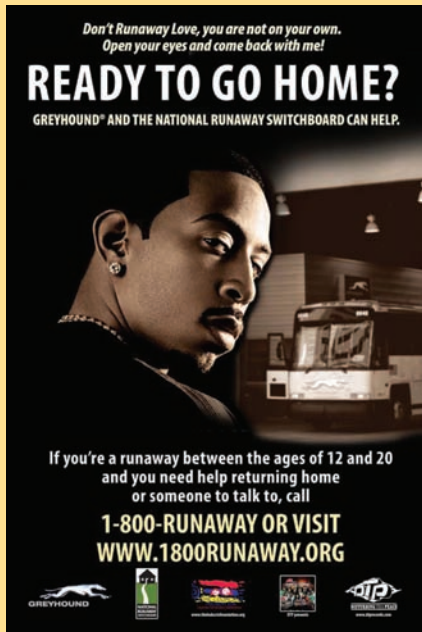
Courtesy of the National Runaway Switchboard

◀ HOME FREE PROGRAM

In addition to providing its hotline and online services and a professionally developed runaway prevention curriculum titled "Let's Talk," the NRS partners with several organizations, most notably Greyhound Lines, Inc., to offer its Home Free Program, promoted in this poster by the musician Ludacris. More than 10,000 runaways have been reunited with their families, free of charge, since the program was started.

© Tim Boyle/Getty Images

▲ SOCIETY'S SAFETY NETS

Males and females run away in equal numbers, although females are more likely to seek help through shelters and hotlines such as the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS), where 77 percent of the callers are female. In 2007, NRS handled more than 176,000 calls. NRS data show that the organization is serving more youths who are contemplating running away, instead of already having run away, than in the past. Children under age twelve are the fastest-growing group of callers, and in 2007, NRS received more crisis calls than it had in the past.

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◀ CATCHING UP

Fifty percent of homeless youths age sixteen or older reported having dropped out of school, having been expelled, or having been suspended. Even if school had not been a major problem, once adolescents and teens, especially teens, have run away, the disruption to their education may be so significant that they end up dropping out of school. Catching up and moving ahead takes determination—and opportunities, such as ones provided by this Skills, Training, Employment, Preparation Services (STEPS) program, where teens can study for a high school General Equivalency Development (GED) test.

◄ **GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

These homeless children, or "street kids," sleeping in a traffic island in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in early 2008 are among the 25 million children, adolescents, and teens in developing countries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas who live, work, and sleep on the streets or in shelters such as railway stations. Whether orphaned by war or disease, abandoned, lost, or runaways, the world's street children lack access to adequate health care, nutrition, and hygiene. They are also at serious risk of being recruited or entrapped and then transported for sexual exploitation or forced labor in the underground economy known as human trafficking, whose victims number an estimated 2.5 million at any given time.

© RAFIQUR RAHMAN/Reuters/Landov

reflect & analyze

1. **Apply functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist perspectives to an analysis of the problems of runaways and other street kids. How does being a runaway or a throwaway child affect a child's ability to thrive, or simply survive, in society?**
2. **What might social institutions such as family, religion, education, and the government do to reduce the likelihood that at-risk children will run away?**
3. **Did you ever run away, or do you know someone who did? If so, do you imagine that the experience of running away will affect you (or the other person) in regard to participation in groups or commitment to a social institution such as a family, school, or religious organization in the future?**

turning to video

Watch the ABC video *Girls Behaving Badly: Violent Girls* (running time 8:29), available on the Kendall Companion Website and through Cengage Learning eResources accounts. In 1999, Judge Cindy Lederman of Miami–Dade County Juvenile Court founded a program known as the Girls Advocacy Project, or GAP, which for seven years helped girls in Florida's Miami–Dade County Juvenile Detention Center, filling gaps in both the juvenile justice system and the girls' lives through educational group discussions and other support. As you watch the video, think about the photographs, commentary, and questions you encountered in this photo essay. After you've watched the video, consider these questions: What risk factors do violent girls have in common with runaway and throwaway youth, and in what ways are running away and acting violently similar—and different?

Societies: Changes in Social Structure

Changes in social structure have a dramatic impact on individuals, groups, and societies. Social arrangements in contemporary societies have grown more complex with the introduction of new technology, changes in values and norms, and the rapidly shrinking "global village." How do societies maintain some degree of social solidarity in the face of such changes? Sociologists Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies developed typologies to explain the processes of stability and change in the social structure of societies. A *typology* is a classification scheme containing two or more mutually exclusive categories that are used to compare different kinds of behavior or types of societies.

Durkheim: Mechanical and Organic Solidarity

Emile Durkheim (1933/1893) was concerned with the question "How do societies manage to hold together?" He asserted that preindustrial societies are held together by strong traditions and by the members' shared moral beliefs and values. As societies industrialized and developed more specialized economic activities, social solidarity came to be rooted in the members' shared dependence on one another. From Durkheim's perspective, social solidarity derives from a society's social structure, which, in turn, is based on the society's division of labor. *Division of labor* refers to how the various tasks of a society are divided up and performed. People in diverse societies (or in the same society at different points in time) divide their tasks somewhat differently, based on their own history, physical environment, and level of technological development.

To explain social change, Durkheim categorized societies as having either mechanical or organic solidarity. *Mechanical solidarity* refers to the social cohesion of preindustrial societies, in which there is minimal division of labor and people feel united by shared values and common social bonds. Durkheim used the term *mechanical solidarity* because he believed that people in such preindustrial societies feel a more or less automatic sense of belonging. Social interaction is characterized by

▼ Compare these photos of Reno, Nevada, to see how this city has changed over time. From its origins as a town tied to the mining industry to a city that focuses on tourism, Reno is an example of how change in social structure affects individuals, families, and communities.

© Popperfoto/Getty Images

© Marvin E. Newman/Getty Images

face-to-face, intimate, primary-group relationships. Everyone is engaged in similar work, and little specialization is found in the division of labor.

Organic solidarity refers to the social cohesion found in industrial (and perhaps postindustrial)

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division of labor how the various tasks of a society are divided up and performed.

mechanical solidarity Emile Durkheim's term for the social cohesion in preindustrial societies, in which there is minimal division of labor and people feel united by shared values and common social bonds.

organic solidarity Emile Durkheim's term for the social cohesion found in industrial societies, in which people perform very specialized tasks and feel united by their mutual dependence.

- **Research:** Have the class explore the Beloit College Mindset List for their own and earlier years to get a better sense of the changes over time in world view and social structure among college students (**beloit.edu/mindset**).
- **Historical Perspective:** Adam Smith (*The Wealth of Nations*) pointed out that forcing individuals to perform mundane and repetitive tasks would lead to an ignorant, dissatisfied workforce.

For this reason he advanced the revolutionary belief that governments had an obligation to provide education to workers (Yousuf Dhamee, *The Victorian Web*).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

societies, in which people perform very specialized tasks and feel united by their mutual dependence. Durkheim chose the term *organic solidarity* because he believed that individuals in industrial societies come to rely on one another in much the same way that the organs of the human body function interdependently. Social interaction is less personal, more status oriented, and more focused on specific goals and objectives. People no longer rely on morality or shared values for social solidarity; instead, they are bound together by practical considerations.

Tönnies: *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*

Sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936) used the terms *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* to characterize the degree of social solidarity and social control found in societies. He was especially concerned about what happens to social solidarity in a society when a "loss of community" occurs.

The ***Gemeinschaft* (guh-MINE-shoft) is a traditional society in which social relationships are based on personal bonds of friendship and kinship and on intergenerational stability.** These relationships are based on ascribed rather than achieved status. In such societies, people have a commitment to the entire group and feel a sense of togetherness. Tönnies (1963/1887) used the German term *Gemeinschaft* because it means "commune" or "community"; social solidarity and social control are maintained by the community. Members have a strong sense of belonging, but they also have very limited privacy.

By contrast, the ***Gesellschaft* (guh-ZELL-shoft) is a large, urban society in which social bonds are based on impersonal and specialized relationships, with little long-term commitment to the group or consensus on values.** In such societies, most people are "strangers" who perceive that they have very little in common with most other people. Consequently, self-interest dominates, and little consensus exists regarding values. Tönnies (1963/1887) selected the German term *Gesellschaft* because it means "association"; relationships are based on achieved statuses, and interactions among people are both rational and calculated.

Industrial and Postindustrial Societies

Industrial societies are based on technology that mechanizes production. Take a look around you:

Most of what you see would not exist if it were not for industrialization. Cars, computers, electric lights, sound systems, cell phones, and virtually every other possession we own is a product of an industrial society.

In industrial societies, a large proportion of the population lives in or near cities. Large corporations and government bureaucracies grow in size and complexity. The nature of social life changes as people come to know one another more as statuses than as individuals. In fact, a person's occupation becomes a key defining characteristic in industrial societies, meaning that those people who are unemployed do not share the same status markers as those who have jobs.

The shift that has taken place toward a postindustrial society in the United States and some other high-income nations has produced new opportunities and problems. A ***postindustrial society* is one in which technology supports a service- and information-based economy.** Postindustrial societies are characterized by an *information explosion* and an economy in which large numbers of people either provide or apply information or are employed in service jobs (such as fast-food server or health care worker). For example, banking, law, and the travel industry are characteristic forms of employment in postindustrial societies, whereas producing steel or automobiles is representative of employment in industrial societies.

Postindustrial societies produce knowledge that becomes a commodity. This knowledge can be leased or sold to others, or it can be used to generate goods, services, or more knowledge. In the previous types of societies we have examined, machinery or raw materials are crucial to how the economy operates. In postindustrial societies, the economy is based on involvement with people and communications technologies such as the mass media, computers, and the Web. For example, recent information from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that 78 percent of all U.S. households have at least one computer and slightly over 60 percent have Internet access (see "Census Profiles: Computer and Internet Access in U.S. Households"). Some analysts refer to postindustrial societies as "service economies," based on the assumption that many workers provide services for others. Examples include home health care workers and airline flight attendants.

- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask your students to write a brief paragraph in which they differentiate between community and society, using this text as a starting point: "In community, people remain essentially united in spite of all separating factors, whereas in society they are essentially separated in spite of all uniting factors" (Ferdinand Tönnies).

- **Global Perspective:** "The odds are good that a refurbished cell phone in the pocket of a user in Bolivia, Jamaica, Kenya, Ukraine or Yemen originated with ReCellular Inc. Based in small-town Michigan, ReCellular gets 75,000 used phones a week—most collected in charity fundraisers—and refurbishes them for sale around the world" (Associated Press). Have students discuss this in light of the concept of industrial and postindustrial societies.

census profiles

Computer and Internet Access in U.S. Households

The U.S. Census Bureau collects extensive data on U.S. households in addition to the questions it used for Census 2000. For example, Current Population Survey data, collected from about 50,000 U.S. households during 2007, show an increase in the percentage of homes with computers and access to the Internet, as the figure illustrates.

Since 1984, the first year in which the Census Bureau collected data on computer ownership and use, there has been a vast increase in the percentage of households with computers.

Computers and Internet Access in the Home: 1984 to 2007
(civilian noninstitutional population)

- Percentage of households with a computer
- Percentage of households with Internet access

Year	Computer	Internet
1984	8.2	
1989	15.0	
1993	22.8	
1998	42.1	26.2
2000	51.0	41.5
2007	78.0	61.7
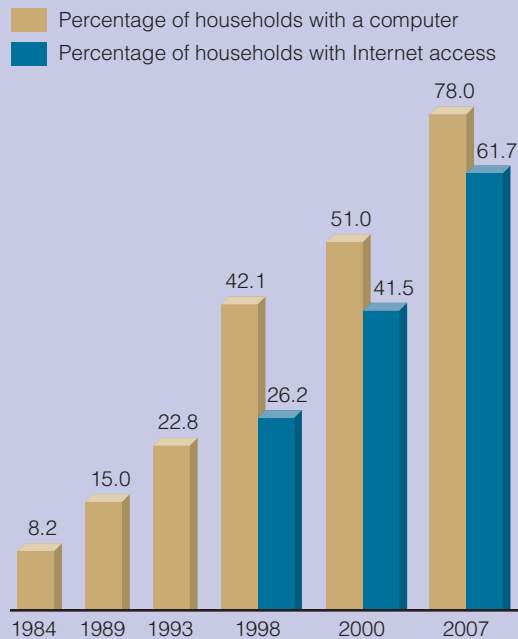
Note: Data on Internet access were not collected before 1997.

Sources: Newburger, 2001; U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

However, most of the new service occupations pay relatively low wages and offer limited opportunities for advancement.

Some sociological theories and research focus on the systematic examination of societies at the macrolevel, including the effects of the postindustrial economy on other social institutions; however, other approaches primarily use a microlevel perspective in their analysis of social interaction in contemporary societies.

Social Interaction: The Microlevel Perspective

So far in this chapter, we have focused on society and social structure from a macrolevel perspective, seeing how the structure of society affects the statuses we occupy, the roles we play, and the groups and organizations to which we belong. Functionalist and conflict perspectives provide a macrosociological overview because they concentrate on large-scale events and broad social features. By contrast, the symbolic interactionist perspective takes a microsociological approach, asking how social institutions affect our daily lives.

Social Interaction and Meaning

When you are with other people, do you often wonder what they think of you? If so, you are not alone! Because most of us are concerned about the meanings that others ascribe to our behavior, we try to interpret their words and actions so that we can plan how we will react toward them (Blumer, 1969). We

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Gemeinschaft (guh-MINE-shoft) a traditional society in which social relationships are based on personal bonds of friendship and kinship and on intergenerational stability.

Gesellschaft (guh-ZELL-shoft) a large, urban society in which social bonds are based on impersonal and specialized relationships, with little long-term commitment to the group or consensus on values.

industrial society a society based on technology that mechanizes production.

postindustrial society a society in which technology supports a service- and information-based economy.

- **Active Learning:** Ask students to work in small groups and brainstorm with the data presented in the Census Profiles on computer and Internet access. Create lists of benefits and disadvantages that this amount of technology and access to the Internet might have for our society.
- **Active Learning:** Conduct a civil inattention demonstration of sorts. Try to arrive in class before most students. Sit somewhere else in the room where students normally sit. Do not initiate conversation. Keep any responses short. Many students may actually practice a kind of civil inattention. You might ask a colleague to come to your class in the role of subject of the experiment to get a different reaction from students.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

know that others have expectations of us. We also have certain expectations about them. For example, if we enter an elevator that has only one other person in it, we do not expect that individual to confront us and stare into our eyes. As a matter of fact, we would be quite upset if the person did so.

Social interaction within a given society has certain shared meanings across situations. For instance, our reaction would be the same regardless of *which* elevator we rode in *which* building. Sociologist Erving Goffman (1961b) described these shared meanings in his observation about two pedestrians approaching each other on a public sidewalk. He noted that each will tend to look at the other just long enough to acknowledge the other's presence. By the time they are about eight feet away from each other, both individuals will tend to look downward. Goffman referred to this behavior as *civil inattention*—the ways in which an individual shows an awareness that another is present without making this person the object of particular attention. The fact that people engage in civil inattention demonstrates that interaction does have a pattern, or *interaction order,* which regulates the form and processes (but not the content) of social interaction.

Does everyone interpret social interaction rituals in the same way? No. Race/ethnicity, gender, and social class play a part in the meanings we give to our interactions with others, including chance encounters on elevators or the street. Our perceptions about the meaning of a situation vary widely based on the statuses we occupy and our unique personal experiences. For example, sociologist Carol Brooks Gardner (1989) found that women frequently do not perceive street encounters to be "routine" rituals. They fear for their personal safety and try to avoid comments and propositions that are sexual in nature. African Americans may also feel uncomfortable in street encounters. A middle-class African American college student described his experiences walking home at night from a campus job:

> So, even if you wanted to, it's difficult just to live a life where you don't come into conflict with others. . . . Every day that you live as a black person you're reminded how you're perceived in society. You walk the streets at night; white people cross the streets. I've seen white couples and individuals dart in front of cars to not be on the same side of

the street. Just the other day, I was walking down the street, and this white female with a child, I saw her pass a young white male about 20 yards ahead. When she saw me, she quickly dragged the child and herself across the busy street. . . . [When I pass,] white men tighten their grip on their women. I've seen people turn around and seem like they're going to take blows from me. . . . So, every day you realize [you're black]. Even though you're not doing anything wrong; you're just existing. You're just a person. But you're a black person perceived in an unblack world. (qtd. in Feagin, 1991: 111–112)

As this passage indicates, social encounters have different meanings for men and women, whites and people of color, and individuals from different social classes. Members of the dominant classes regard the poor, unemployed, and working class as less worthy of attention, frequently subjecting them to subtle yet systematic "attention deprivation" (Derber, 1983). The same can certainly be said about how members of the dominant classes "interact" with the homeless.

The Social Construction of Reality

If we interpret other people's actions so subjectively, can we have a shared social reality? Some symbolic interaction theorists believe that there is very little shared reality beyond that which is socially created. Symbolic interactionists refer to this as the *social construction of reality*—the process by which our perception of reality is largely shaped by the subjective meaning that we give to an experience (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). This meaning strongly influences what we "see" and how we respond to situations.

As discussed previously, our perceptions and behavior are influenced by how we initially define situations: We act on reality as we see it. Sociologists describe this process as the *definition of the situation,* meaning that we analyze a social context in which we find ourselves, determine what is in our best interest, and adjust our attitudes and actions accordingly. This process can result in a *self-fulfilling prophecy*—a false belief or prediction that produces behavior that makes the originally false belief come true (Merton, 1968). An example would be a person who has been told repeatedly that she or he is not a good student; eventually, this

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- **Extra Examples:** Provide students with further examples of self-fulfilling prophecies as exemplified in social class dynamics, racism, sexism, political misinformation, and even teacher/pupil interactions. Have them brainstorm some of their own.
- **Active Learning:** Ask student groups from social service clubs and organizations to send representatives or materials to your class to address issues related to homelessness. Ask students in class who

are involved in these kinds of programs to share with the class useful information about getting involved.
- **Sociological Imagination:** Challenge students to think critically about the ways that their own reality has been socially constructed. Provide several topics such as family, religion, success, or justice, and ask students to write a brief essay on how this reality has been constructed over the course of their lives.

▲ People can have sharply contrasting perceptions of the same reality.

person might come to believe it to be true, stop studying, and receive failing grades.

People may define a given situation in very different ways, a tendency demonstrated by the sociologist Jacqueline Wiseman (1970) in her study of "Pacific City's" skid row. She wanted to know how people who live or work on skid row (a run-down area found in all cities) felt about it. Wiseman found that homeless persons living on skid row evaluated it very differently from the social workers who dealt with them there. On the one hand, many of the social workers "saw" skid row as a smelly, depressing area filled with men who were "down-and-out," alcoholic, and often physically and mentally ill. On the other hand, the men who lived on skid row did not see it in such a negative light. They

social construction of reality the process by which our perception of reality is shaped largely by the subjective meaning that we give to an experience.

self-fulfilling prophecy the situation in which a false belief or prediction produces behavior that makes the originally false belief come true.

experienced some degree of satisfaction with their "bottle clubs [and a] remarkably indomitable and creative spirit"—at least initially (Wiseman, 1970: 18). As this study shows, we define situations from our own frame of reference, based on the statuses that we occupy and the roles that we play.

Dominant-group members with prestigious statuses may have the ability to establish how other people define "reality" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 109). Some sociologists have suggested that dominant groups, particularly higher-income white males in powerful economic and political statuses, perpetuate their own world view through ideologies that are frequently seen as "social reality." For example, the sociologist Dorothy E. Smith (1999) points out that the term "Standard North American Family" (meaning a heterosexual two-parent family) is an ideological code promulgated by the dominant group to identify how people's family life *should* be arranged. According to Smith (1999), this code plays a powerful role in determining how people in organizations such as the government and schools believe that a family should be. Likewise, the sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1998) argues that "reality" may be viewed differently by African American women and other historically oppressed groups when compared to the perspectives of dominant-group members. However, according to Collins (1998), mainstream, dominant-group members sometimes fail to realize how much they could learn about "reality" from "outsiders." As these theorists state, social reality and social structure are often hotly debated issues in contemporary societies.

Ethnomethodology

How do we know how to interact in a given situation? What rules do we follow? Ethnomethodologists are interested in the answers to these questions. **Ethnomethodology is the study of the commonsense knowledge that people use to understand the situations in which they find themselves** (Heritage, 1984: 4). Sociologist Harold Garfinkel (1967) initiated this approach and coined the term: *ethno* for "people" or "folk" and *methodology* for "a system of methods." Garfinkel was critical of mainstream sociology for not recognizing the ongoing

ways in which people create reality and produce their own world. Consequently, ethnomethodologists examine existing patterns of conventional behavior in order to uncover people's background expectancies—that is, their shared interpretation of objects and events, as well as their resulting actions. According to ethnomethodologists, interaction is based on assumptions of shared expectancies. For example, when you are talking with someone, what expectations do you have that you will take turns? Based on your background expectancies, would you be surprised if the other person talked for an hour and never gave you a chance to speak?

To uncover people's background expectancies, ethnomethodologists frequently break "rules" or act as though they do not understand some basic rule of social life so that they can observe other people's responses. In a series of *breaching experiments,* Garfinkel assigned different activities to his students to see how breaking the unspoken rules of behavior created confusion.

The ethnomethodological approach contributes to our knowledge of social interaction by making us aware of subconscious social realities in our daily lives. However, a number of sociologists regard ethnomethodology as a frivolous approach to studying human behavior because it does not examine the impact of macrolevel social institutions—such as the economy and education—on people's expectancies. Some scholars suggest that ethnomethodologists fail to do what they claim to do: look at how social realities are created. Rather, they take ascribed statuses (such as race, class, gender, and age) as "givens," not as *socially created* realities.

Dramaturgical Analysis

Erving Goffman suggested that day-to-day interactions have much in common with being on stage or in a dramatic production. *Dramaturgical analysis is the study of social interaction that compares everyday life to a theatrical presentation.* Members of our "audience" judge our performance and are aware that we may slip and reveal our true character (Goffman, 1959, 1963a). Consequently, most of us attempt to play our role as well as possible and to control the impressions we give to others.

- **Extra Examples:** "The procedure of deciding, before the actual occasion of choice, the conditions under which one among a set of possible alternative courses of action will be elected, is one definition of a rational strategy. It is worth noting that this rational property of the decision-making process in managing everyday affairs is conspicuous by its absence" (Harold Garfinkel). Unpack

this statement to help students think about the social construction of reality.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Active Learning:** Try some "breaching exercises" with your class, such as sitting on the floor while lecturing, or interrupting students when they speak. Help them see how properties of social life that

▲ Erving Goffman believed that people spend a great amount of time and effort managing the impression that they present. How do politicians use impression management as they seek to accomplish their goal of being elected to public office?

the other person (your "audience"). In one study, students who all received high grades ("Ace–Ace encounters") willingly talked with one another about their grades and sometimes engaged in a little bragging about how they had "aced" the test. However, encounters between students who had received high grades and those who had received low or failing grades ("Ace–Bomber encounters") were uncomfortable. The Aces felt as if they had to minimize their own grade. Consequently, they tended to attribute their success to "luck" and were quick to offer the Bombers words of encouragement. On the other hand, the Bombers believed that they had to praise the Aces and hide their own feelings of frustration and disappointment. Students who received low or failing grades ("Bomber–Bomber encounters") were more comfortable when they talked with one another because they could share their negative emotions. They often indulged in self-pity and relied on face-saving excuses (such as an illness or an unfair exam) for their poor performances (Albas and Albas, 1988).

In Goffman's terminology, **face-saving behavior refers to the strategies we use to rescue our performance when we experience a potential or actual loss of face.** When the Bombers made excuses for their low scores, they were engaged in face-saving; the Aces attempted to help them save face by asserting that the test was unfair or that it was only a

Impression management (presentation of self) refers to people's efforts to present themselves to others in ways that are most favorable to their own interests or image.

For example, suppose that a professor has returned graded exams to your class. Will you discuss the exam and your grade with others in the class? If you are like most people, you probably play your student role differently depending on whom you are talking to and what grade you received on the exam. Your "presentation" may vary depending on the grade earned by

ethnomethodology the study of the commonsense knowledge that people use to understand the situations in which they find themselves.

dramaturgical analysis the study of social interaction that compares everyday life to a theatrical presentation.

impression management (presentation of self) Erving Goffman's term for people's efforts to present themselves to others in ways that are most favorable to their own interests or image.

face-saving behavior Erving Goffman's term for the strategies we use to rescue our performance when we experience a potential or actual loss of face.

seem objective, factual, and transsituational are actually managed accomplishments or intersubjectively constructed.
- **Active Learning:** As students come into class, have them divide a paper down the middle and write down on the left side their front-stage actions over the past 24 hours. Next ask students to write down their backstage actions on the right side. When possible,

they should try and link the two sets of behaviors chronologically. Have volunteers share their results.
- **Historical Perspective:** "I think Dostoevsky was right, that every human must have a point at which he stands against the culture, where he says, this is me and the damned world can go to hell" (Rollo May). Why do you think it gets harder and harder for us to stand against our culture?

small part of the final grade. Why would the Aces and Bombers both participate in face-saving behavior? In most social interactions, all role players have an interest in keeping the "play" going so that they can maintain their overall definition of the situation in which they perform their roles.

Goffman noted that people consciously participate in *studied nonobservance,* a face-saving technique in which one role player ignores the flaws in another's performance to avoid embarrassment for everyone involved. Most of us remember times when we have failed in our role and know that it is likely to happen again; thus, we may be more forgiving of the role failures of others.

Social interaction, like a theater, has a front stage and a back stage. The *front stage* is the area where a player performs a specific role before an audience. The *back stage* is the area where a player is not required to perform a specific role because it is out of view of a given audience. For example, when the Aces and Bombers were talking with one another at school, they were on the "front stage." When they were in the privacy of their own residences, they were in "back stage" settings—they no longer had to perform the Ace and Bomber roles and could be themselves.

The need for impression management is most intense when role players have widely divergent or devalued statuses. As we have seen with the Aces and Bombers, the participants often play different roles under different circumstances and keep their various audiences separated from one another. If one audience becomes aware of other roles that a person plays, the impression being given at that time may be ruined. For example, people facing or experiencing homelessness are not only stigmatized but may also find that they lose the opportunity to get a job if their homelessness becomes known (see "Sociology Works!"). However, many homeless individuals do not passively accept the roles into which they are cast. For the most part, they attempt—as we all do—to engage in impression management in their everyday life.

The dramaturgical approach helps us think about the roles we play and the audiences who judge our presentation of self; however, this perspective has also been criticized for focusing on appearances and not the underlying substance. This approach may not place enough emphasis on the ways in which our everyday interactions with other people are influenced by occurrences within the larger society. For example, if some political leaders or social elites in a community deride homeless people by saying they are "lazy" or "unwilling to work," it may become easier for everyday people walking down a street to treat homeless individuals poorly. Overall, however, Goffman's dramaturgical analysis has been highly influential in the development of the sociology of emotions, an important area of contemporary theory and research.

The Sociology of Emotions

Why do we laugh, cry, or become angry? Are these emotional expressions biological or social in nature? To some extent, emotions are a biologically given sense (like hearing, smell, and touch), but they are also social in origin. We are socialized to feel certain emotions, and we learn how and when to express (or not express) those emotions (Hochschild, 1983).

How do we know which emotions are appropriate for a given role? Sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1983) suggests that we acquire a set of *feeling rules* that shapes the appropriate emotions for a given role or specific situation. These rules include how, where, when, and with whom an emotion should be expressed. For example, for the role of a mourner at a funeral, feeling rules tell us which emotions are required (sadness and grief, for example), which are acceptable (a sense of relief that the deceased no longer has to suffer), and which are unacceptable (enjoyment of the occasion expressed by laughing out loud) (see Hochschild, 1983: 63–68).

Feeling rules also apply to our occupational roles. For example, the truck driver who handles explosive cargos must be able to suppress fear. Although all jobs place some burden on our feelings, *emotional labor* occurs only in jobs that require personal contact with the public or the production of a state of mind (such as hope, desire, or fear) in others (Hochschild, 1983). With emotional labor, employees must display only certain carefully selected emotions. For example, flight attendants are required to act friendly toward passengers, to be helpful and open to requests, and to maintain an "omnipresent smile" in order to enhance the customers' status.

• **For Discussion:** What kinds of face-saving or impression-management tactics do your students think that people who are homeless must learn to use? Try and steer the discussion away from stereotypes and toward more thoughtful, constructive applications.
• **Extra Examples:** Ask your class to talk about some of the traditional occupations for women that required the type of work

Hochschild called "emotional labor." U.S. culture has moved into what some call a "service-oriented" economy. In what ways might our current economy increase the challenges for people providing emotional labor?

sociology works!

Goffman's Stigmatization Theory and Contemporary Homelessness

We need as a state and a community here in South Australia to stop blaming and stigmatizing people who are homeless. Any one of us could be homeless if the circumstances turned for us at any time and we need to recognize that.

> —Jo Wickes, a representative of Homelessness South Australia, emphasizing the importance of doing something to reduce homelessness in her country rather than merely stigmatizing those who are homeless (abc.net.au, 2008)

As we have seen in this chapter, homelessness carries a stigma like the ones sociologist Erving Goffman described in his important book, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity,* which was originally published in 1963. According to Goffman, a gap may exist between an individual's *virtual social identity*—what a person *ought* to be—and his or her *actual social identity*—what a person actually is. Having a permanent residence is considered to be normal, and individuals who fall outside the norm are stigmatized by those who are domiciled and view themselves as the mainstream group.

People who are visibly homeless are more likely to be stigmatized than those who make up the invisible homeless. Goffman identifies two types of stigma: (1) *discredited stigmas* are obvious to other people because the source of the stigma is visible (such as a person with a missing nose or other physical impairment), and (2) *discreditable stigmas* are not obvious to others and are not known or perceived by them. Homelessness is more visible in some cases than in others, and homeless persons must cope with the extent to which their situation is seen and known by others. When homelessness is highly visible, homeless individuals must manage the tension that occurs because others know of their problem. When homeless is not highly visible (for example, homeless persons who live in their cars or with relatives), the central concern of

these individuals is managing information so that others do not find out about their problem (Goffman, 1963b).

Current scholars studying problems associated with homelessness continue to find that Goffman's work on stigma is useful. According to Guy Johnson, an Australian scholar, "For people facing or experiencing homelessness, stigma is real in that they have to deal with the devalued identity attached to homelessness as much as they have to deal with shortages in the supply of affordable housing" (2006: 42). As a result of the stigma that is attached to homelessness, it is difficult for homeless people to reestablish a routine in everyday life. Some individuals who are homeless try to "pass" by acting like they have a place to live and by disassociating themselves with other homeless people. Others respond differently to stigma and instead embrace homelessness by becoming part of a subculture comprising homeless individuals who provide mutual support for one another (Johnson, 2006).

As we look at Goffman's ideas on stigma today, we find rich new opportunities for application of classical sociological insights to our understanding of pressing social problems such as homelessness. We can also hope that political and social leaders in various nations will seek to provide new pathways *out* of homelessness through innovative public policy rather than continuing to reinforce social structures that contribute to long-term homelessness and stigmatization for many people.

reflect & analyze

How might you apply Goffman's ideas about stigma to problems at your college or university? For example, would his analysis be useful in studying issues such as eating disorders or alcohol abuse among college students?

By contrast, bill collectors are encouraged to show anger and make threats to customers, thereby supposedly deflating the customers' status and wearing down their presumed resistance to paying past-due bills. In both jobs, the employees are expected to show feelings that are often not their true ones (Hochschild, 1983).

Social class and race are determinants in managed expression and emotion management. Emotional labor is emphasized in middle- and upper-class families. Because middle- and upper-class parents often work with people, they are more likely to teach their children the importance of emotional labor in their own careers than are working-class

- **Active Learning:** Ask students to write a proposal for a university-wide study, using the "Reflect & Analyze" questions from Sociology Works! Bring these back to class, and discuss them in small groups. Have the class vote on the most useful study and take steps toward implementing it.

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▲ Are there different gender-based expectations in the United States about the kinds of emotions that men, as compared with women, are supposed to show? What feeling rules shape the emotions of the men in these two roles?

parents, who tend to work with things, not people (Hochschild, 1983). Race is also an important factor in emotional labor. People of color spend much of their life engaged in emotional labor because racist attitudes and discrimination make it continually necessary to manage one's feelings.

Emotional labor may produce feelings of estrangement from one's "true" self. C. Wright Mills (1956) suggested that when we "sell our personality" in the course of selling goods or services, we engage in a seriously self-alienating process. In other words, the "commercialization" of our feelings may dehumanize our work role performance and create alienation and contempt that spill over into other aspects of our life (Hochschild, 1983; Smith and Kleinman, 1989).

Clearly, the sociology of emotions helps us understand the social context of our feelings and the relationship between the roles we play and the emotions we experience. However, it may overemphasize the cost of emotional labor and the emotional controls that exist outside the individual (Wouters, 1989).

Nonverbal Communication

In a typical stage drama, the players not only speak their lines but also use nonverbal communication to convey information. *Nonverbal communication is the transfer of information between persons without the use of words.* It includes not only visual cues (gestures, appearances) but also vocal features (inflection, volume, pitch) and environmental factors (use of space, position) that affect meanings (Wood, 1999). Facial expressions, head movements, body positions, and other gestures carry as much of the total meaning of our communication with others as our spoken words do (Wood, 1999).

Functions of Nonverbal Communication

We obtain first impressions of others from various kinds of nonverbal communication, such as the

- **For Discussion:** Ask your class to divide up by sex and then talk about nonverbal communication. What are examples of nonverbal communication used by the opposite sex to communicate interest? What are some gender-specific patterns of nonverbal communication that they can identify in their group?
- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students analyze this description in terms of gender and nonverbal communication: "Biden was

licking his lips a tremendous amount—it shows genuine emotion. It's the human side of him and the animal side of him. When you see someone purse their lips, that's a typical male response to choke back emotion. . . . It was good and genuine" (Greg Hartley, *I Can Read You Like a Book*).
- **Extra Examples:** Describe the relationship between gender socialization and how we learn the norms for touching. Connect

clothing they wear and their body positions. Head and facial movements may provide us with information about other people's emotional states, and others receive similar information from us (Samovar and Porter, 1991). Through our body posture and eye contact, we signal that we do or do not wish to speak to someone. For example, we may look down at the sidewalk or off into the distance when we pass homeless persons who look as if they are going to ask for money.

Nonverbal communication establishes the relationship among people in terms of their responsiveness to and power over one another (Wood, 1999). For example, we show that we are responsive toward or like another person by maintaining eye contact and attentive body posture and perhaps by touching and standing close. We can even express power or control over others through nonverbal communication. Goffman (1956) suggested that *demeanor* (how we behave or conduct ourselves) is relative to social power. People in positions of dominance are allowed a wider range of permissible actions than are their subordinates, who are expected to show deference. *Deference* is the symbolic means by which subordinates give a required permissive response to those in power; it confirms the existence of inequality and reaffirms each person's relationship to the other (Rollins, 1985).

Facial Expression, Eye Contact, and Touching

Deference behavior is important in regard to facial expression, eye contact, and touching. This type of nonverbal communication is symbolic of our relationships with others. Who smiles? Who stares? Who makes and sustains eye contact? Who touches whom? All these questions relate to demeanor and deference; the key issue is the status of the person who is doing the smiling, staring, or touching relative to the status of the recipient (Goffman, 1967).

Facial expressions, especially smiles and eye contact, also reflect gender-based patterns of dominance and subordination in society. Typically, white women have been socialized to smile and frequently do so even when they are not actually happy (Halberstadt and Saitta, 1987). Jobs held predominantly by women (including flight attendant, secretary, elementary schoolteacher, and nurse) are more closely associated with being pleasant and smiling than are "men's jobs." By contrast, men tend to

display less emotion through smiles or other facial expressions and instead seek to show that they are reserved and in control (Wood, 1999).

Women are more likely to sustain eye contact during conversations (but not otherwise) as a means of showing their interest in and involvement with others. By contrast, men are less likely to maintain prolonged eye contact during conversations but are more likely to stare at other people (especially men) in order to challenge them and assert their own status (Pearson, 1985).

Eye contact can be a sign of domination or deference. For example, in a participant observation study of domestic (household) workers and their employers, the sociologist Judith Rollins (1985) found that the domestics were supposed to show deference by averting their eyes when they talked to their employers. Deference also required that they present an "exaggeratedly subservient demeanor" by standing less erect and walking tentatively.

Touching is another form of nonverbal behavior that has many different shades of meaning. Gender and power differences are evident in tactile communication from birth. Studies have shown that touching has variable meanings to parents: Boys are touched more roughly and playfully, whereas girls are handled more gently and protectively (Condry, Condry, and Pogatshnik, 1983). This pattern continues into adulthood, with women touched more frequently than men. Sociologist Nancy Henley (1977) attributed this pattern to power differentials between men and women and to the nature of women's roles as mothers, nurses, teachers, and secretaries. Clearly, touching has a different meaning to women than to men. Women may hug and touch others to indicate affection and emotional support, but men are more likely to touch others to give directions, assert power, and express sexual interest (Wood, 1999). The "meaning" we give to touching is related to its "duration, intensity, frequency, and the body parts touching and being touched" (Wood, 1994: 162).

Personal Space

Physical space is an important component of nonverbal communication.

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nonverbal communication the transfer of information between persons without the use of speech.

▶ Nonverbal communication may be thought of as an international language. What message do you receive from the facial expression, body position, and gestures of each of these people? Is it possible to misinterpret these messages?

Anthropologist Edward Hall (1966) analyzed the physical distance between people speaking to each other and found the amount of personal space that people prefer varies from one culture to another. **Personal space is the immediate area surrounding a person that the person claims as private.** Our personal space is contained within an invisible boundary surrounding our body, much like a snail's shell. When others invade our space, we may retreat, stand our ground, or even lash out, depending on our cultural background (Samovar and Porter, 1991). ▶ Figure 4.5 illustrates differences in social distance rules between two contrasting cultures.

Age, gender, kind of relationship, and social class are important factors in the allocation of personal space. Power differentials between people (including adults and children, men and women, and dominant-group members and people of color)

are reflected in personal space and privacy issues. With regard to age, adults generally do not hesitate to enter the personal space of a child (Thorne, Kramarae, and Henley, 1983). Similarly, young children who invade the personal space of an adult tend to elicit a more favorable response than do older uninvited visitors (Dean, Willis, and la Rocco, 1976). The need for personal space appears to increase with age (Baxter, 1970; Aiello and Jones, 1971), although it may begin to decrease at about age forty (Heshka and Nelson, 1972).

> **personal space** the immediate area surrounding a person that the person claims as private.

Westerners and East Asian observers. Westerners tend to look at specific features on an individual's face such as the eyes and mouth whereas East Asian observers tend to focus on the nose or the centre of the face which allows a more general view of all the features. One possible cause of this could be that direct or excessive eye contact may be considered rude in East Asian cultures" (*Wired Science,* 8/2008).

- **For Discussion:** Draw a diagram of a men's public restroom with wall-mounted urinals. Draw five urinals mounted in a row. Indicate the position of men at various stations at the urinals, and let the males in your class tell where they would go upon entering. Point out that personal space is not something that is formally taught, yet is something that is uniformly experienced and enforced.
- **IRM:** Student Activities: Nonverbal Communication
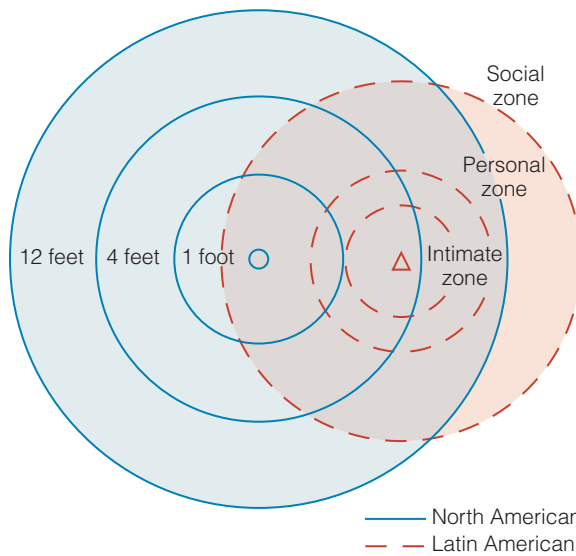
▲ **FIGURE 4.5** NORTH AMERICAN AND LATIN AMERICAN SOCIAL DISTANCE RULES

Source: Hiebert, 1983.

In sum, all forms of nonverbal communication are influenced by gender, race, social class, and the personal contexts in which they occur. Although it is difficult to generalize about people's nonverbal behavior, we still need to think about our own non-verbal communication patterns. Recognizing that

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▲ Have you ever watched how people react to one another in an elevator? How might we explain the lack of eye contact and the general demeanor of the individuals pictured here?

[concept quick review 4.1]

Social Interaction: The Microlevel Perspective

Social interaction and meaning	In a given society, forms of social interaction have shared meanings, although these may vary to some extent based on race/ethnicity, gender, and social class.
Social construction of reality	The process by which our perception of reality is largely shaped by the subjective meaning that we give to an experience.
Ethnomethodology	Studying the commonsense knowledge that people use to understand the situations in which they find themselves makes us aware of subconscious social realities in daily life.
Dramaturgical analysis	The study of social interaction that compares everyday life to a theatrical presentation. This approach includes impression management (people's efforts to present themselves favorably to others).
Sociology of emotions	We are socialized to feel certain emotions, and we learn how and when to express (or not express) them.
Nonverbal communication	The transfer of information between persons without the use of speech, such as by facial expressions, head movements, and gestures.

• **Table Note:** Use the Concept Quick Review. Put students into small groups, and ask them to provide examples for each concept.

you can make a difference

Offering a Helping Hand to Homeless People

When you pull up at an intersection and see a person holding a torn piece of cardboard with a handwritten sign on it, how do you react? Many of us shy away from chance encounters such as this because we know, without actually looking, that the sign says something like "Homeless, please help." In an attempt to avoid eye contact with the person on the street corner, we suddenly look with newfound interest at something lying on our car seat, or we check our appearance in the rearview mirror, or we adjust the radio. In fact, we do just about whatever it takes to divert our attention, making eye contact with this person impossible until the traffic light changes and we can be on our way.

Does this scenario sound familiar? Many of us see homeless individuals on street corners and elsewhere as we go about our daily routine. We are uncomfortable in their presence because we don't know what we can do to help them, or even if we should. Frequently, we hear media reports stating that some allegedly homeless people abuse the practice of asking for money on the streets and that many are faking injury or poverty so that they can take advantage of generous individuals. Stereotypes such as this are commonplace when some laypersons, members of the media, and politicians describe the homeless in America. But it is far from the entire picture: Many homeless people are in need of assistance, and many of the homeless are children, persons with disabilities, and people with other problems that make it difficult, if not impossible, for them to earn enough money to pay for housing in many cities.

Do all of these "big-picture" problems in our society mean that we have no individual responsibility to help homeless people? We do not necessarily have to hand money over to the person on the street to help individuals who are homeless. There are other, and perhaps even better, ways in which we can provide help to the homeless through our small acts of generosity and kindness.

In some communities, college students lead the way in helping homeless individuals and families. Some programs help homeless children by providing them with clothing, other basic necessities, and even school supplies so that the children will feel comfortable in a classroom setting. Still other college students work in, or run, homeless shelters in their communities. For example, Harvard University students, along with some city officials and church leaders in Cambridge, Massachusetts, created the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter in 1983 to address the housing needs of the area's poorest residents. Although it was hoped that the shelter would be a temporary project that would be rendered unnecessary when society recognized and dealt with its homeless problem, the shelter was still in existence in the 2000s. According to Alina Das, a former volunteer director at the shelter, "I have learned more about humanity and life within these walls than I have learned anywhere else. For students, the shelter is more than a place to stay . . . most important, we try to foster a sense of dignity" (qtd. in Powell, 2001).

As organizers of some college groups that seek to help the homeless have suggested, individuals without homes need food, clothing, and shelter, but they also need compassion and caring that extend beyond what most bureaucratic organizations can offer. Here are a few ways in which you and

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differences in social interaction exist is important. We should be wary of making value judgments—the differences are simply differences. Learning to understand and respect alternative styles of social interaction enhances our personal effectiveness by increasing the range of options we have for communicating with different people in diverse contexts and for varied reasons (Wood, 1999). (The Concept Quick Review summarizes the microlevel approach to social interaction.)

Changing Social Structure and Interaction in the Future

The social structure in the United States has been changing rapidly in recent decades. Currently, there are more possible statuses for persons to occupy and roles to play than at any other time in history. Although achieved statuses are considered very important, ascribed statuses still have a significant effect on people's options and opportunities.

- **U.S. Census:** Homeless Americans were counted in the 2000 Census. It is just unclear from the results how many there were. Officials are demanding that the Census Bureau say exactly how many homeless people it finds, instead of grouping them into a less-specific category called "other noninstitutionalized group quarters."

- **Historical Perspective:** In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, nearly 275,000 Gulf Coast residents were forced into group shelters. To provide more suitable and longer-term housing for those affected, FEMA began moving families into motel rooms. At its peak in October 2005, some 85,000 families were being provided transitional housing with hotel or motel rooms in more than 40

others at your school might help homeless individuals and families in your community:

- *Understand who the homeless are* so that you can help dispel the stereotypes often associated with homeless people. Learn what causes homelessness, and remember that each person's story is unique.
- *Buy a street newspaper sold by homeless persons if you live in an urban area where these newspapers are sold.* Newspapers produced and sold by homeless individuals have grown in number and circulation: Homeless persons receive a small amount for every paper they sell. Examples include *Street Roots* in Portland, Oregon; *Real Change* in Seattle, Washington; and *Street Sense* in Washington, D.C.
- *Give money, clothing, and/or recyclables to organizations that aid the homeless.* In addition to money or clean, usable clothing, recyclable cans and bottles are helpful because they can be turned into small sums of money for living expenses.
- *Volunteer at a shelter, soup kitchen, or battered women's shelter* where you can help staff and other volunteers meet the daily needs of people who are without shelter and food, as well as women and children who need assistance in getting away from abusive relationships with family members.
- *Look for campus organizations that work with the homeless,* or create your own and enlist friends and existing organizations (such as your service organization, sorority, or fraternity) to engage in community service projects that will benefit both the temporarily and permanently homeless.

For additional ways you can help the homeless, check with shelters in your area. You may also want to visit the websites of organizations such as the following:

- Just Give
  www.justgive.org
- The Doe Fund
  www.doe.org
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
  www.hud.gov/homeless

▲ A unique way that some college students recycle items they no longer want is to conduct a garage sale that benefits a local charity or community organization.

Courtesy of Gretchen Otto

Ironically, at a time when we have more technological capability, more leisure activities and types of entertainment, and more quantities of material goods available for consumption than ever before, many people experience high levels of stress, fear for their lives because of crime, and face problems such as homelessness. In a society that can send astronauts into space to perform complex scientific experiments, is it impossible to solve some of the problems that plague us here on Earth?

Individuals and groups often show initiative in trying to solve some of our pressing problems, at least on a local level (see an example in the You Can Make a Difference box). However, the future of this country rests on our collective ability to deal with major social problems at both the macrolevel and the microlevel of society.

states (**FEMA.gov**). Have students reflect on how events might produce homelessness in their own lives.
- **For Discussion:** Ask students to brainstorm and come up with a short list of what they consider to be the most socially significant events in their lifetimes. What kinds of social changes have these events brought about?
- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disk also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.

chapter review

● **How does social structure shape our social interactions?**

The stable patterns of social relationships within a particular society make up its social structure. Social structure is a macrolevel influence because it shapes and determines the overall patterns in which social interaction occurs. Social structure provides an ordered framework for society and for our inter-actions with others.

● **What are the main components of social structure?**

Social structure comprises statuses, roles, groups, and social institutions. A status is a specific posi-tion in a group or society and is characterized by certain expectations, rights, and duties. Ascribed statuses, such as gender, class, and race/ethnicity, are acquired at birth or involuntarily later in life. Achieved statuses, such as education and occupa-tion, are assumed voluntarily as a result of personal choice, merit, or direct effort. We occupy a status, but a role is the set of behavioral expectations asso-ciated with a given status. A social group consists of two or more people who interact frequently and share a common identity and sense of interdepen-dence. A formal organization is a highly structured group formed to complete certain tasks or achieve specific goals. A social institution is a set of orga-nized beliefs and rules that establishes how a society attempts to meet its basic needs.

● **What are the functionalist and conflict perspectives on social institutions?**

According to functionalist theorists, social institu-tions perform several prerequisites of all societies: replace members; teach new members; produce, distribute, and consume goods and services; pre-serve order; and provide and maintain a sense of purpose. Conflict theorists suggest that social institutions do not work for the common good of all individuals: Institutions may enhance and uphold the power of some groups but exclude others, such as the homeless.

● **How do societies maintain stability in times of social change?**

According to Emile Durkheim, although changes in social structure may dramatically affect individu-als and groups, societies manage to maintain some degree of stability. People in preindustrial societ-ies are united by mechanical solidarity because they have shared values and common social bonds. Industrial societies are characterized by organic solidarity, which refers to the cohesion that results when people perform specialized tasks and are united by mutual dependence.

● **How do *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* societies differ in social solidarity?**

According to Ferdinand Tönnies, the *Gemeinschaft* is a traditional society in which relationships are based on personal bonds of friendship and kinship and on intergenerational stability. The *Gesellschaft* is an urban society in which social bonds are based on impersonal and specialized relationships, with little group commitment or consensus on values.

● **What is the dramaturgical perspective?**

According to Erving Goffman's dramaturgical anal-ysis, our daily interactions are similar to dramatic productions. Presentation of self refers to efforts to present our own self to others in ways that are most favorable to our interests or self-image.

● **Why are feeling rules important?**

Feeling rules shape the appropriate emotions for a given role or specific situation. Our emotions are not always private, and specific emotions may be demanded of us on certain occasions.

key terms

achieved status 108	**dramaturgical analysis** 126	**formal organization** 116
ascribed status 108	**ethnomethodology** 126	*Gemeinschaft* 122
division of labor 121	**face-saving behavior** 127	*Gesellschaft* 122

● **CourseMate:** The Sociology CourseMate for this text gives your students access to an interactive ebook, flashcards, video, and other study and learning tools, including quizzes that provide immediate feedback. It's easiest for students to log in at **www.cengagebrain.com**.

questions for critical thinking

1. Think of a person you know well who often irritates you or whose behavior grates on your nerves (it could be a parent, friend, relative, teacher). First, list that person's statuses and roles. Then analyze the person's possible role expectations, role performance, role conflicts, and role strains. Does anything you find in your analysis help to explain the irritating behavior? How helpful are the concepts of social structure in analyzing individual behavior?

2. You are conducting field research on gender differences in nonverbal communication styles. How are you going to account for variations among age, race, and social class?

3. When communicating with other genders, races, and ages, is it better to express and acknowledge different styles or to develop a common, uniform style?

turning to video

Watch the ABC video *On the Run: Humanity on the Run from California Wildfires* (running time 2:53), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video is about the 2007 Southern California wildfires that led to people being evacuated from their homes, and focuses on people forced to live together at a football stadium and organize their own community. As you watch the video, think about what has been or could be your own experience in a natural disaster—or a less extreme situation that required you to adapt to a new routine or to live with strangers. After you've watched the video, consider these questions: How long did it take or do you think it would take for you to feel "at home" in the temporary situation? What happened or would need to happen for you to feel at home?

Go to CENGAGE**brain**.com to access online homework and study resources such as Aplia or CourseMate, which include a searchable, interactive eBook version of the text and more!

- If you are a returning user, log in at **CengageBrain.com** and go to your **My Home** page.
- If you are a first-time user, the site will walk you through the registration process to redeem your access code.
- Alternatively, you may search by this book's title to locate its complimentary resources.

Groups and Organizations

Okay, I think I'll share why Facebook works for me and keeps me coming back. . . . Since college is fairly dynamic (new classes every quarter), a directory of friends and students remains very dynamic and gives me a reason to come back (to see how friends are doing and what classes they are taking). Also it is cool to look up people you have in class and see what they are interested in. . . .

—a Washington state college student discussing why he uses Facebook, which has more than 400 million users on the Internet (Linden, 2005)

The bigger question is really one about the term "friend" as it's used nowadays and how does that translate. . . . Why? There are many people who have added me as a friend via various social networks (but most notably Facebook) that don't know

me that well at all. The window into my world that it provides probably makes more sense to those that have known me for some time compared to those who've only heard my name or who've made the passing connection in person. They know only what they see of me via status updates and tweets. . . . These virtual glimpses allow for there to be less awkwardness when you meet in person or talk on the telephone, but is it really a friendship? . . . It had me doing a lot of thinking, particularly about whom I consider a friend, especially since most people know me only through that sliver that is posted online for all to see. Our virtual windows continue to open

AP Images/L.G.Patterson

▲ **Have Facebook and other networking websites influenced our social interactions and group participation? Why are face-to-face encounters in groups and organizations still important in everyday life?**

wider to the rest of the world every day. Do we need to think about whom we allow in so that we are being true to ourselves?

—Andre, a freelance writer who posts "Dre's Ramblings" online, explaining his mixed feelings about using the term *friends,* rather than *connections* or *acquaintances,* for people with whom he communicates on Facebook and other social networking sites (dresramblings.com, 2010)

Chapter Focus Question

Why is it important for groups and organizations to enhance communication among participants and improve the flow of information while protecting the privacy of individuals?

According to sociologists, we need groups and organizations—just as we need culture and socialization—to live and participate in a society. Historically, the basic premise of groups and organizations was that individuals engage in face-to-face interactions in order to be part of such a group; however, millions of people today communicate with others through the Internet, cell phones, and other forms of information technology that make it possible for them to "talk" with individuals they have never met and who may live thousands of miles away. A variety of networking websites, including Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Twitter, now compete with, or in some cases replace, live, person-to-person communications. For many college students, Facebook has become a fun way to get to know other people, to join online groups with similar interests or activities, and to plan "real-life" encounters. Despite the wealth of information and opportunities for new social connections that such websites offer, many of our daily activities require that we participate in social groups and formal organizations where *face-time*—time spent interacting with others on a face-to-face basis, rather than via Internet or cell phone—is necessary.

What do social groups and formal organizations mean to us in an age of rapid telecommunications?

What is the relationship between information and social organizations in societies such as ours? How can we balance the information that we provide to other people about us with our own right to privacy and need for security? These questions are of interest to sociologists who seek to apply the sociological imagination to their studies of social groups, bureaucratic organizations, social networking, and virtual communities. Before we take a closer look at groups and organizations, take the quiz in the Sociology and Everyday Life box on issues pertaining to personal privacy in groups and organizations.

> **In this chapter**
> - Social Groups
> - Group Characteristics and Dynamics
> - Formal Organizations in Global Perspective
> - Alternative Forms of Organization
> - Organizations in the Future

Social Groups

Three strangers are standing at a street corner waiting for a traffic light to change. Do they constitute a group? Five hundred women and men are first-year graduate students at a university. Do they constitute a group? In everyday usage, we use the word *group* to mean any collection of people. According to sociologists, however, the answer to these questions is no; individuals who happen to share a common

feature or to be in the same place at the same time do not constitute social groups.

Groups, Aggregates, and Categories

As we saw in Chapter 4, a *social group* is a collection of two or more people who interact frequently with one another, share a sense of belonging, and have a feeling of interdependence. Several people waiting for a traffic light to change constitute an ***aggregate—a collection of people who happen to be in the same place at the same time but share little else in common.*** Shoppers in a department store and passengers on an airplane flight are also examples of aggregates. People in aggregates share a common purpose (such as purchasing items or arriving at their destination) but generally do not interact with one another, except perhaps briefly. The first-year graduate students, at least initially, constitute a ***category—a number of people who may never have met one another but share a similar characteristic (such as education level, age, race, or gender).*** Men and women make up categories, as do Native Americans and Latinos/as, and victims of sexual or racial harassment. Categories are not social groups because the people in them do not usually create a social structure or have anything in common other than a particular trait.

Occasionally, people in aggregates and categories form social groups. For instance, people within the category known as "graduate students" may become an aggregate when they get together for an orientation to graduate school. Some of them may form social groups as they interact with one another in classes and seminars, find that they have mutual interests and concerns, and develop a sense of belonging to the group. Information technology raises new and interesting questions about what constitutes a group. For example, some people question whether we can form a social group on the Internet (see the Framing "Community" in the Media box).

Types of Groups

As you will recall from Chapter 4, groups have varying degrees of social solidarity and structure. This structure is flexible in some groups and more rigid in others. Some groups are small and personal;

others are large and impersonal. We more closely identify with the members of some groups than we do with others.

Cooley's Primary and Secondary Groups

Sociologist Charles H. Cooley (1963/1909) used the term *primary group* to describe a small, less specialized group in which members engage in face-to-face, emotion-based interactions over an extended period of time. We have primary relationships with other individuals in our primary groups—that is, with our *significant others,* who frequently serve as role models.

In contrast, you will recall, a *secondary group* is a larger, more specialized group in which the members engage in more impersonal, goal-oriented relationships for a limited period of time. The size of a secondary group may vary. Twelve students in a graduate seminar may start out as a secondary group but eventually become a primary group as they get to know one another and communicate on a more personal basis. Formal organizations are secondary groups, but they also contain many primary groups within them. For example, how many primary groups do you think there are within the secondary-group setting of your college?

Sumner's Ingroups and Outgroups
All groups set boundaries by distinguishing between insiders who are members and outsiders who are not. Sociologist William Graham Sumner (1959/1906) coined the terms *ingroup* and *outgroup* to describe people's feelings toward members of their own and other groups. An ***ingroup* is a group to which a person belongs and with which the person feels a sense of identity.** An ***outgroup* is a group to which a person does not belong and toward which the person may feel a sense of competitiveness or hostility.** Distinguishing between our ingroups and our outgroups helps us establish our individual identity and self-worth. Likewise, groups are solidified by ingroup and outgroup distinctions; the presence of an enemy or a hostile group binds members more closely together (Coser, 1956).

Group boundaries may be formal, with clearly defined criteria for membership. For example, a country club that requires an applicant for membership to be recommended by four current members

- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disk provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint slides, videos, PowerPoint and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** Ask students to create a list of all the groups to which they are members. How many students are members of

virtual communities online? Ask students to share these kinds of experiences and the motivations for joining these kinds of groups.
- **For Discussion:** What makes primary groups most effective as sources of identity development? "Institutions—government, churches, industries, and the like—have properly no other function than to contribute to human freedom; and in so far as they fail,

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Privacy in Groups and Organizations?

True	False	
T	F	1. A college student's privacy is protected when using a school-owned computer as long as he or she deletes from the computer all e-mails or other documents he or she has worked on and thus prevents anyone else from examining those documents.
T	F	2. Parents of students at all U.S. colleges and universities are entitled to obtain a transcript of their children's college grades, regardless of the student's age.
T	F	3. If you work for a business that monitors phone calls with a pen register, your employer has the right to maintain and examine a list of phone numbers dialed by your extension and how long each call lasted.
T	F	4. Members of a high school football team can be required to submit to periodic, unannounced drug testing.
T	F	5. A company has the right to keep its employees under video surveillance anywhere at the company's place of business—even in the restrooms.
T	F	6. A professor can legally post students' grades in public, using the student's Social Security number as an identifier, as long as the student's name does not appear with the number.
T	F	7. Students at a church youth-group meeting who hear one member of the group confess to an illegal act can be required to divulge what that member said.
T	F	8. If you apply for a job at a company that has more than 25 employees, your employer can require that you provide a history of your medical background or take a physical examination prior to offering you a job.

Answers on page 142.

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and to pay a $50,000 initiation fee has clearly set requirements for its members (see "Sociology Works!" on p.144). However, group boundaries are not always that formal. For example, friendship groups usually do not have clear guidelines for membership; rather, the boundaries tend to be very informal and vaguely defined.

Ingroup and outgroup distinctions may encourage social cohesion among members, but they may also promote classism, racism, sexism, and ageism. Ingroup members typically view themselves positively and members of outgroups negatively. These feelings of group superiority, or *ethnocentrism,* are somewhat inevitable. However, members of some groups feel more free than others to act on their beliefs. If groups are embedded in larger groups and organizations, the large organization may discourage such beliefs and their consequences (Merton, 1968). Conversely, organizations may covertly foster these ingroup/outgroup distinctions by denying their existence or by failing to take action when misconduct occurs.

Reference Groups Ingroups provide us not only with a source of identity but also with a point of reference. A *reference group* is a group that strongly influences a person's behavior and social attitudes, regardless of whether that individual

> **aggregate** a collection of people who happen to be in the same place at the same time but share little else in common.
>
> **category** a number of people who may never have met one another but share a similar characteristic, such as education level, age, race, or gender.
>
> **ingroup** a group to which a person belongs and with which the person feels a sense of identity.
>
> **outgroup** a group to which a person does not belong and toward which the person may feel a sense of competitiveness or hostility.
>
> **reference group** a group that strongly influences a person's behavior and social attitudes, regardless of whether that individual is an actual member.

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on the whole, to perform this function, they are wrong and need reconstruction" (Charles Horton Cooley).

- **For Discussion:** Ask students this question: Why do all groups set boundaries between insiders and outsiders? Do you feel more valued in a group that selectively chooses its members?

- **Media Coverage:** *The Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg Poll reports that 34 percent of Americans say that they would vote for a Muslim candidate for president, while 53 percent say they would not. Sixty-five percent say they would vote for an evangelical Christian candidate, while 22 percent would not. Have students discuss these results in terms of ingroups and outgroups.

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Privacy

1. **False.** Deleting an e-mail or other document from a computer does not actually remove it from the computer's memory. Until other files are entered that write over the space where the document was located, experts can retrieve the document that was deleted.

2. **False.** The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act, which allows parents of a student under age 18 to obtain their child's grades, requires the student's consent once he or she has attained age 18; however, that law applies only to institutions that receive federal educational funds.

3. **True.** Telephone numbers called from a company's phone extensions can be recorded on a pen register, and this information can be used by the employer in evaluating the amount of time you have spent talking with clients—or with other people.

4. **True.** The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that schools may require students to submit to random drug testing as a condition of participating in extracurricular activities such as sports teams, the school band, the future homemakers' club, the cheerleading squad, and the choir.

5. **False.** An employer may not engage in video surveillance of its employees in situations where they have a reasonable right of privacy. At least in the absence of a sign warning of such surveillance, employees have such a right in company restrooms.

6. **False.** The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act states that Social Security numbers are considered to be "personally identifiable information" that may not be released without written consent from the student. Posting grades by Social Security number violates this provision unless the student has consented to the number being disclosed to others.

7. **True.** Although confidential communications made privately to a minister, priest, rabbi, or other religious leader (or to an individual the person reasonably believes to hold such a position) generally cannot be divulged without the consent of the person making the communication, this does not apply when other people are present who are likely to hear the statement.

8. **False.** The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits employers in companies with more than 25 employees from asking job applicants about medical information or requiring a physical examination prior to employment.

is an actual member. When we attempt to evaluate our appearance, ideas, or goals, we automatically refer to the standards of some group. Sometimes, we will refer to our membership groups, such as family or friends. Other times, we will rely on groups to which we do not currently belong but that we might wish to join in the future, such as a social club or a profession.

Reference groups help explain why our behavior and attitudes sometimes differ from those of our membership groups. We may accept the values and norms of a group with which we identify rather than one to which we belong. We may also act more like members of a group we want to join than members of groups to which we already belong. In this case, reference groups are a source of anticipatory socialization. For most of us, our reference-group attachments change many times during our life course, especially when we acquire a new status in a formal organization.

Group Characteristics and Dynamics

What purpose do groups serve? Why are individuals willing to relinquish some of their freedom to participate in groups? According to functionalists, people form groups to meet instrumental and expressive needs. *Instrumental*, or task-oriented, needs cannot always be met by one person, so the

- **For Discussion:** Have students consider how ingroup and outgroup distinctions might promote members' biases based on class, race, ethnicity, gender, or age.
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss what kinds of reference groups college students typically have. What do they consider to be their most important reference group? Why?

- **Active Learning:** "The American city should be a collection of communities where every member has a right to belong. It should be a place where every man feels safe on his streets and in the house of his friends. It should be a place where each individual's dignity and self-respect is strengthened by the respect and affection

framing "community" in the media

"Virtual Communities" on the Internet

Meeting new friends,
Imagining smiles . . .
Across the networks
Spanning the miles. . . .

From all walks of life
We come to the net.
A community of friends
Who have never met.
—from "Thoughts of Internet Friendships" by Jamie
Wilkerson (1996)

As this excerpt from a poem posted on the Internet suggests, many people believe that they can make new friends and establish a community online. We are encouraged to establish such friendships by joining chat groups maintained by various Internet service providers. Chat groups are framed as a public service offered as part of the fee a subscriber pays for an Internet connection. To participate, people fill out a profile listing their hobbies and interests so that they can be matched with other participants. Many people hope to become part of the larger Internet community, which has been described as "a body of people looking for similar information, dealing with similar conditions, and abiding by the same general rules" (thewritemarket.com, 2003).

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▲ Chatrooms and other forms of communication on the Internet are extremely popular with millions of people; however, some sociologists question whether we can actually form social groups and true communities on the Internet. Is cyber chat that different from our face-to-face interactions with others?

Although chat groups are framed as a new way to make friends, get dates, and establish a cyber community, as you study sociology you might ask whether this form of "community" is actually a true community. Because sociologists define a *social group* as a collection of two or more people who interact frequently with one another, share a sense of belonging, and have a feeling of interdependence, this definition suggests that people must have a sense of place (be in the same place at the same time at least part of the time) in order to establish a true social group or community. However, this definition was developed before the Internet provided people with the rapid communications that link them with others around the world today. Are we able to form groups and establish communities with people whom we have never actually met?

Some social scientists believe that virtual communities established on the Internet constitute true communities (see Wellman, 2001). However, the sociologists Robyn Bateman Driskell and Larry Lyon examined existing theories and research on this topic and concluded that true communities cannot be established in the digital environment of cyberspace. According to Driskell and Lyon, although the Internet provides us with the opportunity to share interests with others whom we have not met and to communicate with people we already know, the original concept of community, which "emphasized local place, common ties, and social interaction that is intimate, holistic, and all-encompassing," is lacking (Driskell and Lyon, 2002: 6). Virtual communities on the Internet do not have geographic and social boundaries, are limited in their scope to specific areas of interest, are psychologically detached from close interpersonal ties, and have only limited concern for their "members" (Driskell and Lyon, 2002). In fact, if we spend many hours in social isolation doing impersonal searches for information, the Internet may *reduce* community rather than enhance it. Even so, it is possible that the Internet will create a "weak community replacement" for people based on a virtual community of specialized ties developed by e-mail correspondence and chat-room discussions (Driskell and Lyon, 2002).

reflect & analyze

Have you had opportunities to gain new friends and build "community" on the Internet? What are the strengths and limitations of virtual communications?

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of his neighbors. It should be a place where each of us can find the satisfaction and warmth which comes from being a member of the community of man" (President Lyndon Baines Johnson). Have students discuss what it would take to create such a city.
• **IRM:** See Wadsworth's Sociology Readings Collection, Patricia Adler and Peter Adler: "Clique Dynamics."

• **Writing Assignment:** Ask students to read the Framing "Community" in the Media box and respond to the assertion presented by Driskell and Lyon: that online communities are not real social communities. Do they think that chat groups are accurately framed in descriptions by Internet service providers, or are they overrated to potential participants?
• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

sociology works!

Ingroups, Outgroups, and "Members Only" Clubs

In this country we have a God-given right to associate with whomever we please. And frankly, this includes my right to *not* associate with people I don't want to. If I don't want to be around somebody, why should I have to let them in my club? Let them go start their own club.

> —Phil, a white, male attorney who is a member of several prestigious private clubs, explaining why he believes he has the right to establish his own ingroup through private club memberships (qtd. in Kendall, 2008)

A key characteristic of the city clubs and country clubs where Phil is a member is that each organization has formal group boundaries, with people becoming members "by invitation only." In other words, prospective members must be nominated by current members and be voted into the club: They cannot simply decide to join the organization. For this reason, people who are invited to join typically feel special (like "insiders") because they know that club membership is not available to everyone. Club members such as Phil often develop *consciousness of kind*—a term used by sociologists to describe the awareness that individuals may have when they

believe that they share important commonalities with certain other people. Consciousness of kind is strengthened by membership in clubs ranging from country clubs to college sororities, fraternities, and other by-invitation-only university social clubs. Members of ingroups typically share strong feelings of consciousness of kind and believe that they have little in common with people in the outgroup.

Recent studies on private clubs and exclusive college social organizations show that the sociological concepts of "ingroup" and "outgroup" remain highly relevant today when we conduct research on the processes of inclusion and exclusion to learn more about how such activities affect individuals and groups (see Kendall, 2008). Most of us are aware that our ingroups are very important to us: They provide us with a unique sense of identity, but they also give us the ability to exclude those individuals whom we do not want in our inner circle of friends and acquaintances. The early sociologist Max Weber captured this idea in his description of the *closed relationship*—a setting in which the "participation of certain persons is excluded, limited, or subjected to conditions" (Gerth and Mills, 1946: 139). Exclusive clubs typically have signs

group works cooperatively to fulfill a specific goal. Groups help members do jobs that are impossible to do alone or that would be very difficult and time-consuming at best. For example, think of how hard it would be to function as a one-person football team or to single-handedly build a skyscraper. In addition to instrumental needs, groups also help people meet their *expressive,* or emotional, needs, especially those involving self-expression and support from family, friends, and peers.

Although not disputing that groups ideally perform such functions, conflict theorists suggest that groups also involve a series of power relationships whereby the needs of individual members may not be equally served. Symbolic interactionists focus on how the size of a group influences the kind of interaction that takes place among members. To many postmodernists, groups and organizations—like other aspects of postmodern societies—are generally characterized by superficiality and depthlessness

in social relationships (Jameson, 1984). One postmodern thinker who focuses on this issue is the literary theorist Fredric Jameson, who believes that people experience a waning of emotion in organizations where fragmentation and superficiality are a way of life (Ritzer, 1997). For example, fast-food restaurant employees and customers interact in extremely superficial ways that are largely scripted: The employees follow scripts in taking and filling customers' orders ("Would you like fries and a drink with that?"), and the customers respond with their own "recipied" action. According to the sociologist George Ritzer (1997: 226), "[C]ustomers are mindlessly following what they consider tried-and-true social recipes, either learned or created by them previously, on how to deal with restaurant employees and, more generally, how to work their way through the system associated with the fast-food restaurant."

We will now look at certain characteristics of groups, such as how size affects group dynamics.

- **For Discussion:** Divide students into teams, and have them create lists of instrumental and expressive needs that each student has experienced. Put these lists on the board, and then have the class match specific groups (formal and informal) to both sets of needs.
- **IRM:** Lecture Ideas: Reference Groups
- **Table Note:** Sociology Works! Have students research "members only" clubs on campus and in their communities. Through

interviews and research, they should try to determine what motivates members to join.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Applied Sociology:** Challenge your class to start having unscripted, human social interactions with service-industry workers they come into contact with during the day. Have them

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▲ Sometimes, the distinction between what constitutes an ingroup and an outgroup is subtle. Other times, it is not subtle at all. Would you feel comfortable entering either of these establishments if you were not a member?

posted on gates, fences, or buildings that state "Members Only." These organizations do not welcome outsiders within their walls, and members are often pledged to loyalty and secrecy about their club's activities. Similarly, many college fraternities and sororities thrive on rituals, secrecy, and the importance of what it means to pledge—to have accepted a bid to join but not having yet been initiated into—the group of one's choice (Robbins, 2004: 342).

reflect & analyze

What areas of sociological research or personal interest can you think of that might benefit from applying the ingroup/outgroup concept to your analysis? How might these concepts be applied to other areas of college life beside invitational social organizations?

Group Size

The size of a group is one of its most important features. Interactions are more personal and intense in a *small group,* **a collectivity small enough for all members to be acquainted with one another and to interact simultaneously.**

Sociologist Georg Simmel (1950/1902–1917) suggested that small groups have distinctive interaction patterns that do not exist in larger groups. According to Simmel, in a *dyad*—**a group composed of two members**—the active participation of both members is crucial to the group's survival. If one member withdraws from interaction or "quits," the group ceases to exist. Examples of dyads include two people who are best friends, married couples, and domestic partnerships. Dyads provide members with an intense bond and a sense of unity not found in most larger groups.

When a third person is added to a dyad, **a** *triad,* **a group composed of three members,** is formed. The nature of the relationship and interaction patterns changes with the addition of the third person. In a triad, even if one member ignores another or declines to participate, the group can still function. In addition, two members may unite to create a coalition that can subject the third member to group pressure to conform. A *coalition* is an alliance created in an attempt to reach a shared objective or goal. If two members form a coalition, the other member may be seen as an outsider or intruder.

small group a collectivity small enough for all members to be acquainted with one another and to interact simultaneously.

dyad a group composed of two members.

triad a group composed of three members.

report back and compare their interactions to the ones that Jameson describes.
- **IRM:** Student Activities: Ask students to observe group size in their interactions for a week. How often do they find themselves in dyads? In triads? In larger groups? Do communication patterns change as more people join the group? Is there truth to the adage that "two's company; three's a crowd"?

- **Extra Examples:** Present the ideas of Georg Simmel as they relate to social groups. Simmel's social geometry addresses the significance of numbers for social life. A website with a summary of Simmel's essay, "Quantitative Aspects of the Group," can be found at **www.socio.ch/sim/work.htm**.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

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◄ According to the sociologist Georg Simmel, interaction patterns change when a third person joins a dyad—a group composed of two members. How might the conversation between these two women change when another person arrives to talk with them?
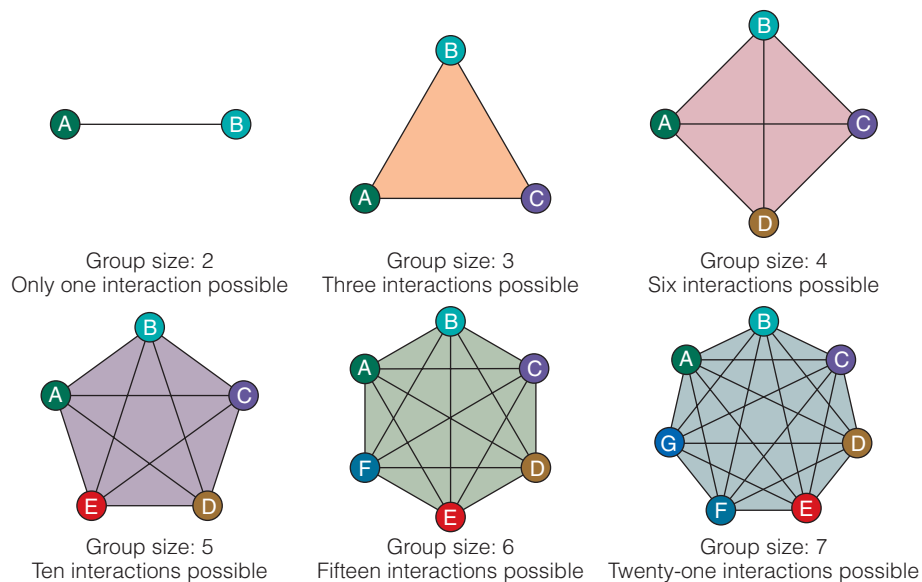
As the size of a group increases beyond three people, members tend to specialize in different tasks, and everyday communication patterns change. For instance, in groups of more than six or seven people, it becomes increasingly difficult for everyone to take part in the same conversation; therefore, several

conversations will probably take place simultaneously. Members are also likely to take sides on issues and form a number of coalitions. In groups of more than ten or twelve people, it becomes virtually impossible for all members to participate in a single conversation unless one person serves as moderator and guides the discussion. As shown in ▶ Figure 5.1, when the size of the group increases, the number of possible social interactions also increases.

Although large groups typically have less social solidarity than small ones, they may have more power. However, the relationship between size and power is more complicated than it might initially seem. The power relationship depends on both a group's *absolute* size and its *relative* size (Simmel, 1950/1902–1917; Merton, 1968). The absolute size is the number of members the group actually has; the relative size is the number of potential members. For example, suppose that 300 people band together to "march on Washington" and demand enactment of a law on some issue that they feel is important. Although 300 people is a large number in some contexts, opponents of this group would argue that the low turnout (compared with the number of people in this country) demonstrates that most people don't

Group size: 2
Only one interaction possible

Group size: 3
Three interactions possible

Group size: 4
Six interactions possible

Group size: 5
Ten interactions possible

Group size: 6
Fifteen interactions possible

Group size: 7
Twenty-one interactions possible

◄ **FIGURE 5.1** GROWTH OF POSSIBLE SOCIAL INTERACTION BASED ON GROUP SIZE

• **Active Learning:** "A dyad depends on each of its two elements alone—in its death though not in its life: for its life it needs both, but for its death, only one" (Georg Simmel). Have the class rewrite this statement in their own words.

believe the issue is important. At the same time, the power of a small group to demand change may be based on a "strength in numbers" factor if the group is seen as speaking on behalf of a large number of other people (who are also voters).

Larger groups typically have more formalized leadership structures. Their leaders are expected to perform a variety of roles, some related to the internal workings of the group and others related to external relationships with other groups.

Group Leadership

What role do leaders play in groups? Leaders are responsible for directing plans and activities so that the group completes its task or fulfills its goals. Primary groups generally have informal leadership. For example, most of us do not elect or appoint leaders in our own families. Various family members may assume a leadership role at various times or act as leaders for specific tasks. In traditional families, the father or eldest male is usually the leader. However, in today's more diverse families, leadership and power are frequently in question, and power relationships may be quite different, as discussed later in this text. By comparison, larger groups typically have more formalized leadership structures. For example, leadership in secondary groups (such as colleges, governmental agencies, and corporations) involves a clearly defined chain of command, with written responsibilities assigned to each position in the organizational structure.

Leadership Functions
Both primary and secondary groups have some type of leadership or positions that enable certain people to be leaders, or at least to wield power over others. From a functionalist perspective, if groups exist to meet the instrumental and expressive needs of their members, then leaders are responsible for helping the group meet those needs. *Instrumental leadership is goal or task oriented;* this type of leadership is most appropriate when the group's purpose is to complete a task or reach a particular goal. *Expressive leadership provides emotional support for members;* this type of leadership is most appropriate when the group is dealing with emotional issues, and harmony, solidarity, and high morale are needed. Both kinds of leadership are needed for groups to work effectively.

Leadership Styles
Three major styles of leadership exist in groups: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. *Authoritarian leaders* make all major group decisions and assign tasks to members. These leaders focus on the instrumental tasks of the group and demand compliance from others. In times of crisis, such as a war or natural disaster, authoritarian leaders may be commended for their decisive actions. In other situations, however, they may be criticized for being dictatorial and for fostering intergroup hostility. By contrast, *democratic leaders* encourage group discussion and decision making through consensus building. These leaders may be praised for their expressive, supportive behavior toward group members, but they may also be blamed for being indecisive in times of crisis.

Laissez-faire literally means "to leave alone." *Laissez-faire leaders* are only minimally involved in decision making and encourage group members to make their own decisions. On the one hand, laissez-faire leaders may be viewed positively by group members because they do not flaunt their power or position. On the other hand, a group that needs active leadership is not likely to find it with this style of leadership, which does not work vigorously to promote group goals.

Studies of kinds of leadership and decision-making styles have certain inherent limitations. They tend to focus on leadership that is imposed externally on a group (such as bosses or political leaders) rather than leadership that arises within a group. Different decision-making styles may be more effective in one setting than another. For example, imagine attending a college class in which the professor asked

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instrumental leadership goal- or task-oriented leadership.

expressive leadership an approach to leadership that provides emotional support for members.

authoritarian leaders people who make all major group decisions and assign tasks to members.

democratic leaders leaders who encourage group discussion and decision making through consensus building.

laissez-faire leaders leaders who are only minimally involved in decision making and who encourage group members to make their own decisions.

the students to determine what should be covered in the course, what the course requirements should be, and how students should be graded. It would be a difficult and cumbersome way to start the semester; students might spend the entire term negotiating these matters and never actually learn anything.

Group Conformity

To what extent do groups exert a powerful influence in our lives? Groups have a significant amount of influence on our values, attitudes, and behavior. In order to gain and then retain our membership in groups, most of us are willing to exhibit a high level of conformity to the wishes of other group members. *Conformity* **is the process of maintaining or changing behavior to comply with the norms established by a society, subculture, or other group.** We often experience powerful pressure from other group members to conform. In some situations, this pressure may be almost overwhelming.

In several studies (which would be impossible to conduct today for ethical reasons), researchers found that the pressure to conform may cause group members to say they see something that is contradictory to what they are actually seeing or to do something that they would otherwise be unwilling to do. As we look at two of these studies, ask yourself what you might have done if you had been involved in this research.

Asch's Research   Pressure to conform is especially strong in small groups in which members want to fit in with the group. In a series of experiments conducted by Solomon Asch (1955, 1956), the pressure toward group conformity was so great that participants were willing to contradict their own best judgment if the rest of the group disagreed with them.

One of Asch's experiments involved groups of undergraduate men (seven in each group) who were allegedly recruited for a study of visual perception. All the men were seated in chairs. However, the person in the sixth chair did not know that he was the only actual subject; all the others were assisting the researcher. The participants were first shown a large card with a vertical line on it and then a second card with three vertical lines (see ▶ Figure 5.2). Each of the seven participants was asked to indicate which of the three lines on the second card was identical in length to the "standard line" on the first card.
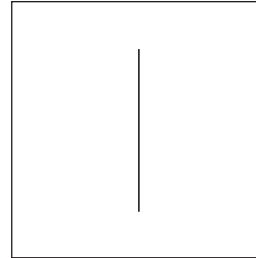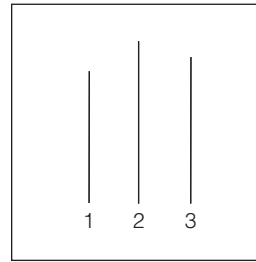
◀ **FIGURE 5.2 ASCH'S CARDS**
Although Line 2 is clearly the same length as the line in the lower card, Solomon Asch's research assistants tried to influence "actual" participants by deliberately picking Line 1 or Line 3 as the correct match. Many of the participants went along rather than risking the opposition of the "group."

Source: Asch, 1955.

In the first test with each group, all seven men selected the correct matching line. In the second trial, all seven still answered correctly. In the third trial, however, the actual subject became very uncomfortable when all the others selected the incorrect line. The subject could not understand what was happening and became even more confused as the others continued to give incorrect responses on eleven out of the next fifteen trials.

Asch (1955) found that about one-third of all subjects chose to conform by giving the same (incorrect) responses as Asch's assistants. In discussing the experiment afterward, most of the subjects who gave incorrect responses indicated that they had known the answers were wrong but decided to go along with the group in order to avoid ridicule or ostracism.

Asch concluded that the size of the group and the degree of social cohesion felt by participants were important influences on the extent to which individuals respond to group pressure. If you had been in the position of the subject, how would you have responded? Would you have continued to give the correct answer, or would you have been swayed by the others?

Milgram's Research   How willing are we to do something because someone in a position of authority has told us to do it? How far are we willing to go to follow the demands of that individual? Stanley Milgram (1963, 1974) conducted a series of controversial experiments to find answers to these questions about people's obedience to authority. *Obedience* is a

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- **Extra Examples:** Introduce the "control" dimension of George Ritzer's theory of McDonaldization at this point. Talk about the power of the social scripts that guide our everyday lives. Have students brainstorm about the "college student" script.
- **For Discussion:** Ask students this: To what extent do you consider yourself to be a conformist? Why is it necessary for a group to require some degree of conformity from its members?

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Research:** Yohtaro Takano and Shunya Sogon have recently demonstrated that even in their ingroups, Japanese college students do not conform at any higher levels than do Americans (*Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology,* 39 [2008]: 237–250). Have the class read these results and compare them to their assumptions about Japan.
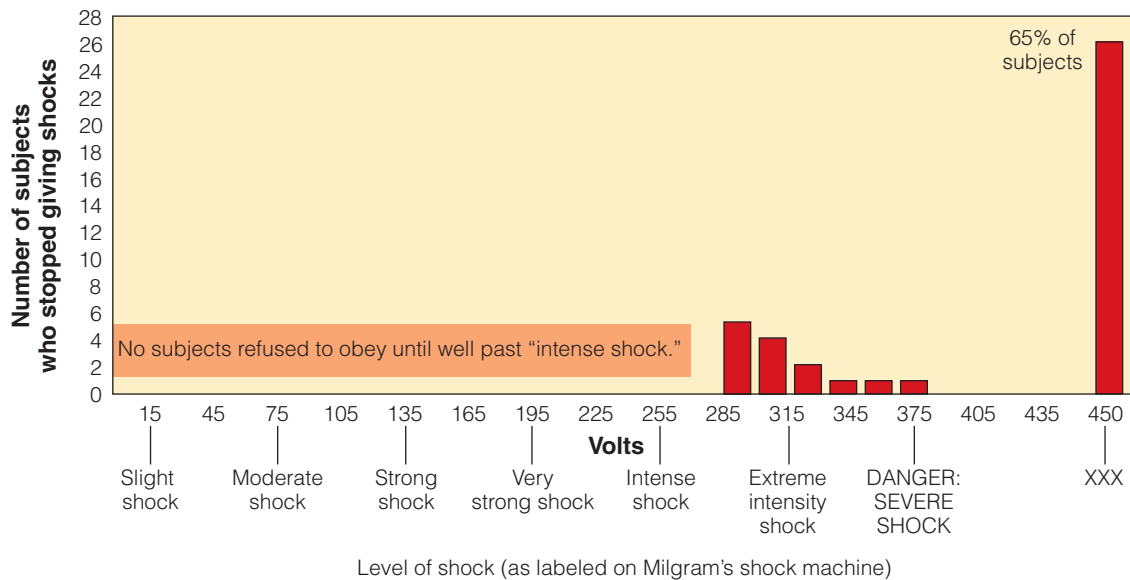
▲ **FIGURE 5.3** **RESULTS OF MILGRAM'S OBEDIENCE EXPERIMENT**
Even Milgram was surprised by subjects' willingness to administer what they thought were severely painful and even dangerous shocks to a helpless "learner."
Source: Milgram, 1963.

==form of compliance in which people follow direct orders from someone in a position of authority.==

Milgram's subjects were men who had responded to an advertisement for participants in an experiment. When the first (actual) subject arrived, he was told that the study concerned the effects of punishment on learning. After the second subject (an assistant of Milgram's) arrived, the two men were instructed to draw slips of paper from a hat to get their assignments as either the "teacher" or the "learner." Because the drawing was rigged, the actual subject always became the teacher, and the assistant the learner. Next, the learner was strapped into a chair with protruding electrodes that looked something like an electric chair. The teacher was placed in an adjoining room and given a realistic-looking but nonoperative shock generator. The "generator's" control panel showed levels that went from "Slight Shock" (15 volts) on the left, to "Intense Shock" (255 volts) in the middle, to "DANGER: SEVERE SHOCK" (375 volts), and finally "XXX" (450 volts) on the right.

The teacher was instructed to read aloud a pair of words and then repeat the first of the two words. At that time, the learner was supposed to respond with the second of the two words. If the learner could not provide the second word, the teacher was instructed to press the lever on the shock generator so that the learner would be punished for forgetting the word. Each time the learner gave an incorrect response, the teacher was supposed to increase the shock level by 15 volts. The alleged purpose of the shock was to determine if punishment improves a person's memory.

What was the maximum level of shock that a "teacher" was willing to inflict on a "learner"? The learner had been instructed (in advance) to beat on the wall between him and the teacher as the experiment continued, pretending that he was in intense pain. The teacher was told that the shocks might be "extremely painful" but that they would cause no permanent damage. At about 300 volts, when the learner quit responding at all to questions, the teacher often turned to the experimenter to see what he should do next. When the experimenter indicated that the teacher should give increasingly painful shocks, 65 percent of the teachers administered shocks all the way up to the "XXX" (450-volt) level (see ▶ Figure 5.3). By this point in the process, the teachers were frequently sweating, stuttering,

> **conformity** the process of maintaining or changing behavior to comply with the norms established by a society, subculture, or other group.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** Ask students to write anonymous individual responses to these questions: What do you think your response might have been if you had been a subject in Asch's study? In Milgram's? Read responses aloud, and have the class discuss why group influence is such a powerful a force in our lives.
- **Popular Culture:** Have students view the HBO film *The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib,* which incorporates film footage from the Milgram experiment into the documentary.
- **Research:** Have students examine works by Stanford psychologist Philip Zimbardo. *The Lucifer Effect* describes the point in time when an ordinary person first crosses the boundaries of decency to engage in evil action. It represents a transformation of human

or biting on their lip. According to Milgram, the teachers (who were free to leave whenever they wanted to) continued in the experiment because they were being given directions by a person in a position of authority (a university scientist wearing a white coat).

What can we learn from Milgram's study? The study provides evidence that obedience to authority may be more common than most of us would like to believe. None of the "teachers" challenged the process before they had applied 300 volts. Almost two-thirds went all the way to what could have been a deadly jolt of electricity if the shock generator had been real. For many years, Milgram's findings were found to be consistent in a number of different settings and with variations in the research design (Miller, 1986).

This research once again raises some questions concerning research ethics. As was true of Asch's research, Milgram's subjects were deceived about the nature of the study in which they were asked to participate. Many of them found the experiment extremely stressful. Such conditions cannot be ignored by social scientists because subjects may receive lasting emotional scars from this kind of research. Today, it would be virtually impossible to obtain permission to replicate this experiment in a university setting.

Groupthink

As we have seen, individuals often respond differently in a group context than they might if they were alone. Social psychologist Irving Janis (1972, 1989) examined group decision making among political experts and found that major blunders in U.S. history can be attributed to pressure toward group conformity. To describe this phenomenon, he coined the term *groupthink—the process by which members of a cohesive group arrive at a decision that many individual members privately believe is unwise.* Why not speak up at the time? Members usually want to be "team players." They may not want to be the ones who undermine the group's consensus or who challenge the group's leaders. Consequently, members often limit or withhold their opinions and focus on consensus rather than on exploring all of the options and determining the best course of action. ▶ Figure 5.4 summarizes the dynamics and results of groupthink.

The tragic 2003 explosion of the space shuttle *Columbia* while preparing to land has been cited as an example of this process. During takeoff, a chunk of insulated foam fell off the bipod ramp of the external fuel tank, striking and damaging the shuttle's left wing. Although some NASA engineers had previously raised concerns that hardened foam popping off the fuel tank could cause damage to the ceramic tiles protecting the shuttle, and although their concerns were again raised following *Columbia*'s liftoff, these concerns were overruled by NASA officials prior to and during the flight (Glanz and Wong, 2003; Schwartz, 2003). One analyst subsequently described the way that NASA dealt with these concerns as an example of "the ways that smart people working collectively can be dumber than the sum of their brains" (Schwartz and Wald, 2003: WK3).
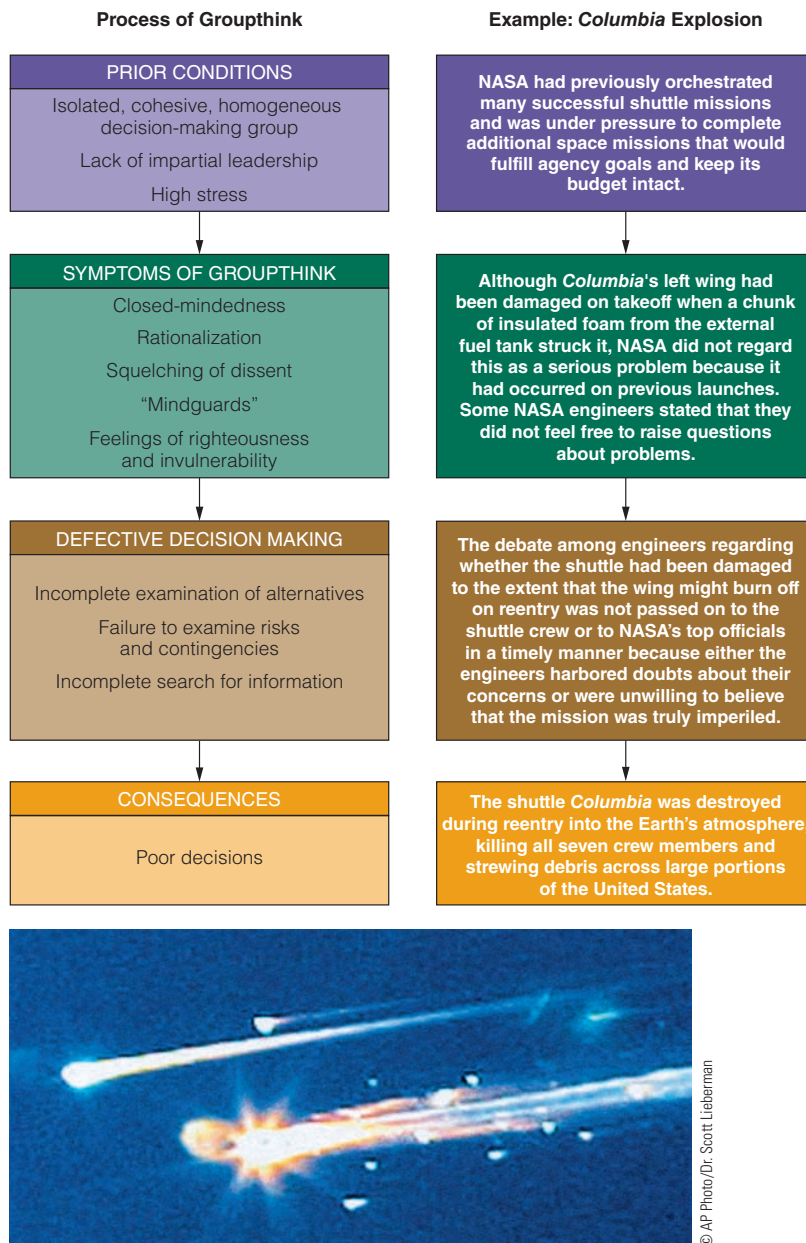
Formal Organizations in Global Perspective

Over the past century, the number of formal organizations has increased dramatically in the United States and other industrialized nations. Previously, everyday life was centered in small, informal, primary groups, such as the family and the village. With the advent of industrialization and urbanization (as discussed in Chapter 1), people's lives became increasingly dominated by large, formal, secondary organizations. A *formal organization,* you will recall, is a highly structured secondary group formed for the purpose of achieving specific goals in the most efficient manner. Formal organizations (such as corporations, schools, and government agencies) usually keep their basic structure for many years in order to meet their specific goals.

Types of Formal Organizations

We join some organizations voluntarily and others out of necessity. Sociologist Amitai Etzioni (1975) classified formal organizations into three categories—normative, coercive, and utilitarian—based on the nature of membership in each.

Normative Organizations We voluntarily join *normative organizations* when we want to pursue some common interest or gain personal satisfaction or prestige from being a member. Political

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character and is more likely to occur in novel settings, "total situations," where social situational forces are sufficiently powerful to overwhelm, or set aside temporally, personal attributes of morality, compassion, or justice.

• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

• **For Discussion:** Janis wrote that one of the ways to prevent groupthink was as follows: "Leaders should assign each member the role of critical evaluator. This allows each member to freely air objections and doubts." Ask students why this can be such a difficult task for leaders to accomplish. What obstacles stand in their way?

• **Active Learning:** Have your class work in groups to rephrase this description of groupthink in their own words: "We are not talking

| Process of Groupthink | Example: *Columbia* Explosion |

PRIOR CONDITIONS

Isolated, cohesive, homogeneous decision-making group

Lack of impartial leadership

High stress

NASA had previously orchestrated many successful shuttle missions and was under pressure to complete additional space missions that would fulfill agency goals and keep its budget intact.

SYMPTOMS OF GROUPTHINK

Closed-mindedness

Rationalization

Squelching of dissent

"Mindguards"

Feelings of righteousness and invulnerability

Although *Columbia*'s left wing had been damaged on takeoff when a chunk of insulated foam from the external fuel tank struck it, NASA did not regard this as a serious problem because it had occurred on previous launches. Some NASA engineers stated that they did not feel free to raise questions about problems.

DEFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

Incomplete examination of alternatives

Failure to examine risks and contingencies

Incomplete search for information

The debate among engineers regarding whether the shuttle had been damaged to the extent that the wing might burn off on reentry was not passed on to the shuttle crew or to NASA's top officials in a timely manner because either the engineers harbored doubts about their concerns or were unwilling to believe that the mission was truly imperiled.

CONSEQUENCES

Poor decisions

The shuttle *Columbia* was destroyed during reentry into the Earth's atmosphere, killing all seven crew members and strewing debris across large portions of the United States.

▲ **FIGURE 5.4 JANIS'S DESCRIPTION OF GROUPTHINK**

In Janis's model, prior conditions such as a highly homogeneous group with committed leadership can lead to potentially disastrous "groupthink," which short-circuits careful and impartial deliberation. Events leading up to the tragic 2003 explosion of the space shuttle *Columbia* have been cited as an example of this process.

Sources: Broder, 2003; Glanz and Wong, 2003; Schwartz (with Wald), 2003; Schwartz and Broder, 2003; Schwartz and Wald, 2003.

parties, ecological activist groups, religious organizations, parent–teacher associations, and college sororities and fraternities are examples of normative, or voluntary, associations.

groupthink the process by which members of a cohesive group arrive at a decision that many individual members privately believe is unwise.

about mere instinctive conformity—it is, after all, a perennial failing of mankind. What we are talking about is a rationalized conformity—an open, articulate philosophy which holds that group values are not only expedient but right and good as well" (William Whyte, 1952).
• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

• **Active Learning:** Find out to what occupations your students aspire. Describe the specific formal organizations that will be a part of most of these occupational choices. Talk about the formal organizations that you have experienced (insurance, hospitals, ASA, graduate school, etc.).

Class, gender, and race are important determinants of a person's participation in a normative association. Class (socioeconomic status based on a person's education, occupation, and income) is the most significant predictor of whether a person will participate in mainstream normative organizations; membership costs may exclude some from joining. Those with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to be not only members but also active participants in these groups. Gender is also an important determinant. Half of the voluntary associations in the United States have all-female memberships; one-fifth are all male. However, all-male organizations usually have higher levels of prestige than do all-female ones (Odendahl, 1990).

Throughout history, people of all racial–ethnic categories have participated in voluntary organizations, but the involvement of women in these groups has largely gone unrecognized. For example, African American women were actively involved in antislavery societies in the nineteenth century and in the civil rights movement in the twentieth century (see Scott, 1990). Other normative organizations focusing on civil rights, self-help, and philanthropic activities in which African American women and men have been involved include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League. Similarly, Native American women have participated in the American Indian Movement, a group organized to fight problems ranging from police brutality to housing and employment discrimination (Feagin and Feagin, 2003). Mexican American women (as well as men) have held a wide range of leadership positions in La Raza Unida Party and the League of United Latin American Citizens, organizations oriented toward civic activities and protests against injustices (Amott and Matthaei, 1996).

Coercive Organizations People do not voluntarily become members of *coercive organizations*— associations that people are forced to join. Total institutions, such as boot camps, prisons, and some mental hospitals, are examples of coercive organizations. As discussed in Chapter 3, the assumed goal of total institutions is to resocialize people through incarceration. These environments are characterized by restrictive barriers (such as locks, bars, and security guards) that make it impossible for people to leave freely. When people leave without being officially dismissed, their exit is referred to as an "escape."

Utilitarian Organizations We voluntarily join *utilitarian organizations* when they can provide us with a material reward that we seek. To make a living or earn a college degree, we must participate in organizations that can provide us these opportunities. Although we have some choice regarding where we work or attend school, utilitarian organizations are not always completely voluntary. For example, most people must continue to work even if the conditions of their employment are less than ideal. (This chapter's Concept Quick Review summarizes the types of groups, sizes of groups, and types of formal organizations.)

Bureaucracies

The bureaucratic model of organization remains the most universal organizational form in government, business, education, and religion. A *bureaucracy* is an organizational model characterized by a hierarchy of authority, a clear division of labor, explicit rules and procedures, and impersonality in personnel matters.

Sociologist Max Weber (1968/1922) was interested in the historical trend toward bureaucratization that accelerated during the Industrial Revolution. To Weber, bureaucracy was the most "rational" and efficient means of attaining organizational goals because it contributed to coordination and control. According to Weber, *rationality is the process by which traditional methods of social organization, characterized by informality and spontaneity, are gradually replaced by efficiently administered formal rules and procedures.* Bureaucracy can be seen in all aspects of our lives, from small colleges with perhaps a thousand students to multinational corporations employing many thousands of workers worldwide.

In his study of bureaucracies, Weber relied on an ideal-type analysis, which he adapted from the field of economics. An *ideal type is an abstract model that describes the recurring characteristics of some phenomenon* (such as bureaucracy). To develop this ideal type, Weber abstracted the most

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- **Extra Examples:** Introduce various theories of problem solving. Talk about the kinds of organizational problems that can more easily be resolved through informal networks than through official structures. Have students discuss this idea: When is one way better than the other?
- **Applied Sociology:** Locate examples of employee manuals, and check them for organizational charts. Use these to help students analyze bureaucracies and their characteristic features. Alternatively, use an organizational chart for your college/university to help students see how they already participate in a bureaucracy. Point out the organizational structures of groups such as families, churches, and teams.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

[concept quick review 5.1]

Characteristics of Groups and Organizations

Types of Social Groups	Primary group	Small, less specialized group in which members engage in face-to-face, emotion-based interaction over an extended period of time
	Secondary group	Larger, more specialized group in which members engage in more impersonal, goal-oriented relationships for a limited period of time
	Ingroup	A group to which a person belongs and with which the person feels a sense of identity
	Outgroup	A group to which a person does not belong and toward which the person may feel a sense of competitiveness or hostility
	Reference group	A group that strongly influences a person's behavior and social attitudes, regardless of whether the person is actually a member
Group Size	Dyad	A group composed of two members
	Triad	A group composed of three members
	Formal organization	A highly structured secondary group formed for the purpose of achieving specific goals
Types of Formal Organizations	Normative	Organizations that we join voluntarily to pursue some common interest or gain personal satisfaction or prestige by joining
	Coercive	Associations that people are forced to join (total institutions such as boot camps and prisons are examples)
	Utilitarian	Organizations that we join voluntarily when they can provide us with a material reward that we seek

characteristic bureaucratic aspects of religious, educational, political, and business organizations. Weber acknowledged that no existing organization would exactly fit his ideal type of bureaucracy (Blau and Meyer, 1987).

Ideal Characteristics of Bureaucracy Weber set forth several ideal-type characteristics of bureaucratic organizations. His model (see ▶ Figure 5.5) highlights the organizational efficiency and productivity that bureaucracies strive for in these five central elements of the ideal organization:

- *Division of labor.* Bureaucratic organizations are characterized by specialization, and each member has highly specialized tasks to fulfill.
- *Hierarchy of authority.* In a bureaucracy, each lower office is under the control and supervision

of a higher one. Those few individuals at the top of the hierarchy have more power and exercise more control than do the many at the lower levels. Those who are lower in the hierarchy report

bureaucracy an organizational model characterized by a hierarchy of authority, a clear division of labor, explicit rules and procedures, and impersonality in personnel matters.

rationality the process by which traditional methods of social organization, characterized by informality and spontaneity, are gradually replaced by efficiently administered formal rules and procedures.

ideal type an abstract model that describes the recurring characteristics of some phenomenon (such as bureaucracy).

- **Extra Examples:** Come up with several examples of ideal types so that your students can start to brainstorm other examples of this theoretical concept (marriage, family, job, neighborhood, medical plan, etc.).
- **Table Note:** Ask your students to bring a list of all their groups to class. Using this table, ask them to identify each by type, size, and, if appropriate, formal organization.
- **Active Learning:** Have students interview family and friends about the ways in which organizational hierarchies (in their jobs, schools, clubs, religious organizations) affect their relations with others. Have them identify both positive and negative effects of hierarchies.

Characteristics

- Division of labor
- Hierarchy of authority
- Rules and regulations
- Qualification-based employment
- Impersonality

Effects

- Inefficiency and rigidity
- Resistance to change
- Perpetuation of race, class, and gender inequalities

◀ **FIGURE 5.5** CHARACTERISTICS AND EFFECTS OF BUREAUCRACY
The very characteristics that define Weber's idealized bureaucracy can create or exacerbate the problems that many people associate with this type of organization. Can you apply this model to an organization with which you are familiar?

to (and often take orders from) those above them in the organizational pyramid. Persons at the upper levels are responsible not only for their own actions but also for those of the individuals they supervise.

- *Rules and regulations.* Rules and regulations establish authority within an organization. These rules are typically standardized and provided to members in a written format. In theory, written rules and regulations offer clear-cut standards for determining satisfactory performance so that each new member does not have to reinvent the rules.
- *Qualification-based employment.* Bureaucracies require competence and hire staff members and professional employees based on specific qualifications. Individual performance is evaluated against specific standards, and promotions are based on merit as spelled out in personnel policies.
- *Impersonality.* Bureaucracies require that everyone must play by the same rules and be treated the same. Personal feelings should not interfere with organizational decisions.

Contemporary Applications of Weber's Theory

How well do Weber's theory of rationality and his ideal-type characteristics of bureaucracy withstand the test of time? More than 100 years later, many organizational theorists still apply Weber's perspective. For example, the sociologist George Ritzer used Weber's theories to examine fast-food restaurants such as McDonald's. According to Ritzer, the process of "McDonaldization" has become a global phenomenon that can be seen in fast-food restaurants and other "speedy" or "jiffy" businesses (such as Sir Speedy Printing and Jiffy Lube). Ritzer (2000a: 433) identifies four dimensions of formal rationality—efficiency, predictability, emphasis on quantity rather than quality, and control through nonhuman technologies—that are found in today's fast-food restaurants:

Efficiency means the search for the best means to the end; in the fast-food restaurant, the drive-through window is a good example of heightening the efficiency of obtaining a meal. Predictability means a world of no surprises; the Big Mac in Los Angeles is indistinguishable from the one in New York; similarly, the one we consume tomorrow or next year will be just like the one we eat today. Rational systems tend to emphasize quantity, usually large quantities, rather than quality. The Big Mac is a good example of this emphasis on quantity rather than quality. Instead of the human qualities of a chef, fast-food restaurants rely on nonhuman technologies like unskilled cooks following detailed directions and assembly-line methods applied to the cooking and serving of food. Finally, such a formally rational system brings with it various irrationalities, most notably the demystification and dehumanization of the dining experience.

While still useful today, Weber's ideal type largely failed to take into account the informal side of bureaucracy.

The Informal Side of Bureaucracy

When we look at an organizational chart, the official, formal structure of a bureaucracy is readily apparent. In practice, however, a bureaucracy has patterns of activities and interactions that cannot be accounted for by its organizational chart. These have been referred to as *bureaucracy's other face* (Page, 1946).

The *informal side of a bureaucracy* is composed of those aspects of participants' day-to-day activities and interactions that ignore, bypass, or do not correspond with the official rules and procedures

- **For Discussion:** Ask students to examine the following as an argument for the value of efficiency: "What kind of society isn't structured on greed? The problem of social organization is how to set up an arrangement under which greed will do the least harm; capitalism is that kind of system" (economist Milton Friedman).

- **Popular Culture:** "McJob. Noun: *slang.* A job, usually in the retail or service sector that is low paying, often temporary, and offers minimal or no benefits or opportunity for promotion" (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

of the bureaucracy. An example is an informal "grapevine" that spreads information (with varying degrees of accuracy) much faster than do official channels of communication, which tend to be slow and unresponsive. The informal structure has also been referred to as *work culture* because it includes the ideology and practices of workers on the job. Workers create this work culture in order to confront, resist, or adapt to the constraints of their jobs, as well as to guide and interpret social relations on the job (Zavella, 1987).

Is the informal side of bureaucracy good or bad? Should it be controlled or encouraged? Two schools of thought have emerged with regard to these questions. One approach emphasizes control of informal groups in order to ensure greater worker productivity. By contrast, the other school of thought asserts that informal groups should be nurtured because such networks may serve as a means of communication and cohesion among individuals. Large organizations would be unable to function without strong informal norms and relations among participants (Blau and Meyer, 1987).

Informal networks thrive in contemporary organizations because e-mail and websites have made it possible for people to communicate throughout the day without ever having to engage in face-to-face interaction. The need to meet at the water fountain or the copy machine in order to exchange information is long gone: Workers now have an opportunity to tell one another—and higher-ups, as well—what they think.

▼ Colleges and universities rely a great deal on the use of standardized tests to assess student applications. How do such tests relate to Weber's model of bureaucracy?

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▲ How do people use the informal "grapevine" to spread information? Is this faster than the organization's official channels of communication? Is it more or less accurate than official channels?

informal side of a bureaucracy those aspects of participants' day-to-day activities and interactions that ignore, bypass, or do not correspond with the official rules and procedures of the bureaucracy.

Problems of Bureaucracies

The characteristics that make up Weber's "rational" model of bureaucracy have a dark side that has frequently given this type of organization a bad name. Three of the major problems of bureaucracies are (1) inefficiency and rigidity, (2) resistance to change, and (3) perpetuation of race, class, and gender inequalities.

Inefficiency and Rigidity   Bureaucracies experience inefficiency and rigidity at both the upper and lower levels of the organization. The self-protective behavior of officials at the top may render the organization inefficient. One type of self-protective behavior is the monopolization of information in order to maintain control over subordinates and outsiders. Information is a valuable commodity in organizations, and those persons in positions of authority guard information because it is a source of power for them—others cannot "second-guess" their decisions without access to relevant (and often "confidential") information (Blau and Meyer, 1987).

When those at the top tend to use their power and authority to monopolize information, they also fail to communicate with workers at the lower levels. As a result, they are often unaware of potential problems facing the organization and of high levels of worker frustration. Bureaucratic regulations are written in far greater detail than is necessary in order to ensure that almost all conceivable situations are covered. *Goal displacement* **occurs when the rules become an end in themselves rather than a means to an end, and organizational survival becomes more important than achievement of goals** (Merton, 1968).

Inefficiency and rigidity occur at the lower levels of the organization as well. Workers often engage in *ritualism;* that is, they become most concerned with "going through the motions" and "following the rules." According to Robert Merton (1968), the term *bureaucratic personality* **describes those workers who are more concerned with following correct procedures than they are with getting the job done correctly.** Such workers are usually able to handle routine situations effectively but are frequently incapable of handling a unique problem or an emergency. Thorstein Veblen (1967/1899) used the term *trained incapacity* to characterize situations in which workers have become so highly specialized, or have been given such fragmented jobs to do, that they are unable to come up with creative solutions to problems. Workers who have reached this point also tend to experience bureaucratic alienation—they really do not care what is happening around them.

Resistance to Change   Once bureaucratic organizations are created, they tend to resist change. This resistance not only makes bureaucracies virtually impossible to eliminate but also contributes to bureaucratic enlargement. Because of the assumed relationship between size and importance, officials tend to press for larger budgets and more staff and office space. To justify growth, administrators and managers must come up with more tasks for workers to perform.

▼ Corporate employees in different work settings vary widely in their manner and appearance. How does the environment in which we work affect how we dress and act?

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Resistance to change may also lead to incompetence. Based on organizational policy, bureaucracies tend to promote people from within the organization. As a consequence, a person who performs satisfactorily in one position is promoted to a higher level in the organization. Eventually, people reach a level that is beyond their knowledge, experience, and capabilities.

Perpetuation of Race, Class, and Gender Inequalities

Some bureaucracies perpetuate inequalities of race, class, and gender because this form of organizational structure creates a specific type of work or learning environment. This structure was typically created for middle-class and upper-middle-class white men, who for many years were the predominant organizational participants.

For people of color, *entry* into dominant white bureaucratic organizations does not equal actual *integration* (Feagin, 1991). Instead, many have experienced an internal conflict between the bureaucratic ideals of equal opportunity and fairness and the prevailing norms of discrimination and hostility that exist in many organizations. Research has found that people of color are more adversely affected than dominant-group members by hierarchical bureaucratic structures and exclusion from informal networks.

Like racial inequality, social class divisions may be perpetuated in bureaucracies (Blau and Meyer, 1987). The theory of a "dual labor market" has been developed to explain how social class distinctions are perpetuated through different types of employment. Middle- and upper-middle-class employees are more likely to have careers characterized by higher wages, more job security, and opportunities for advancement. By contrast, poor and working-class employees work in occupations characterized by low wages, lack of job security, and few opportunities for promotion. The "dual economy" not only reflects but may also perpetuate people's current class position.

Gender inequalities are also perpetuated in bureaucracies. Women in traditionally male organizations may feel more visible and experience greater performance pressure. They may also find it harder to gain credibility in management positions.

Inequality in organizations has many consequences. People who lack opportunities for integration and advancement tend to be pessimistic and to have lower self-esteem. Believing that they have few opportunities, they resign themselves to staying put and surviving at that level. By contrast, those who enjoy full access to organizational opportunities tend to have high aspirations and high self-esteem. They feel loyalty to the organization and typically see their job as a means for mobility and growth.

Bureaucracy and Oligarchy

Why do a small number of leaders at the top make all the important organizational decisions? According to the German political sociologist Robert Michels (1949/1911), all organizations encounter the *iron law of oligarchy—the tendency to become a bureaucracy ruled by the few.* His central idea

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▲ According to conflict theorists, members of the capitalist class benefit from the work of laborers such as the people shown here, who are harvesting onions on a farm in the Texas Rio Grande Valley. How do low wages and lack of job security contribute to class-based inequalities in the United States?

goal displacement a process that occurs in organizations when the rules become an end in themselves rather than a means to an end, and organizational survival becomes more important than achievement of goals.

bureaucratic personality a psychological construct that describes those workers who are more concerned with following correct procedures than they are with getting the job done correctly.

iron law of oligarchy according to Robert Michels, the tendency of bureaucracies to be ruled by a few people.

the time available for its completion. *Peter Principle:* In a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to his or her level of incompetence.

- **Extra Examples:** "The workweek has decreased by 38 percent over the past century, but workers have no additional leisure time. Longer commutes and more household chores have gobbled up the time created by work-related technological advances" (*Forbes* magazine). Have students discuss how this

situation might lead to the experience of bureaucratic alienation, as described by Veblen.

- **Active Learning:** Have students come up with examples of specialization in work and in thinking. Then have them read the following statement and consider ways in which such specialization could lead to trained incapacity: "A habitual line of action constitutes a habitual line of thought, and gives the point of

was that those who control bureaucracies not only wield power but also have an interest in retaining their power. Michels found that the hierarchical structures of bureaucracies and oligarchies go hand in hand. On the one hand, power may be concentrated in the hands of a few people because rank-and-file members must inevitably delegate a certain amount of decision-making authority to their leaders. Leaders have access to information that other members do not have, and they have "clout," which they may use to protect their own interests. On the other hand, oligarchy may result when individuals have certain outstanding qualities that make it possible for them to manage, if not control, others. The members choose to look to their leaders for direction; the leaders are strongly motivated to maintain the power and privileges that go with their leadership positions.

Are there limits to the iron law of oligarchy? The leaders in most organizations do not have unlimited power. Divergent groups within a large-scale organization often compete for power, and informal networks can be used to "go behind the backs" of leaders. In addition, members routinely challenge, and sometimes they (or the organization's governing board) remove leaders when they are not pleased with their actions.

Alternative Forms of Organization

Many organizations have sought new and innovative ways to organize work more efficiently than the traditional hierarchical model. In the early 1980s, there was a movement in the United States to *humanize bureaucracy*—to establish an organizational environment that develops rather than impedes human resources. More-humane bureaucracies are characterized by (1) less-rigid hierarchical structures and greater sharing of power and responsibility by all participants, (2) encouragement of participants to share their ideas and try new approaches to problem solving, and (3) efforts to reduce the number of people in dead-end jobs, train people in needed skills and competencies, and help people meet outside family responsibilities while still receiving equal treatment inside the organization (Kanter, 1983, 1985, 1993/1977). However, this movement has been overshadowed by globalization and the

perceived strengths of systems of organizing work in other nations, such as Japan.

Organizational Structure in Japan

For several decades, the Japanese model of organization was widely praised for its innovative structure because it focused on long-term employment and company loyalty. Until recently, many Japanese employees remained with the same company for their entire career, whereas their U.S. counterparts often changed employers every few years. Although the practice of lifetime employment has been replaced by the concept of long-term employment, workers in Japan often have higher levels of job security than do workers in the United States. According to advocates of the Japanese system, this model encourages worker loyalty and a high level of productivity. Managers move through various parts of the organization and acquire technical knowledge about the workings of many aspects of the corporation, unlike their U.S. counterparts, who tend to become highly specialized (Sengoku, 1985). Unlike top managers in the United States who have given themselves pay raises and bonuses even when their companies were financially strapped, many Japanese managers have taken pay cuts under similar circumstances. Japanese management is characterized as being people oriented, taking a long-term view, and having a culture that focuses on *how* work gets done rather than on the result alone.

Quality Circles How work is organized, such as by the use of quality circles, may also affect job satisfaction and worker productivity. Small work groups made up of about five to fifteen workers who meet regularly with one or two managers to discuss the group's performance and working conditions are known as *quality circles*. The purpose of this team approach to management is both to improve product quality and to lower product costs. Workers are motivated to save the corporation money because they, in turn, receive bonuses or higher wages for their efforts. Quality circles have been praised for creating worker satisfaction, helping employees develop their potential, and improving productivity (Ishikawa, 1984). Because quality circles focus on both productivity and worker satisfaction, these circles (at least ideally) meet the needs of both the corporation and the workers.

▲ The Japanese model of organization—including planned group-exercise sessions for employees—has become a part of the workplace in many nations. Would it be a positive change if more workplace settings, such as the one shown here, were viewed as an extension of the family? Why or why not?

Organizations in the Future

What is the best organizational structure for the future? Of course, this question is difficult to answer because it requires the ability to predict economic, political, and social conditions. Nevertheless, we can make several observations.

First, organizations have been affected by growing social inequality in the United States and other nations due to heightening differences between high- and low-income segments of populations. Having *socially sustainable organizations* is of increasing importance because television, the Internet, and international travel have made people more aware of the wide disparities in the resources and power of "haves" and "have-nots" both within a single country and across nations. As a result, organizations must be developed that are both economically efficient and as equitable as possible. Some organizational and management analysts suggest that more attention must be paid to the "stakeholders" of an organization (MIT 21st Century Manifesto Working Group, 1999). For example, at a college or university, stakeholders would include (but not be limited to) students, faculty and staff, administrators, alumni, major contributors, boards of regents, suppliers, the community where the school is located, and the society as a whole. Goals of the organization should be based on taking into account the interests of these various stakeholders and working toward organizational goals and outcomes that will not only ensure organizational success but also provide the greatest good for the greatest number of stakeholders. Although academic success, winning sports teams, and college financial stability are important in higher education, other criteria should also be used in assessing the effectiveness and overall output of the college community. In other types of organizations, similar stakeholders can be identified and goals established to meet the needs of various constituencies.

- **Active Learning:** To illustrate the iron law of oligarchy, tell your class that you will give them one minute to collectively decide on the date of the next exam. Step to the side and start timing. What usually occurs is either the class sits dumbfounded and unable to get itself organized or, as the time passes, one or two "leaders" emerge and organize the group into some sort of vote. Connect these experiences to Michels's theory.

- **Media Coverage:** "It's a sense of team spirit and together-ness—called *soshikiryoku*—that many Japanese corporations are trying to rekindle. 'We realized that workplace communication was becoming nonexistent,' explains human-resources manager Shinji Matsuyama, whose company, Alps Electric, spent several million dollars last year to bring together about 3,000 workers for its

you can make a difference

Developing Invisible (but Meaningful) Networks on the Web

Sept. 7

Hello! Hello! Is anybody getting this message?? I'm lost in Cyberspace and I don't know if I am getting through to anyone! Please write back if you have received this message!!

Sept. 8

We got your message. Who are you? Where are you? We are 5th graders at Perry Central School. We live in Perry County, Indiana. Where are you from? Can we help? Signed, Darrin, Jenna, Becky (qtd. in Kranning and Ehman, 1999)

As a result of this initial e-mail exchange, fifth-grade students at a rural Indiana elementary school began an extended project ("Mysteries from History") with college students taking a computer education class at Indiana University. Although this collaboration was initially established by a fifth-grade teacher (Antoinette Kranning) and a college professor (Lee Ehman), projects such as this could be established by computer-savvy students in other college classes or by a campus service organization.

Let's look at how "Mysteries from History" works. Students in the computer education class pose historical mysteries for the fifth graders to solve through research and group problem-solving skills. For example, students are told that one mystery person worked in a hospital as a nurse during the Civil War and later became a famous writer, and the students are to guess the identity of this individual. Although the fifth graders' initial choice was Clara Barton, they realized that Louisa May Alcott was the correct choice after their research because only Alcott had gone on to become a famous writer. Other mystery questions were posed about other famous people in history, and the fifth graders became very excited as the project progressed. As one student stated, "I'm really enjoying e-mail. I felt very excited when I got my first message. It felt great. I felt like I was a detective searching for clues to a mystery" (qtd. in Kranning and Ehman, 1999).

Through this collaborative project, both the fifth graders and the college students benefited. The college students learned how to interact as a group with a class of young students via the Internet, and they also picked up valuable teaching tips from the fifth-grade teacher, particularly regarding how elementary school students learn about history (Kranning and Ehman, 1999). Likewise, the fifth graders learned how to find information and how to work collaboratively on a project.

Although the nature of groups and organizations has changed with new technologies, and although some people believe that computer networks are not equal to face-to-face interactions, all of us are increasingly involved in computer networks because they allow us to create a range of new social spaces in which we can meet and interact with one another. These social spaces might otherwise not exist: Collaborations between a group of fifth graders and a group of college students would be less likely to occur without technologies such as the Internet. From this perspective, if we are able to create social spaces where we can help others to do things—such as learn history, become savvy Internet users, or feel that they are part of a special group—we can make a difference in their lives by connecting people to people.

What kinds of meaningful social spaces might be created through a class you are taking or a service organization to which you belong? Social spaces on the Internet can be used for a variety of purposes, including discussing topics of mutual interest, learning from one another, working on collaborative projects, entertaining one another, and playing games. Are there ways in which your class or organization (with guidance from a faculty member) could create cross-age or cross-cultural collaborations that would link people together in a shared activity or a discussion that otherwise might not take place?

Second, globalization is the key word for management and change in many organizations, and the use of technology is intricately linked with performing flexible, mobile work anywhere in the world. Based on the assumption that organizations must respond to a rapidly changing environment or they will not thrive, several twenty-first-century organizational models are based on the need to relegate traditional organizational structure to dinosaur status and to move ahead with structures that fully use technology and focus on the need to communicate more effectively. As the pace of communication has

first company-wide *undokai,* or mini-Olympics, in 14 years" (Toko Sekiguch). Ask students to draw comparisons with U.S. firms.

- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disk also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.

- **CourseMate:** The Sociology CourseMate for this text gives your students access to an interactive ebook, flashcards, video, and other study and learning tools, including quizzes that provide immediate feedback. It's easiest for students to log in at **www.cengagebrain.com.**

increased dramatically and information overload has become prevalent, the leaders of organizations are seeking new ways in which to more efficiently manage their organizations and to be ahead of change, rather than merely adapting to change after it occurs. One recent approach is referred to as "smart working," which is based on the assumption that innovation is crucial and that organizational leaders must be able to use the talents and energies of the people who work with them. At one level, "smart working" refers to "anytime, anywhere" ways of work that have become prevalent because of communications technologies such as smart phones and computers. However, another level focuses on the ways in which smart working makes it possible for people to have flexibility and autonomy in where, when, and how they work (chiefexecutive.com, 2010). According to one management specialist,

> It turns out that the sort of collaborative, challenging work with potential for learning and personal development that people find satisfying is exactly the sort of work needed to adapt to current turbulent global operating conditions. Smart working is an outcome of designing organizational systems that are good for business and good for people. (chiefexecutive.com, 2010)

From this perspective, organizations must adapt to change; empower all organizational participants to become involved in collaboration, problem solving, and innovation; and create a work environment that people find engaging and that inspires them to give their best to that organization. Exactly how these organizations might look is not fully clear, although some analysts suggest that corporations such as Google, Microsoft, and other high-tech companies have actively sought to redefine organizational culture and environment by being responsive to employees, customers, and other shareholders. Although management continues to exist, the distinction between managers and the managed becomes less prevalent, and the idea that management knowledge will be everyone's responsibility becomes more predominant. Emphasis is also placed on the importance of improving communication and on acquiring the latest technologies to make this process even more fast, secure, and efficient. Overall, there is a focus on change and the assumption that people in an organization should be change agents, not individuals who merely respond to change after it occurs.

Ultimately, everyone has a stake in seeing that organizations operate in an effective, humane manner and that opportunities are widely available to all people regardless of race, gender, class, or age. Workers and students alike can benefit from organizational environments that make it possible for people to explore their joint interests without fear of losing their privacy or being pitted against one another in a competitive struggle for advantage. (For an example of students working together on a meaningful activity that benefits others, see the You Can Make a Difference box.)

chapter review

● **How do sociologists distinguish among social groups, aggregates, and categories?**

Sociologists define a social group as a collection of two or more people who interact frequently, share a sense of belonging, and depend on one another. People who happen to be in the same place at the same time are considered an aggregate. Those who share a similar characteristic are considered a category. Neither aggregates nor categories are considered social groups.

● **How do sociologists classify groups?**

Sociologists distinguish between primary groups and secondary groups. Primary groups are small and personal, and members engage in emotion-based interactions over an extended period. Secondary groups are larger and more specialized, and members have less personal and more formal, goal-oriented relationships. Sociologists also divide groups into ingroups, outgroups, and reference groups. Ingroups are groups to which we belong

and with which we identify. Outgroups are groups we do not belong to or perhaps feel hostile toward. Reference groups are groups that strongly influence people's behavior whether or not they are actually members.

● **What is the significance of group size?**

In small groups, all members know one another and interact simultaneously. In groups with more than three members, communication dynamics change, and members tend to assume specialized tasks.

● **What are the major styles of leadership?**

Leadership may be authoritarian, democratic, or laissez-faire. Authoritarian leaders make major decisions and assign tasks to individual members. Democratic leaders encourage discussion and collaborative decision making. Laissez-faire leaders are minimally involved and encourage members to make their own decisions.

● **What do experiments on conformity show us about the importance of groups?**

Groups may have significant influence on members' values, attitudes, and behaviors. In order to maintain ties with a group, many members are willing to conform to norms established and reinforced by group members.

● **What are the strengths and weaknesses of bureaucracies?**

A bureaucracy is a formal organization characterized by hierarchical authority, division of labor, explicit procedures, and impersonality. According to Max Weber, bureaucracy supplies a rational means of attaining organizational goals because it contributes to coordination and control. A bureaucracy also has an informal structure, which includes the daily activities and interactions that bypass the official rules and procedures. The informal structure may enhance productivity or may be counterproductive to the organization. A bureaucracy may be inefficient, resistant to change, and a vehicle for perpetuating class, race, and gender inequalities.

● **What types of organizational structures have been used in recent decades to modify or change typical bureaucracies?**

Some organizations adopted Japanese management techniques based on long-term employment and company loyalty or the use of quality circles as alternative forms of bureaucratic structures. More recently the focus has been on "smart working," which is based on the needs of the global organizational environment and relies heavily on communication technologies.

key terms

aggregate 140

authoritarian leaders 147

bureaucracy 152

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outgroup 140

rationality 152

reference group 141

small group 145

triad 145

questions for critical thinking

1. Who might be more likely to conform in a bureaucracy, those with power or those wanting more power?
2. Do the insights gained from Milgram's research on obedience outweigh the elements of deception and stress that were forced on its subjects?
3. How would you organize a large-scale organization or company for the twenty-first century?

turning to video

Watch the ABC video *Online Generation: Wired Seniors Surf Net* (running time 3:54), available through **CengageBrain.com.** This video presents a group of senior citizens in assisted-living centers who have organized to help younger generations with life issues via the Internet. As you watch the video, think about the opportunities older and younger generations have to interact in your daily life—how frequently do you experience cross-generation communication? After you watch the video, consider these questions: Is the Internet a good means of cross-generation communication? What advantages and disadvantages come with it?

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" What worries me, " said Marlene [a Southside Chicago block-club president], " is that there's about seventy children on my block who use that park—and that's not counting the ones who live on the other side. Can't have them around your boys [gang members]. "

"You all are something else," Big Cat [a gang leader for the "Black Kings"] said shaking his head. "I been cooperating with you all for years now, never complaining that I'm losing money. . . . I don't get no respect for that?"

"If you're in our park, we can't be. It's as simple as that," Marlene replied. "I'll give you the nighttime. Maybe I can convince folks that you all need to work at night, but that's going to be tough. But, bottom line, baby, is we can't have you all there during the day." . . .

"Okay," interjected [local pastor] Wilkins. "Now you have to stop for the summer, Big Cat. We're not asking for a two-year thing, or nothing like that. Just when the kids are outside."

"I guess I could work it on 59th, but that [business owner] keeps telling us he doesn't want us around, keeps calling the cops. . . ."

"If I get him to leave you alone during the day, and you can hang out in the parking lot on the other side of the store, you'll leave the park for the summer."

"Yeah," Big Cat replied, dejected at the compromise. "Okay, we'll be gone."

—sociologist Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh (2006: 294–295) describing a conversation among three people he interviewed during his research into the underground economy in Chicago and the gangs that constitute part of that economy

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▲ **Members of the California group known as the Culver City Boyz typify how gang members use items of clothing and gang signs made with their hands to assert their membership in the group and solidarity with one another. Some people might view this conduct as deviant behavior, whereas many gang members view it as an act of conformity.**

Chapter Focus Question

What do studies of adolescent peer cliques and youth gangs tell us about deviance?

Sociologists and criminologists typically define a *gang* as an ongoing group of people, often young, who band together for purposes generally considered to be deviant or criminal by the larger society. Throughout the past century, gang behavior has been of special interest to sociologists (see Puffer, 1912), who generally agree that youth gangs can be found in many settings and among all racial and ethnic categories. The National Gang Center (2010), funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, estimates that in 2007 there were 27,300 gangs with about 788,000 members of all ages in the United States. Between 2002 and 2007, the estimated number of gangs increased by 15 percent in larger cities, 17 percent in suburban counties, 41 percent in smaller cities, and 64 percent in rural counties (National Gang Center, 2010).

Today, some gang members are committing sophisticated crimes that are different from the drive-by shootings and narcotics distribution of other gangs. Some twenty-first-century gang members use the Internet to carry out crimes such as identity theft, bank fraud, check kiting, criminal impersonation, and other technology-related crimes that were largely unheard of in the past (Ferrell, 2008).

As unusual as it may sound, important similarities exist between youth gangs and adolescent peer cliques, which are typically viewed as conforming to most social norms. At the most basic level, *cliques* are friendship circles, whose members identify one another as mutually connected (Adler and Adler, 1998). Members of contemporary cliques not only meet in person but often communicate with each other by cell phone, Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks. Unlike informal friendship networks, cliques have a distinctive organizational structure. According to the sociologists Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler (1998: 56), cliques "have a hierarchical structure, being dominated by leaders, and are exclusive in nature, so that not all individuals who desire membership are accepted." Moreover, sociologists have found that cliques function as "bodies of power" in schools by "incorporating the most popular individuals, offering the most exciting social lives, and commanding the most interest and attention from classmates" (Adler and Adler, 1998: 56).

Although cliques may have some similarities with gangs, there are also significant differences: Gangs play a large role in the economy of many low-income urban neighborhoods, where residents often believe that they must do whatever is necessary to survive. Some activities in the underground economy include the performance of unregulated, unreported, and untaxed work, whereas others involve more widely recognized criminal activities such as the sale of drugs by gang members. According to Venkatesh (2006), one remarkable thing about studying deviance and crime in settings such as "Maquis Park" (a pseudonym for a real Southside Chicago neighborhood) was learning that residents and gang members sometimes forge temporary alliances and engage in self-initiated policing so that

neighborhood children may play safely at the park or enjoy other everyday activities without fear of harm. Venkatesh's study reveals people's efforts to survive with the resources they amass in the underground economy, as well as residents' willingness to negotiate with gang members if it will help restore a sense of order to their neighborhood. This unique form of community policing often takes place without the assistance of law enforcement officials.

In this chapter, we look at the relationship among conformity, deviance, and crime; even in times of economic hardships and other national crises, "everyday" deviance and crime occur as usual. People do not stop activities that might be viewed by others—or by law enforcement officials—as violating social norms. An example is gang behavior, which is used in this chapter as an example of deviant behavior. For individuals who find a source of identity, self-worth, and a feeling of protection by virtue of gang membership, no radical change occurs in daily life even as events around them may change. Youth gangs have been present in the United States for many years because they meet the perceived needs of members. Some gangs may be thought of as being very similar to youth cliques, whereas other gangs engage in activities that constitute crime. Before reading on, take the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz on peer cliques, youth gangs, and deviance.

What Is Deviance?

Deviance is any behavior, belief, or condition that violates significant social norms in the society or group in which it occurs. We are most familiar with *behavioral* deviance, based on a person's intentional or inadvertent actions. For example, a person may engage in intentional deviance by drinking too much or robbing a bank, or in inadvertent deviance by losing money in a Las Vegas casino or laughing at a funeral.

Although we usually think of deviance as a type of behavior, people may be regarded as deviant if they express a radical or unusual *belief system*. Members of cults (such as Moonies and satanists) or of far-right-wing or far-left-wing political groups may be considered deviant when their religious or political beliefs become known to people with more conventional cultural beliefs. However, individuals who are considered to be "deviant" by one category of people may be seen as conformists by another group. For example, adolescents in some peer cliques and youth gangs may shun mainstream cultural beliefs and values but routinely conform to subcultural codes of dress, attitude (such as defiant individualism), and behavior (Jankowski, 1991). Those who think of themselves as "Goths" may wear black trench coats, paint their fingernails black, and listen to countercultural musicians.

In addition to their behavior and beliefs, individuals may also be regarded as deviant because they possess a specific *condition* or *characteristic*. A wide range of conditions have been identified as "deviant," including being obese (Degher and Hughes, 1991; Goode, 1996) and having AIDS (Weitz, 2004). For example, research by the sociologist Rose Weitz (2004) has shown that persons with AIDS live with a stigma that affects their relationships with other people, including family members, friends, lovers, colleagues, and health care workers. Chapter 4 defines a *stigma* as any physical or social attribute or sign that so devalues

◄ Although most people think of a high school clique as being far different from a gang, patterns of inclusion and exclusion operate similarly in both groups. In this still from the movie *Mean Girls,* note the three young women on the right-hand side. In what ways are they excluding the young woman (played by Lindsey Lohan) on the left?

© Everett Collection

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Peer Cliques, Youth Gangs, and Deviance?

True	False	
T	F	1. According to some sociologists, deviance may serve a useful purpose in society.
T	F	2. Peer cliques on high school campuses have few similarities to youth gangs.
T	F	3. Most people join gangs to escape from broken homes caused by divorce or the death of a parent.
T	F	4. Juvenile gangs are an urban problem; few rural areas have problems with gangs.
T	F	5. Street crime has a much higher economic cost to society than crimes committed in executive suites or by government officials.
T	F	6. Rising crime rates are accurately reflected by the extensive crime coverage in the media and the growing number of crime dramas (such as *CSI* and *Law & Order* and its spin-offs) on television.
T	F	7. Studies have shown that peer cliques have become increasingly important to adolescents over the past two decades.
T	F	8. Gangs are an international problem.

Answers on page 168.

a person's social identity that it disqualifies the person from full social acceptance (Goffman, 1963b). Based on this definition, the stigmatized person has a "spoiled identity" as a result of being negatively evaluated by others (Goffman, 1963b). To avoid or reduce stigma, many people seek to conceal the characteristic or condition that might lead to stigmatization.

Who Defines Deviance?

Are some behaviors, beliefs, and conditions inherently deviant? In commonsense thinking, deviance is often viewed as inherent in certain kinds of behavior or people. For sociologists, however, deviance is a formal property of social situations and social structure. As the sociologist Kai T. Erikson (1964: 11) explains,

> Deviance is not a property inherent in certain forms of behavior; it is a property conferred upon these forms by the audiences which directly or indirectly witness them. The critical variable in the study of deviance, then, is the social audience rather than the individual actor, since it is the audience which eventually determines whether or not any episode of behavior or any class of episodes is labeled deviant.

Based on this statement, we can conclude that deviance is *relative*—that is, an act becomes deviant when it is socially defined as such. Definitions of deviance vary widely from place to place, from time to time, and from group to group (see "Sociology Works!"). Today, for example, some women wear blue jeans and very short hair to college classes; some men wear an earring and long hair. In the past, such looks violated established dress codes in many schools, and administrators probably would have asked these students to change their appearance or leave school.

Deviant behavior also varies in its *degree of seriousness,* ranging from mild transgressions of folkways, to more serious infringements of mores, to quite serious violations of the law. Have you kept a library book past its due date or cut classes? If so, you have violated folkways. Others probably view your infraction as relatively minor; at most, you might have to pay a fine or receive a lower grade.

> **deviance** any behavior, belief, or condition that violates significant social norms in the society or group in which it occurs.

papers sold or shared on the Web" (*Los Angeles Times*). Have students research the justifications that plagiarists typically use and discuss plagiarism in the broader context of social deviance.
- **Quote, Unquote:** "Men are rewarded or punished not for what they do but for how their acts are defined. That is why men are more interested in better justifying themselves than in better

behaving themselves" (Thomas Szasz). In smaller groups, relate this observation to the social construction of deviance.
- **Applied Sociology:** Have students rephrase the following in their own words: "The hermetic communities pictured in *Brokeback Mountain* illustrate sociologist Kai T. Erikson's findings in *Wayward Puritans* (1966)—that American communities have always defined themselves in terms of who doesn't belong in them. The deviant,

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Peer Cliques, Youth Gangs, and Deviance

1. **True.** From Durkheim to contemporary functionalists, theorists have regarded some degree of deviance as functional for societies.
2. **False.** Many social scientists believe that there are striking similarities between adolescent cliques and youth gangs, including the demands that are placed on members in each category to conform to group norms pertaining to behavior, appearance, and the people with whom one is allowed to associate.
3. **False.** Recent studies have found that people join gangs for a variety of reasons, including the desire to gain access to money, recreation, and protection.
4. **False.** Gangs are frequently thought of as an urban problem because central-city gangs organized around drug dealing have become prominent in recent years; however, gangs are found in suburban counties, smaller cities, Native American reservations, and rural counties throughout the country as well.
5. **False.** Although street crime—such as assault and robbery—often has a greater psychological cost, crimes committed by persons in top positions in business (such as accounting and tax fraud) or government (including the Pentagon) have a far greater economic cost, especially for U.S. taxpayers.
6. **False.** Despite extensive news media coverage and popular culture representations of a rapidly growing crime rate in the United states, crime rates overall are declining.
7. **True.** As more youths grow up in single-parent households or in households where both parents are employed, many adolescents have turned to members of their peer cliques to satisfy their emotional needs and to gain information.
8. **True.** Gangs are found in nations around the world. In countries such as Japan, youth gangs are often points of entry into adult crime organizations.

Sources: Based on Adler and Adler, 2003; and FBI, 2008.

Violations of mores—such as falsifying a college application or cheating on an examination—are viewed as more serious infractions and are punishable by stronger sanctions, such as academic probation or expulsion. Some forms of deviant behavior violate the criminal law, which defines the behaviors that society labels as criminal. A **crime** is a behavior that violates criminal law and is punishable with fines, jail terms, and/or other negative sanctions. Crimes range from minor offenses (such as traffic violations) to major offenses (such as murder). A subcategory, **juvenile delinquency, refers to a violation of law or the commission of a status offense by young people.** Note that the legal concept of juvenile delinquency includes not only crimes but also status offenses, which are illegal only when committed by younger people (such as cutting school or running away from home).

What Is Social Control?

Societies not only have norms and laws that govern acceptable behavior; they also have various mechanisms to control people's behavior. **Social control refers to the systematic practices that social groups develop in order to encourage conformity to norms, rules, and laws and to discourage deviance.** Social control mechanisms may be either internal or external. Internal social control takes place through the socialization process: Individuals *internalize* societal norms and values that prescribe how people should behave and then follow those norms and values in their everyday lives. By contrast, external social control involves the use of negative sanctions that proscribe certain behaviors and set forth the punishments for rule breakers and nonconformists. In contemporary societies, the

whether religious, political, or sexual, has always needed to be identified from among the existing population, then exterminated or expelled" (Gary Indiana, *Village Voice*).
- **For Discussion:** "Violence among young people is an aspect of their desire to create. They don't know how to use their energy creatively so they do the opposite and destroy" (Anthony Burgess).

Ask students what they make of this interpretation of youth violence. What does it get right? What does it miss?
- **Active Learning:** After they take the Sociology in Everyday Life quiz, ask students to share their answers in pairs. Check for the correct answers aloud, and use this as a starting point for a discussion of gangs and cliques.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

sociology works!

Social Definitions of Deviance: Have You Seen Bigfoot or a UFO Lately?

My mind's open to anything. After all, they just found another planet. So, who knows? Anything's possible.

> —Jim Maier, a resident of Seneca, Illinois, explaining why he thinks it might be possible that a group of observers actually saw Bigfoot (a so-called "wild man" who is allegedly covered in hair, stands about eight feet tall, has a strong odor, and walks on much larger feet than those of a typical human being) near his community, about seventy miles southwest of Chicago (qtd. in Wischnowsky, 2005)

Bigfoot is one of those things that people like to believe in. . . . Regardless of whether there are such things as Bigfoot, people like that thrill of uncertainty, that sense of danger. It's exciting to try and discover the unknown. And it's a lot more fun to have that little bit of doubt when you're sitting out in the woods.

> —sociologist Christopher Bader describing why tales of the improbable, such as sightings of Bigfoot (also known as Sasquatch), are exciting and believable to some individuals, whereas others think that people who spend countless hours waiting in a densely wooded area to catch sight of Bigfoot are engaged in deviant behavior (qtd. in Wischnowsky, 2005)

Sociology contributes to our thinking about conformity and deviance by making us aware that the people we are around help us define what we think of as "normal" beliefs and actions. If we are surrounded by individuals who believe that a Bigfoot or UFO (unidentified flying object) sighting is just around the corner, we may think of such beliefs as normal and gain a personal sense of belonging when we go out and wait with these individuals for Bigfoot or a flying saucer to show up. For this reason, some people join groups such as the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization (**www.bfro.net**) so that they can share their outings, compare field notes on recent sightings, and feel that they are part of an important group or a clique. Among other Bigfoot believers, followers are treated with respect when they record sightings rather than receiving blank stares or comments like "You've got to be kidding?" all the while they are being labeled as "weird" or "deviant" by outsiders who are nonbelievers (Wischnowsky, 2005).

Looking at the seemingly deviant behavior of going out on Bigfoot or UFO sightings from a sociological perspective, researchers such as Christopher Bader place these actions within a larger social context. One context Bader uses for studying people's fascination with Bigfoot sightings and other paranormal occurrences is the sociology of religion. According to Bader, many people who believe in Bigfoot or UFOs "believe without the kinds of evidence that would convince outsiders—it's a matter of faith" (qtd. in Weiss, 2004). This faith may be intensified by use of the Internet, where true believers may easily report their sightings without fear of ridicule or being identified as deviant by outsiders.

reflect & analyze

At your college or university, what beliefs and actions of individuals and groups might be classified as conformity by some people but identified as deviance by others? For example, do some students and/or professors believe that certain buildings are haunted and stay away from those areas?

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criminal justice system, which includes the police, the courts, and the prisons, is the primary mechanism of external social control.

If most actions deemed deviant do little or no direct harm to society or its members, why is social control so important to groups and societies? Why is the same belief or action punished in one group or society and not in another? These questions pose interesting theoretical concerns and research topics for sociologists and criminologists who examine

crime behavior that violates criminal law and is punishable with fines, jail terms, and other sanctions.

juvenile delinquency a violation of law or the commission of a status offense by young people.

social control systematic practices developed by social groups to encourage conformity to norms, rules, and laws and to discourage deviance.

- **Extra Examples:** Assign students to listen to the *This American Life* podcast on "The Allure of Crime" (episode 135). Have them analyze the crime stories described in terms of social deviance and social control (thisamericanlife.org).
- **Popular Culture:** Bigfoot's body has been found, according to two Georgia men who held a press conference to display three blurry photos said to depict the huge furry creature. They also presented an e-mail from Curt Nelson, a University of Minnesota scientist who analyzed DNA samples provided by the two men. Nelson said one of the samples came from a human, the other from an opossum. The presenters sidestepped the issue by saying that is what their Bigfoot must have recently eaten (Discovery Channel, 8/2008).

issues pertaining to law, social control, and the criminal justice system. *Criminology* **is the systematic study of crime and the criminal justice system, including the police, courts, and prisons.**

The primary interest of sociologists and criminologists is not questions of how crime and criminals can best be controlled but rather social control as a social product. Sociologists do not judge certain kinds of behavior or people as being "good" or "bad." Instead, they attempt to determine what types of behavior are defined as deviant, who does the defining, how and why people become deviants, and how society deals with deviants. Although sociologists have developed a number of theories to explain deviance and crime, no one perspective is a comprehensive explanation of all deviance. Each theory provides a different lens through which we can examine aspects of deviant behavior.

Functionalist Perspectives on Deviance

As we have seen in previous chapters, functionalists focus on societal stability and the ways in which various parts of society contribute to the whole. According to functionalists, a certain amount of deviance contributes to the smooth functioning of society.

What Causes Deviance, and Why Is It Functional for Society?

Sociologist Emile Durkheim believed that deviance is rooted in societal factors such as rapid social change and lack of social integration among people. As you will recall, Durkheim attributed the social upheaval he saw at the end of the nineteenth century to the shift from mechanical to organic solidarity, which was brought about by rapid industrialization and urbanization. Although many people continued to follow the dominant morals (norms, values, and laws) as best they could, rapid social change contributed to *anomie*—a social condition in which people experience a sense of futility because social norms are weak, absent, or conflicting. According to Durkheim, as social integration (bonding and community involvement) decreased, deviance and crime increased. However, from his perspective, this was not altogether bad because he believed that deviance has positive social functions in terms of its consequences. For Durkheim (1964a/1895), deviance is a natural and inevitable part of all societies. Likewise, contemporary functionalist theorists suggest that deviance is universal because it serves three important functions:

1. *Deviance clarifies rules.* By punishing deviant behavior, society reaffirms its commitment to the rules and clarifies their meaning.
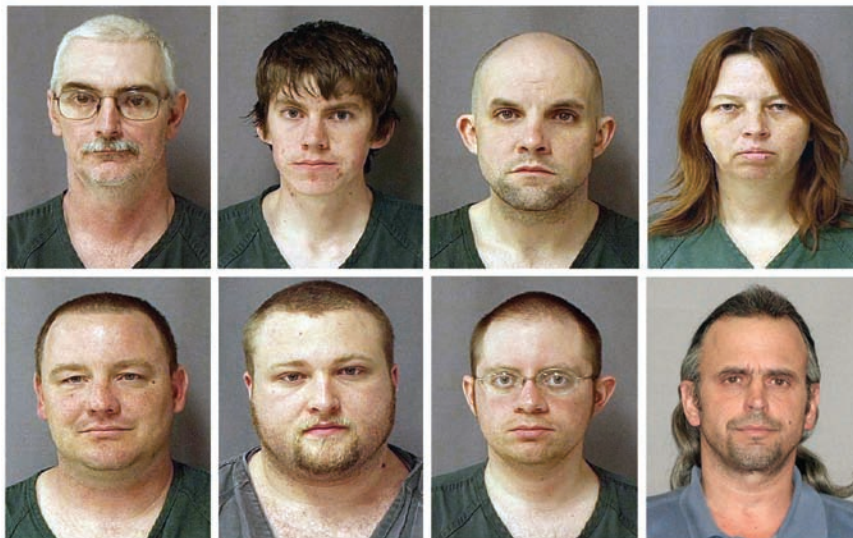
▲ Shown here are eight of the nine members arrested in 2010 from a Michigan group called Hutaree, which federal authorities described as consisting of domestic terrorists who planned to wage war against the government. How is such a group an example of deviance?

2. *Deviance unites a group.* When deviant behavior is seen as a threat to group solidarity and people unite in opposition to that behavior, their loyalties to society are reinforced.

3. *Deviance promotes social change.* Deviants may violate norms in order to get them changed. For example, acts of *civil disobedience*—including lunch counter sit-ins and bus boycotts—were used to protest and eventually correct injustices such as segregated buses and lunch counters in the South.

Functionalists acknowledge that deviance may also be dysfunctional for society. If too many people violate the norms, everyday existence may become unpredictable, chaotic, and even violent. If even a few people commit acts that are so violent that they threaten the survival of a society, then deviant acts move into the realm of the criminal and even the unthinkable. Of course, the example that stands out in everyone's mind is terrorist attacks around the world and the fear that remains constantly present as a result.

Although there is a wide array of contemporary functionalist theories regarding deviance and crime, many of these theories focus on social structure. For this reason, the first theory we will discuss is referred to as a structural functionalist approach. It describes the relationship between the society's economic structure and why people might engage in various forms of deviant behavior.

Strain Theory: Goals and Means to Achieve Them

Modifying Durkheim's (1964a/1895) concept of *anomie,* the sociologist Robert Merton (1938, 1968) developed strain theory. According to *strain theory, people feel strain when they are exposed to cultural goals that they are unable to obtain because they do not have access to culturally approved means of achieving those goals.* The goals may be material possessions and money; the approved means may include an education and jobs. When denied legitimate access to these goals, some people seek access through deviant means.

Merton identified five ways in which people adapt to cultural goals and approved ways of achieving them: conformity, innovation, ritualism,

▲ The sociologist Robert Merton identified five ways in which people adapt to cultural goals and approved ways of achieving them. Consider the young woman shown here. Which of Merton's modes of adaptation might best explain her views on social life?

retreatism, and rebellion (see ■ Table 6.1). According to Merton, *conformity* occurs when people accept culturally approved goals and pursue them through approved means. Persons who want to achieve success through conformity work hard, save their money, and so on. Even people who find that they are blocked from achieving a high level of education or a lucrative career may take a lower-paying job and attend school part time, join the military, or seek alternative (but legal) avenues, such as playing the lottery, to "strike it rich."

Conformity is also crucial for members of middle- and upper-class teen cliques, who often gather in small groups to share activities and confidences.

> **criminology** the systematic study of crime and the criminal justice system, including the police, courts, and prisons.
>
> **strain theory** the proposition that people feel strain when they are exposed to cultural goals that they are unable to obtain because they do not have access to culturally approved means of achieving those goals.

positive deviance. Explain the full range of social control from giggles, shunning, and punishment to violent punishment and death.
• **Media Coverage:** "Body art is a growing fashion trend, even among highly educated folk, but business executives in positions to hire won't see the Cupid-like hearts and purple razor-blade stains as mini-Picassos or as signs of intellectual prowess. More likely, they'll see the 'art' as a sign of recklessness, at best, say

researchers at Texas State University. And in the event you land a white-collar job, even your colleagues won't want to have much to do with you, said management professor Brian K. Miller, explaining the survey of 150 people, some with and some without body art" (Cox News Service, 8/2008). Have students look up the original survey and evaluate the conclusions in the quoted statement above.

table 6.1

Merton's Strain Theory of Deviance

Mode of Adaptation	Method of Adaptation	Seeks Culture's Goals	Follows Culture's Approved Ways
Conformity	Accepts culturally approved goals; pursues them through culturally approved means	Yes	Yes
Innovation	Accepts culturally approved goals; adopts disapproved means of achieving them	Yes	No
Ritualism	Abandons society's goals but continues to conform to approved means	No	Yes
Retreatism	Abandons both approved goals and the approved means to achieve them	No	No
Rebellion	Challenges both the approved goals and the approved means to achieve them	No—seeks to replace	No—seeks to replace

Some youths are members of a variety of cliques, and peer approval is of crucial significance to them—being one of the "in" crowd, not a "loner," is a significant goal for many teenagers. In the aftermath of the recent school shootings, for example, journalists trekked to school campuses to report that athletes ("jocks"), cheerleaders, and other "popular" students enforce the social code at high schools (Adler, 1999; Cohen, 1999).

Merton classified the remaining four types of adaptation as deviance:

- *Innovation* occurs when people accept society's goals but adopt disapproved means for achieving them. Innovations for acquiring material possessions or money cover a wide variety of illegal activities, including theft and drug dealing.
- *Ritualism* occurs when people give up on societal goals but still adhere to the socially approved means for achieving them. Ritualism is the opposite of innovation; persons who cannot obtain expensive material possessions or wealth may nevertheless seek to maintain the respect of others by being a "hard worker" or "good citizen."
- *Retreatism* occurs when people abandon both the approved goals and the approved means of achieving them. Merton included persons such as skid-row alcoholics and drug addicts in this category; however, not all retreatists are destitute. Some may be middle- or upper-income individuals who see themselves as rejecting the conventional trappings of success or the means necessary to acquire them.

- *Rebellion* occurs when people challenge both the approved goals and the approved means for achieving them and advocate an alternative set of goals or means. To achieve their alternative goals, rebels may use violence (such as vandalism or rioting) or may register their displeasure with society through acts of vandalism or graffiti (as further discussed in the You Can Make a Difference box).

Opportunity Theory: Access to Illegitimate Opportunities

Expanding on Merton's strain theory, sociologists Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin (1960) suggested that for deviance to occur, people must have access to *illegitimate opportunity structures—circumstances that provide an opportunity for people to acquire through illegitimate activities what they cannot achieve through legitimate channels.* For example, gang members may have insufficient legitimate means to achieve conventional goals of status and wealth but have illegitimate opportunity structures—such as theft, drug dealing, or robbery—through which they can achieve these goals. In his study of the "Diamonds," a Chicago street gang whose members are second-generation Puerto Rican youths, sociologist Felix M. Padilla (1993) found that gang membership was linked to the members' belief that they might reach their aspirations by transforming the gang into a business enterprise. Coco, one of the Diamonds, explains

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **For Discussion:** Provide examples of illegitimate opportunity structures. Have students discuss what social conditions make these circumstances possible.
- **Research:** Sociologist Elijah Anderson argues that the drug economy is an employment agency for young men who lack other

opportunities. Have students research and evaluate Anderson's work and discuss possible solutions to this problem.
- **Table Note:** Trace the development of Merton's theory from its roots in Durkheim's anomie theory. Use Table 6.1 to help students understand the strain involved in each mode of adaptation.

you can make a difference

Seeing the Writing on the Wall—and Doing Something About It!

"Pirus Rule the Streets of Bompton Fools"

What does this graffiti—written on a Compton, California, wall—mean? To figure out the message, it helps to know that Pirus is a collective made up of several Blood gangs (street gangs identified, among other things, by the red color worn by members) in Los Angeles County. Gang graffiti such as "Pirus Rule" is one way the gang claims its supremacy not only over rival gangs but also over the city as a whole, as indicated by the way the letter "C" in Compton was replaced with a "B" to emphasize the gang's Blood/Pirus identity (Alonso, 1998: 17).

Although not all graffiti is done by street gangs, some gang member use graffiti as an illegal form of communication. Although "taggers" primarily use graffiti as (at least in their opinion) an art form, street gangs use graffiti to increase their visibility, mark their territory, threaten rival gangs, and intimidate local residents (Salt Lake City Sheriff's Department, 2007). According to law enforcement officials, taggers are usually less violent than are members of traditional street gangs, and their "art" is usually more "artistic" and less threatening than street-gang graffiti. However, the work of both taggers and street-gang members defaces walls, buses, subways, and other public areas.

Is there anything we can do when we see graffiti to get it removed and to improve the appearance of our community? How might we lessen the opportunities for gang members to use graffiti to communicate with one another and to threaten outsiders? Here are some suggestions from law enforcement officials:

- Do not confront or challenge a person who is tagging a wall or writing graffiti on a public space. Whether they are gang members or not, some taggers are armed, and even if unarmed, they may assault a challenger with spray paint or a physical attack.
- Make sure that owners of private property or public officials are notified about the graffiti because it is important that the graffiti be painted over immediately.

Studies show that if graffiti is left up, it becomes a status symbol, and the area is likely to be hit again and again.

- Look for adopt-a-wall programs or other groups in which volunteers assist in cleaning off or painting over graffiti.
- Find out if your city has a graffiti hotline where you can report graffiti. Many cities have instituted these hotlines so that graffiti can be quickly removed from both public and private property.
- Be aware of graffiti done by children and young people that might indicate that they are thinking about, or have become involved with, gangs. Look for graffiti on or around a residence, such as drawings or "doodles" of gang-related figures, themes of violence, or gang symbols. Also look for the use of substitute letters, such as replacing the "C" in Compton with a "B" (as discussed above) or intentionally misspelling a word (such as when "cigarette" becomes "bigarette") because the removed letter is in a rival gang's name. (Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, 2002; NAGIA, 2007)

Although graffiti may appear to be a small issue when it is examined within the larger context of gang-related activity and urban crimes, this kind of behavior is one telling sign that law enforcement officials use when identifying possible criminal trends. A dramatic increase in the amount of graffiti in a community is often a sign that gang membership is growing and that gang activities are becoming more confrontational toward rival gangs and toward society as a whole.

For additional information on graffiti and gang indicators, conduct searches on these websites:

- Center for Problem-Oriented Policing
  www.popcenter.org

- National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations
  www.nagia.org

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the importance of sticking together in the gang's income-generating business organization:

> We are a group, a community, a family—we have to learn to live together. If we separate, we will never have a chance. We need each other even to make

illegitimate opportunity structures circumstances that provide an opportunity for people to acquire through illegitimate activities what they cannot achieve through legitimate channels.

- **Active Learning:** Send your students out to discover the graffiti regulations in your city. What are some of the ways your city has tried to address this problem?
- **Media Coverage:** "The Provo Municipal Council voted earlier this week to crack down on taggers by billing them for the cleanup of their own vandalism. The new law also makes it a class B misdemeanor not only to create graffiti, but to be caught in a public area with the tools of the trade and the intent to vandalize. The law also makes the city responsible for cleaning up graffiti on private property if the owner requests it—an attempt to relieve the burden felt by residents whose property is frequently tagged" (Provo, Utah, 9/2008). Ask students whether they consider this a constructive response to graffiti vandalism.

sure that we have a spot for selling our supply [of drugs]. You know, there is people around here, like some opposition, that want to take over your *negocio* [business]. And they think that they can do this very easy. So we stick together, and that makes other people think twice about trying to take over what is yours. In our case, the opposition has never tried messing with our hood, and that's because they know it's protected real good by us fellas. (qtd. in Padilla, 1993: 104)

Based on their research, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) identified three basic gang types—criminal, conflict, and retreatist—which emerge on the basis of what type of illegitimate opportunity structure is available in a specific area. The *criminal gang* is devoted to theft, extortion, and other illegal means of securing an income. For young men who grow up in a criminal gang, running drug houses and selling drugs on street corners make it possible for them to support themselves and their families as well as purchase material possessions to impress others. By contrast, *conflict gangs* emerge in communities that do not provide either legitimate or illegitimate opportunities. Members of conflict gangs seek to acquire a "rep" (reputation) by fighting over "turf" (territory) and adopting a value system of toughness, courage, and similar qualities. On some Native American reservations, for example, homegrown gangs routinely fight their rivals, often over a minor incident or slight, and engage in thefts, assaults, and property crimes in some of the nation's poorest, most neglected places, including the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation (Eckholm, 2009). Unlike criminal and conflict gangs, members of *retreatist gangs* are unable to gain success through legitimate means and are unwilling to do so through illegal ones. As a result, the consumption of drugs is stressed, and addiction is prevalent.

Sociologist Lewis Yablonsky (1997) has updated Cloward and Ohlin's findings on delinquent gangs. According to Yablonsky, today's gangs are more likely to use and sell drugs, and to carry more lethal weapons than gang members did in the past. Today's gangs have become more varied in their activities and are more likely to engage in intraracial conflicts, with "black on black and Chicano on Chicano violence," whereas minority gangs in the past tended to band together to defend their turf

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▲ Conflict theorists suggest that criminal law is unequally enforced along class lines. Consider this setting, in which low-income defendants are arraigned by a judge who sees them only on a television monitor. Do you think, as a rule, that these defendants will be as well represented by attorneys as a wealthier defendant might be?

from gangs of different racial and ethnic backgrounds (Yablonsky, 1997: 3).

How useful are social structural approaches such as opportunity theory and strain theory in explaining deviant behavior? Although there are weaknesses in these approaches, they focus our attention on one crucial issue: the close association between certain forms of deviance and social class position. According to criminologist Anne Campbell (1984: 267), gangs are a "microcosm of American society, a mirror image in which power, possession, rank, and role . . . are found within a subcultural life of poverty and crime."

Conflict Perspectives on Deviance

Who determines what kinds of behavior are deviant or criminal? Different branches of conflict theory offer somewhat divergent answers to this question. One branch emphasizes power as the central factor

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- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Extra Examples:** Assign students to research recent examples of white-collar crime and to apply functionalist and conflict perspectives to these situations. Examples could include the Enron executives, Bernard Madoff, and the ongoing Goldman Sachs investigation.

- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss why the activities of poor and lower-income individuals might be more often defined as criminal than those of middle- and upper-income persons.

in defining deviance and crime: People in positions of power maintain their advantage by using the law to protect their interests. Another branch emphasizes the relationship between deviance and capitalism, whereas a third focuses on feminist perspectives and the confluence of race, class, and gender issues in regard to deviance and crime.

Deviance and Power Relations

Conflict theorists who focus on power relations in society suggest that the lifestyles considered deviant by political and economic elites are often defined as illegal. According to this approach, norms and laws are established for the benefit of those in power and do not reflect any absolute standard of right and wrong (Turk, 1969, 1977). As a result, the activities of poor and lower-income individuals are more likely to be defined as criminal than those of persons from middle- and upper-income backgrounds. Moreover, the criminal justice system is more focused on, and is less forgiving of, deviant and criminal behavior engaged in by people in specific categories. For example, research shows that young, single, urban males are more likely to be perceived as members of the *dangerous classes* and receive stricter sentences in criminal courts (Miethe and Moore, 1987). Power differentials are also evident in how victims of crime are treated. When the victims are wealthy, white, and male, law enforcement officials are more likely to put forth more extensive efforts to apprehend the perpetrator as contrasted with cases in which the victims are poor, black, and female (Smith, Visher, and Davidson, 1984). Recent research generally supports this assertion (Wonders, 1996).

Deviance and Capitalism

A second branch of conflict theory—Marxist/critical theory—views deviance and crime as a function of the capitalist economic system. Although the early economist and social thinker Karl Marx wrote very little about deviance and crime, many of his ideas are found in a critical approach that has emerged from earlier Marxist and radical perspectives on criminology. The critical approach is based on the assumption that the laws and the criminal justice system protect the power and privilege of the capitalist class. As you may recall from Chapter 1, Marx based his critique of capitalism on the inherent conflict that he believed existed between the capitalists (bourgeoisie) and the working class (proletariat). In a capitalist society, social institutions (such as law, politics, and education, which make up the superstructure) legitimize existing class inequalities and maintain the capitalists' superior position in the class structure. According to Marx, capitalism produces haves and have-nots, who engage in different forms of deviance and crime.

According to the sociologist Richard Quinney (2001/1974), people with economic and political power define as criminal any behavior that threatens their own interests. The powerful use law to control those who are without power. For example, drug laws enacted early in the twentieth century were actively enforced in an effort to control immigrant workers, especially the Chinese, who were being exploited by the railroads and other industries (Tracy, 1980). By contrast, antitrust legislation passed at about the same time was seldom enforced against large corporations owned by prominent families such as the Rockefellers, Carnegies, and Mellons. Having antitrust laws on the books

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▲ According to Karl Marx, capitalism produces haves and have-nots, and each group engages in different types of crime. Statistically, the man being arrested here is much more likely to be suspected of a financial crime than a violent crime.

- **Media Coverage:** "Nearly a year after O. J. Simpson walked into a casino hotel room intent on reclaiming some sports memorabilia, he and his lawyers walked into a courthouse Monday to pick jurors for his robbery–kidnapping trial. Simpson has said he put his faith in the jury system and was confident of an acquittal—a conviction could put him away for life" (Associated Press, 9/2008). Have students discuss Simpson's original acquittal, as well as his more recent conviction, in terms of his wealth, fame, and race.

merely shored up the government's legitimacy by making it appear responsive to public concerns about big business (Barnett, 1979).

In sum, the Marxist/critical approach argues that criminal law protects the interests of the affluent and powerful. The way that laws are written and enforced benefits the capitalist class by ensuring that individuals at the bottom of the social class structure do not infringe on the property or threaten the safety of those at the top (Reiman, 1998). However, others assert that critical theorists have not shown that powerful economic and political elites actually manipulate lawmaking and law enforcement for their own benefit. Rather, people of all classes share a consensus about the criminality of certain acts. For example, laws that prohibit murder, rape, and armed robbery protect not only middle- and upper-income people but also low-income people, who are frequently the victims of such violent crimes.

Feminist Approaches

Can theories developed to explain male behavior be used to understand female deviance and crime? According to feminist scholars, the answer is no. A new interest in women and deviance developed in 1975 when two books—Freda Adler's *Sisters in Crime* and Rita James Simons's *Women and Crime*—declared that women's crime rates were going to increase significantly as a result of the women's liberation movement. Although this so-called *emancipation theory* of female crime has been refuted by subsequent analysts, Adler's and Simons's works encouraged feminist scholars (both women and men) to examine more closely the relationship among gender, deviance, and crime. More recently, feminist scholars such as Kathleen Daly and Meda Chesney-Lind (1988) have developed theories and conducted research to fill the void in our knowledge about gender and crime. For example, in a study of the female offender, Chesney-Lind (1997) examined the cultural factors in women's lives that may contribute to their involvement in criminal behavior.

▲ After this young prostitute advertised her services on Craigslist, the Sacramento vice squad and the FBI arranged a meeting that led to her arrest. Which of the feminist theories of women's crime best explains this young woman's offense?

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Although there is no single feminist perspective on deviance and crime, three schools of thought have emerged.

Why do women engage in deviant behavior and commit crimes? According to the *liberal feminist approach*, women's deviance and crime are a rational response to the gender discrimination that women experience in families and the workplace. From this view, lower-income and minority women typically have fewer opportunities not only for education and good jobs but also for "high-end" criminal endeavors. As some feminist theorists have noted, a woman is no more likely to be a big-time drug dealer or an organized crime boss than she is to be a corporate director (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988; Simpson, 1989).

By contrast, the *radical feminist approach* views the cause of women's crime as originating in patriarchy (male domination over females). This approach focuses on social forces that shape women's lives and experiences and shows how exploitation may trigger deviant behavior and criminal activities. From this view, arrests and prosecution for crimes such as prostitution reflect our society's sexual double standard whereby it is acceptable for a man to pay for sex but unacceptable for a woman to accept money for such services. Although state laws usually view both the female prostitute and the male customer as violating the law, in most states the woman is far

- **Popular Culture:** Feminist author Marilyn French notoriously wrote that "All men are rapists and that's all they are." What do you think French could have meant by this claim, if she didn't mean it on a literal level? What might she have been trying to say about power and sexuality in our culture?
- **Historical Perspective:** In 1903 Cesare Lombroso published *The Female Offender,* which characterized short, dark-haired women

with moles and masculine features as good candidates for becoming criminals. He thought criminal women were stronger than men, that they could handle pain better, and that prison would hardly affect them at all.

more likely than the man to be arrested, brought to trial, convicted, and sentenced.

The third school of feminist thought, the *Marxist (socialist) feminist approach,* is based on the assumption that women are exploited by both capitalism and patriarchy. Because most females have relatively low-wage jobs (if any) and few economic resources, crimes such as prostitution and shoplifting become a means to earn money or acquire consumer goods. However, instead of freeing women from their problems, prostitution institutionalizes women's dependence on men and results in a form of female sexual slavery (Vito and Holmes, 1994). Lower-income women are further victimized by the fact that they are often the targets of violent acts by lower-class males, who perceive themselves as being powerless in the capitalist economic system.

Some feminist scholars have noted that these approaches to explaining deviance and crime neglect the centrality of race and ethnicity and focus on the problems and perspectives of women who are white, middle and upper income, and heterosexual without taking into account the views of women of color, lesbians, and women with disabilities (Martin and Jurik, 1996).

Approaches Focusing on the Interaction of Race, Class, and Gender

Some studies have focused on the simultaneous effects of race, class, and gender on deviant behavior. In one study, the sociologist Regina Arnold (1990) examined the relationship between women's earlier victimization in their family and their subsequent involvement in the criminal justice system. Arnold interviewed African American women serving criminal sentences and found that adolescent females are often "labeled and processed as deviants—and subsequently as criminals—for refusing to accept or participate in their own victimization." Arnold attributes many of the women's offenses to living in families in which sexual abuse, incest, and other violence left them few choices except to engage in deviance. Economic marginality and racism also contributed to their victimization: "To be young, Black, poor, and female is to be in a high-risk category for victimization and stigmatization on many levels" (Arnold, 1990: 156). According to

Arnold, the criminal behavior of the women in her study was linked to class, gender, and racial oppression, which they experienced daily in their families and at school and work.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives on Deviance

As we discussed in Chapter 3, symbolic interactionists focus on *social processes,* such as how people develop a self-concept and learn conforming behavior through socialization. According to this approach, deviance is learned in the same way as conformity—through interaction with others. Although there are a number of symbolic interactionist perspectives on deviance, we will examine three major approaches—differential association and differential reinforcement theories, control theory, and labeling theory.

Differential Association Theory and Differential Reinforcement Theory

How do people learn deviant behavior through their interactions with others? According to the sociologist Edwin Sutherland (1939), people learn the necessary techniques and the motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes of deviant behavior from people with whom they associate. ***Differential association theory*** **states that people have a greater tendency to deviate from societal norms when they frequently associate with individuals who are more favorable toward deviance than conformity.** From this approach, criminal behavior is learned within intimate personal groups such as one's family and peer groups.

Differential association theory contributes to our knowledge of how deviant behavior reflects the individual's learned techniques, values, attitudes, motives, and rationalizations. It calls attention to the fact that criminal activity is more likely to occur

differential association theory the proposition that individuals have a greater tendency to deviate from societal norms when they frequently associate with persons who are more favorable toward deviance than conformity.

- **Research:** As many as 40 percent of all forced prostitutes are juveniles, according to the FBI. Have students conduct research on sexual slavery and human trafficking, including its impact on victims and their experiences in later life.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

▲ Is this example of graffiti likely to be the work of an isolated artist or of a gang member? In what ways do gangs reinforce such behavior?

with a well-dressed girl from "the wall." Barry walked around all day in the girl's expensive jeans and Doc Martens, carrying a shopping bag from Abercrombie & Fitch. "People kept saying, 'Oh, you look so pretty,'" she recalls. "I felt really uncomfortable." It was interesting, but the next day, and ever since, she's been back in her regular clothes. (qtd. in Adler, 1999: 58)

Another such approach to studying deviance is control theory, which suggests that conformity is often associated with a person's bonds to other people.

when a person has frequent, intense, and long-lasting interactions with others who violate the law. However, it does not explain why many individuals who have been heavily exposed to people who violate the law still engage in conventional behavior most of the time.

Criminologist Ronald Akers (1998) has combined differential association theory with elements of psychological learning theory to create *differential reinforcement theory,* which suggests that both deviant behavior and conventional behavior are learned through the same social processes. Akers starts with the fact that people learn to evaluate their own behavior through interactions with significant others. If the persons and groups that a particular individual considers most significant in his or her life define deviant behavior as being "right," the individual is more likely to engage in deviant behavior; likewise, if the person's most significant friends and groups define deviant behavior as "wrong," the person is less likely to engage in that behavior. This approach helps explain not only juvenile gang behavior but also how peer cliques on high school campuses have such a powerful influence on people's behavior. For example, when clique members at Glenbrook, a suburban Chicago high school, jealously "guarded" their favorite locations at the school, one student described her response to the powerful pressures to conform as follows:

As an experiment . . . Lauren Barry, a pink-haired trophy-case kid at Glenbrook, switched identities

Control Theory: Social Bonding

According to the sociologist Walter Reckless (1967), society produces pushes and pulls that move people toward criminal behavior; however, some people "insulate" themselves from such pressures by having positive self-esteem and good group cohesion. Reckless suggests that many people do not resort to deviance because of *inner containments*—such as self-control, a sense of responsibility, and resistance to diversions—and *outer containments*—such as supportive family and friends, reasonable social expectations, and supervision by others. Those with the strongest containment mechanisms are able to withstand external pressures that might cause them to participate in deviant behavior.

Extending Reckless's containment theory, sociologist Travis Hirschi's (1969) social control theory is based on the assumption that deviant behavior is minimized when people have strong bonds that bind them to families, schools, peers, churches, and other social institutions. 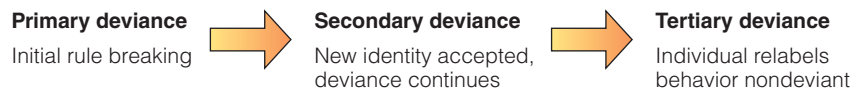**Social bond theory holds that the probability of deviant behavior increases when a person's ties to society are weakened or broken.** According to Hirschi, social bonding consists of (1) *attachment* to other people, (2) *commitment* to conformity, (3) *involvement* in conventional activities, and (4) *belief* in the legitimacy of conventional values and norms. Although Hirschi did not include females in his study, others who have replicated that study with both females and males have found that the theory appears to apply to each (see Naffine, 1987).

• **For Discussion:** According to control theory, the important question to ask is this: Why doesn't everyone engage in deviant behavior? Ask students to provide examples of social bonds in their own lives that may have kept them from engaging in socially or criminally deviant behavior.

• **Extra Examples:** Using the ideas behind control theory, have students explore the relationships among social integration, gang membership, and delinquency.

What does control theory have to say about delinquency and crime? Control theories suggest that the probability of delinquency increases when a person's social bonds are weak and when

peers promote antisocial values and violent behavior. However, some critics assert that Hirschi was mistaken in his assumption that a weakened social bond leads to deviant behavior. The chain of events may be just the opposite: People who routinely engage in deviant behavior may find that their bonds to people who would be positive influences are weakened over time (Agnew, 1985; Siegel, 2007). Or, as labeling theory suggests, people may engage in deviant and criminal behavior because of destructive social interactions and encounters (Siegel, 2007).

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▲ According to control theory, strong bonds—including close family ties—are a factor in explaining why many people do not engage in deviant behavior. Why do some sociologists believe that quality family time is more important in discouraging delinquent behavior than is time spent with other young people?

Labeling Theory

Labeling theory states that deviance is a socially constructed process in which social control agencies designate certain people as deviants, and they, in turn, come to accept the label placed upon them and begin to act accordingly. Based on the symbolic interaction theory of Charles H. Cooley and George H. Mead (see Chapter 3), labeling theory focuses on the variety of symbolic labels that people are given in their interactions with others.

How does the process of labeling occur? The act of fixing a person with a negative identity, such as "criminal" or "mentally ill," is directly related to the power and status of those persons who *do* the labeling and those who are *being labeled.* Behavior, then, is not deviant in and of itself; it is defined as such by a social audience (Erikson, 1962). According to the sociologist Howard Becker (1963), *moral entrepreneurs* are often the ones who create the rules about what constitutes deviant or conventional behavior. Becker believes that moral entrepreneurs use their own perspectives on "right" and "wrong" to establish the rules by which they expect other people to live. They also label others as deviant. Often these rules are enforced on persons with less power than

social bond theory the proposition that the probability of deviant behavior increases when a person's ties to society are weakened or broken.

labeling theory the proposition that deviants are those people who have been successfully labeled as such by others.

- **IRM:** Student Activities: Active Learning. Assign students to watch crime shows on television or the Internet and to look for examples of control and labeling theory. Consider having them watch episodes of the HBO series *The Wire,* which provides particularly powerful (and disturbing) examples of this process.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **For Discussion:** Have the class discuss how power relates to the labeling process. In the United States, what kinds of people have the greatest power to label others? Have them rephrase and apply the following statement: "Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit, and lost without deserving" (Shakespeare).
- **Extra Examples:** Have students analyze the following: "When a rule is enforced the person who is supposed to have broken

▶ **FIGURE 6.1** **A CLOSER LOOK AT LABELING THEORY**

Primary deviance
Initial rule breaking

→

Secondary deviance
New identity accepted, deviance continues

→

Tertiary deviance
Individual relabels behavior nondeviant

the moral entrepreneurs. Becker (1963: 9) concludes that the deviant is "one to whom the label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label."

As the definition of labeling theory suggests, several stages may occur in the labeling process (see ▶ Figure 6.1). *Primary deviance* **refers to the initial act of rule breaking** (Lemert, 1951). However, if individuals accept the negative label that has been applied to them as a result of the primary deviance, they are more likely to continue to participate in the type of behavior that the label was initially meant to control. *Secondary deviance* **occurs when a person who has been labeled a deviant accepts that new identity and continues the deviant behavior.** For example, a person may shoplift an item of clothing from a department store but not be apprehended or labeled as a deviant. The person may subsequently decide to forgo such behavior in the future. However, if the person shoplifts the item, is apprehended, is labeled as a "thief," and subsequently accepts that label, then the person may shoplift items from stores on numerous occasions. A few people engage in *tertiary deviance,* **which occurs when a person who has been labeled a deviant seeks to normalize the behavior by relabeling it as nondeviant** (Kitsuse, 1980). An example would be drug users who believe that using marijuana or other illegal drugs is no more deviant than drinking alcoholic beverages and therefore should not be stigmatized.

Can labeling theory be applied to high school peer groups and gangs? In a classic study, the sociologist William Chambliss (1973) documented how the labeling process works in some high schools when he studied two groups of adolescent boys: the "Saints" and the "Roughnecks." Members of both groups were constantly involved in acts of truancy, drinking, wild parties, petty theft, and vandalism. Although the Saints committed more offenses than the Roughnecks, the Roughnecks were the ones who were labeled as "troublemakers" and arrested by law enforcement officials. By contrast, the Saints were described as being the

"most likely to succeed," and none of the Saints were ever arrested. According to Chambliss (1973), the Roughnecks were more likely to be labeled as deviants because they came from lower-income families, did poorly in school, and were generally viewed negatively, whereas the Saints came from "good families," did well in school, and were generally viewed positively. Although both groups engaged in similar behavior, only the Roughnecks were stigmatized by a deviant label.

How successful is labeling theory in explaining deviance and social control? One contribution of labeling theory is that it calls attention to the way in which social control and personal identity are intertwined: Labeling may contribute to the acceptance of deviant roles and self-images. Critics argue that this does not explain what caused the original acts that constituted primary deviance, nor does it provide insight into why some people accept deviant labels and others do not (Cavender, 1995).

Postmodernist Perspectives on Deviance

Departing from other theoretical perspectives on deviance, some postmodern theorists emphasize that the study of deviance reveals how the powerful exert control over the powerless by taking away their free will to think and act as they might choose. From this approach, institutions such as schools, prisons, and mental hospitals use knowledge, norms, and values to categorize people into "deviant" subgroups such as slow learners, convicted felons, or criminally insane individuals, and then to control them through specific patterns of discipline.

An example of this idea is found in social theorist Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1979), in which Foucault examines the intertwining nature of power, knowledge, and social control. In this study of prisons from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s, Foucault found that many penal institutions ceased torturing prisoners who disobeyed the rules and began using new surveillance techniques to maintain social control. Although the prisons appeared to be more

it . . . is regarded as an outsider. But the person who is labeled an . . . outsider may have a different view of the matter. He may not accept the rule by which he is being judged and may not regard those who judge him as either competent or legitimately entitled to do so. Hence, a second meaning of the term emerges: the rule breaker may feel his judges are outsiders" (Howard Becker, *Outsiders*).

• **Media Coverage:** Between 1994 and 2001, the rate of unwanted pregnancies among affluent women fell by 20 percent, according to the Guttmacher Institute. During that same period, unwanted pregnancies for women below the poverty line increased by nearly 30 percent (*Washington Post*). Ask students to discuss these statistics in terms of labeling theory and economic power.

▲ Michel Foucault contended that new means of surveillance would make it possible for prison officials to use their knowledge of prisoners' activities as a form of power over the inmates. These guards are able to monitor the activities of many prisoners without ever leaving their station.

humane in the post-torture era, Foucault contends that the new means of surveillance impinged more on prisoners and brought greater power to prison officials. To explain, he described the *Panoptican*—a structure that gives prison officials the possibility of complete observation of criminals at all times. Typically, the Panoptican was a tower located in the center of a circular prison from which guards could see all the cells. Although the prisoners knew they could be observed at any time, they did not actually know when their behavior was being scrutinized. As a result, prison officials were able to use their knowledge as a form of power over the inmates. Eventually, the guards did not even have to be present all the time because prisoners believed that they were under constant scrutiny by officials in the observation post. If we think of this in contemporary times, we can see how cameras, computers, and other devices have made continual surveillance quite easy in virtually all institutions. In such cases, social control and discipline are based on the use of knowledge, power, and technology.

Foucault's view on deviance and social control has influenced other social analysts, including Shoshana Zuboff (1988), who views the computer as a modern Panoptican that gives workplace supervisors virtually unlimited capabilities for surveillance over subordinates. Today, cell phones and the Internet provide new opportunities for surveillance by government officials and others who are not visible to the individuals who are being watched.

We have examined functionalist, conflict, interactionist, and postmodernist perspectives on social control, deviance, and crime (see the Concept Quick Review). All of these explanations contribute to our understanding of the causes and consequences of deviant behavior; however, we now turn to the subject of crime itself.

Crime Classifications and Statistics

Crime in the United States can be divided into different categories. We will look first at the legal classifications of crime and then at categories typically used by sociologists and criminologists.

How the Law Classifies Crime

Crimes are divided into felonies and misdemeanors. The distinction between the two is based on the seriousness of the crime. A *felony* is a serious crime such as rape, homicide, or aggravated assault, for which punishment typically ranges from more than a year's imprisonment to death. A *misdemeanor* is a minor crime that is typically punished by less than one year in jail. In either event, a fine may be part of the sanction as well. Actions that constitute felonies and misdemeanors are determined by the legislatures in the various states; thus, their definitions vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

Other Crime Categories

The *Uniform Crime Report* (UCR) is the major source of information on crimes reported in the

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primary deviance the initial act of rule-breaking.

secondary deviance the process that occurs when a person who has been labeled a deviant accepts that new identity and continues the deviant behavior.

tertiary deviance deviance that occurs when a person who has been labeled a deviant seeks to normalize the behavior by relabeling it as nondeviant.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **For Discussion:** Help students connect Foucault's perspective on power to the management of deviance and crime: "Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Michel Foucault).

- **Popular Culture:** "We look at the Abu Ghraib scandal and don't recognize ourselves. Politicians from George Bush to Hillary Clinton insist that those photos of abuse don't depict their America. . . . But the reality, familiar from many instances where western democracies have sent troops to pacify foreign countries, is that there is almost always an ugly side. The Indian writer Salman Rushdie once said the British don't understand their history

[concept quick review 6.1]

Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance

	Theory	Key Elements
Functionalist Perspectives		
Robert Merton	Strain theory	Deviance occurs when access to the approved means of reaching culturally approved goals is blocked. Innovation, ritualism, retreatism, or rebellion may result.
Richard Cloward/Lloyd Ohlin	Opportunity theory	Lower-class delinquents subscribe to middle-class values but cannot attain them. As a result, they form gangs to gain social status and may achieve their goals through illegitimate means.
Conflict Perspectives		
Karl Marx Richard Quinney	Critical approach	The powerful use law and the criminal justice system to protect their own class interests.
Kathleen Daly Meda Chesney-Lind	Feminist approach	Historically, women have been ignored in research on crime. Liberal feminism views women's deviance as arising from gender discrimination, radical feminism focuses on patriarchy, and socialist feminism emphasizes the effects of capitalism and patriarchy on women's deviance.
Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives		
Edwin Sutherland	Differential association	Deviant behavior is learned in interaction with others. A person becomes delinquent when exposure to law-breaking attitudes is more extensive than exposure to law-abiding attitudes.
Travis Hirschi	Social control/social bonding	Social bonds keep people from becoming criminals. When ties to family, friends, and others become weak, an individual is most likely to engage in criminal behavior.
Howard Becker	Labeling theory	Acts are deviant or criminal because they have been labeled as such. Powerful groups often label less-powerful individuals.
Edwin Lemert	Primary/secondary deviance	Primary deviance is the initial act. Secondary deviance occurs when a person accepts the label of "deviant" and continues to engage in the behavior that initially produced the label
Postmodernist Perspective		
Michel Foucault	Knowledge as power	Power, knowledge, and social control are intertwined. In prisons, for example, new means of surveillance that make prisoners think they are being watched all the time give officials knowledge that inmates do not have. Thus, the officials have a form of power over the inmates.

United States. The UCR has been compiled since 1930 by the Federal Bureau of Investigation based on information filed by law enforcement agencies throughout the country. When we read that the rate of certain types of crimes has increased or decreased when compared with prior years, for example, this information is usually based on UCR data. The UCR focuses on violent crime and property crime (which, prior to 2004, were jointly referred to in that report as "index crimes"), but also contains data on other

because it happened overseas, and the same may be coming true for the U.S. also" (Tony Karon, *Time* magazine).
• **Table Note:** Use the Concept Quick Review table to review students on the essential concepts of each of the theories of deviance and crime presented in this chapter. Instead of addressing each theoretical perspective in succession, consider examining these theories through comparisons and contrasts.

• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
• **For Discussion:** Have students evaluate the following statement from Watergate burglar G. Gordon Liddy: "Obviously crime pays, or there'd be no crime." From a sociological perspective, is crime always self-interested? Are there other motives and processes involved?
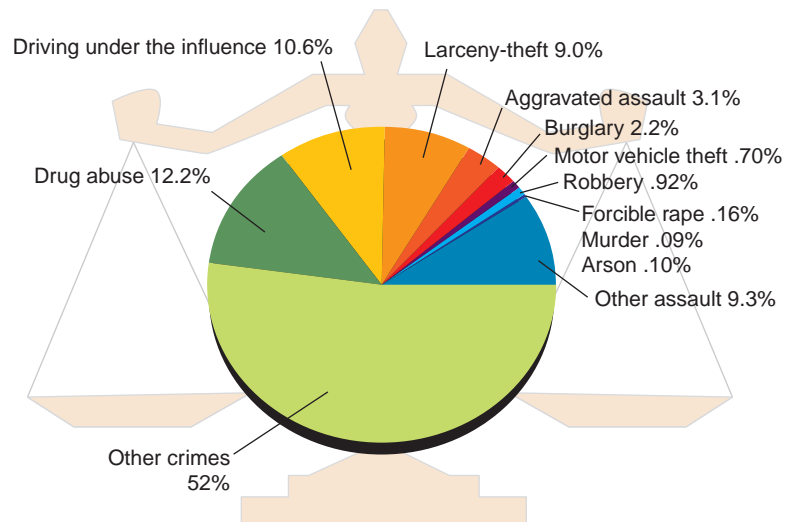
▲ **FIGURE 6.2** DISTRIBUTION OF ARRESTS BY TYPE OF OFFENSE, 2008

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.
Source: FBI, 2009.

types of crime (see ▶ Figure 6.2). In 2008 about 14 million arrests were made in the United States for all criminal infractions (excluding traffic violations). Although the UCR gives some indication of crime in the United States, the figures do not reflect the actual number and kinds of crimes, as will be discussed later.

Violent Crime *Violent crime consists of actions—murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—involving force or the threat of force against others.* Although only 4.25 percent of all arrests in the United States in 2008 were for violent crimes, this category is probably the most anxiety-provoking of all criminal behavior: Most of us know someone who has been a victim of violent crime, or we have been so ourselves. Victims are often physically injured or even lose their lives; the psychological trauma may last for years after the event (Parker and Anderson-Facile, 2000). Violent crime receives the most sustained attention from law enforcement officials and the media (see Warr, 2000).

Nationwide, there is growing concern over juvenile violence. Beginning in 1988, juvenile violent-crime arrest rates started to rise, a trend that has been linked by some scholars to gang membership (see Inciardi, Horowitz, and Pottieger, 1993; Thornberry et al., 1993). Fear of violence is felt not only by the general public but by gang members themselves, as Charles Campbell commented:

> The generation I'm in is going to be lost. Of the circle of friends I grew up in, three are dead, four are in jail, and another is out of school and just does nothing. When he runs out of money he'll sell a couple bags of weed. . . .
>
> I would carry a gun because I am worried about that brother on the fringe. There are some people, there is nothing out there for them. They will blow you away because they have nothing to lose. There are no jobs out there. It's hard to get money to go to school. (qtd. in Lee, 1993: 21)

Property Crime *Property crimes include burglary (breaking into private property to commit a serious crime), motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft (theft of property worth $50 or more), and arson.*

violent crime actions—murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—involving force or the threat of force against others.

property crimes burglary (breaking into private property to commit a serious crime), motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft (theft of property worth $50 or more), and arson.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Research:** The U.S. property crime rate fell 0.8 percent in 2008, part of a 5-year trend that showed a 5.3 percent drop in such crimes. This constitutes one of the lowest rates on record (FBI). Have students research these data further and some of the possible causes.

Some offenses, such as robbery, are both violent crimes and property crimes. In the United States, a property crime occurs, on average, once every 3.2 seconds; a violent crime occurs, on average, once every 22.8 seconds (see ▶ Figure 6.3). In most property crimes, the primary motive is to obtain money or some other desired valuable.

Public Order Crime *Public order crimes* involve an illegal action voluntarily engaged in by the participants, such as prostitution, illegal gambling, the private use of illegal drugs, and illegal pornography. Many people assert that such conduct should not be labeled as a crime; these offenses are often referred to as *victimless crimes* because they **involve a willing exchange of illegal goods or services among adults.** However, morals crimes can include children and adolescents as well as adults. Young children and adolescents may unwillingly become child pornography "stars" or prostitutes.

Occupational and Corporate Crime Although the sociologist Edwin Sutherland (1949) developed the theory of white-collar crime more than sixty years ago, it was not until the 1980s that the public became fully aware of its nature. *Occupational (white-collar) crime* comprises illegal activities committed by people in the course of their employment or financial affairs.

In addition to acting for their own financial benefit, some white-collar offenders become involved in criminal conspiracies designed to improve the market share or profitability of their companies. This is known as *corporate crime—illegal acts committed by corporate employees on behalf of the corporation and with its support.* Examples include antitrust violations; tax evasion; misrepresentations in advertising; infringements on patents, copyrights, and trademarks; price fixing; and financial fraud. These crimes are a result of deliberate decisions made by corporate personnel to enhance resources or profits at the expense of competitors, consumers, and the general public.

Although people who commit occupational and corporate crimes can be arrested, fined, and sent to prison, many people often have not regarded such behavior as "criminal." People who tend to condemn street crime are less sure of how their own (or their friends') financial and corporate behavior should be judged. At most, punishment for such offenses has usually been a fine or a relatively brief prison sentence.

Until recently, public concern and media attention focused primarily on the street crimes disproportionately committed by persons who were poor, powerless, and nonwhite. Today, however, part of our focus has shifted to crimes committed in corporate suites, such as fraud, tax evasion, and insider

In under 1 minute:

One property crime every 3.2 seconds
One larceny-theft every 4.8 seconds
One burglary every 14.2 seconds
One violent crime every 22.8 seconds
One motor vehicle theft every
    33.0 seconds
One aggravated assault every
    37.8 seconds

In less than 2 minutes:

One robbery

In less than 6 minutes:

One forcible rape

Every 32 minutes:

One murder
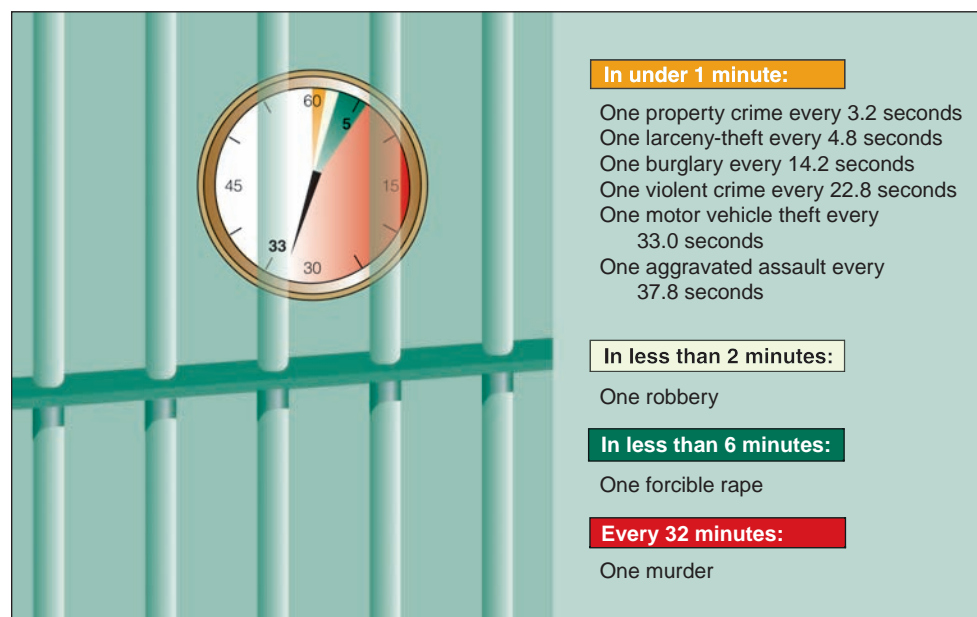
◀ **FIGURE 6.3** THE FBI CRIME CLOCK
Source: FBI, 2009.

• **Media Coverage:** "Members of Congress convicted of crimes committed while in office remain eligible for government pensions. Among the convicted felons getting checks from taxpayers are former Representatives James Traficant ($40,000 annual pension) . . . and . . . Randy Duke Cunningham ($36,000)" (*USA Today*). Congress passed legislation in 2007 to deny convicted lawmakers of their pensions, but the law was not retroactive.

• **Recent Events:** Despite the high-profile white-collar crimes involved in the Enron, Madoff, and other scandals, prosecutions of fraud against financial institutions actually dropped 48 percent from 2000 to 2007, insurance fraud cases declined 75 percent, and securities fraud cases declined 17 percent. Much of this decline appears to be linked to a greater focus by the FBI on national security after 9/11.

trading by executives at large and well-known corporations. Bernard Madoff, the former chairperson of NASDAQ, admitted to defrauding his clients of up to $50 billion in a massive scheme that took place over a number of years. Madoff used his social connections to raise large sums of money for a fund that he used for his own gain. Clients invested in the fund in hopes that Madoff would manage their money wisely and that they would earn large returns on their investments. Instead, he lived lavishly and used new money that came in from investors to pay off existing clients who wanted to cash out of his fund rather than using the new money for the purpose intended. However, Madoff is not an isolated example of such criminal endeavors. Over the past decade, numerous occupational and corporate criminals, including Dennis Kozlowski, the former chief executive of Tyco International, who was convicted of looting more than $600 million from his company, and former Enron executives Ken Lay and Jeff Skilling, who were convicted of corporate conspiracy and fraud in connection with the collapse of one-time energy giant Enron, have all engaged in activities that have cost other people billions of dollars and, in some cases, their life savings.

Corporate crimes are often more costly in terms of money and lives lost than street crimes. Thousands of jobs and billions of dollars have been lost annually as a result of corporate crime. Deaths resulting from corporate crimes such as polluting the air and water, manufacturing defective products, and selling unsafe foods and drugs far exceed the number of deaths due to homicides each year. Other costs include the effect on the moral climate of society (Clinard and Yeager, 1980; Simon, 2008). Throughout the United States, the confidence of everyday people in the nation's economy has been shaken badly by the greedy and illegal behavior of corporate insiders.

Organized Crime *Organized crime* **is a business operation that supplies illegal goods and services for profit.** Premeditated, continuous illegal activities of organized crime include drug trafficking, prostitution, loan-sharking, money laundering, and large-scale theft such as truck hijackings (Simon, 2008). No single organization controls all organized crime; rather, many groups operate at all levels of society. In recent decades, organized crime in the United States has become increasingly

Criminal Organization Threats
- Russian
- Asian
- Italian
- Balkan
- Middle Eastern
- African

▲ **FIGURE 6.4** ORGANIZED CRIME THREATS IN THE UNITED STATES

Source: www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/orgcrime/ocshome.htm.

transnational in nature. Globalization of the economy and the introduction of better communications technology have made it possible for groups around the world to operate in the United States and other nations. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has identified three major categories of organized crime groups: (1) Italian organized crime and racketeering, (2) Eurasian/Middle Eastern organized crime, and (3) Asian and African criminal enterprises, as shown in ▶ Figure 6.4.

Organized crime thrives because there is great demand for illegal goods and services. Criminal organizations initially gain control of illegal activities by combining threats and promises. For

victimless crimes crimes involving a willing exchange of illegal goods or services among adults.

occupational (white-collar) crime illegal activities committed by people in the course of their employment or financial affairs.

corporate crime illegal acts committed by corporate employees on behalf of the corporation and with its support.

organized crime a business operation that supplies illegal goods and services for profit.

- **Extra Examples:** Ralph Nader, a consumer advocate and frequent candidate for president, proposes that we ban corporate criminals from government contracts and deny federal business to serious and/or repeat corporate lawbreakers. The federal government spends $265 billion annually on goods and services. According to Nader, these contracts should not support corporate

criminals, including those with procurement contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Have students debate the merits of this proposal.
- **For Discussion:** "It is no secret that organized crime in America takes in over forty billion dollars a year. This is quite a profitable sum, especially when one considers that the Mafia spends very little for office supplies" (Woody Allen). Have students discuss why

example, small-time operators running drug or prostitution rings may be threatened with violence if they compete with organized crime or fail to make required payoffs (Cressey, 1969).

Apart from their illegal enterprises, organized crime groups have infiltrated the world of legitimate business. Known linkages between legitimate businesses and organized crime exist in banking, hotels and motels, real estate, garbage collection, vending machines, construction, delivery and long-distance hauling, garment manufacture, insurance, stocks and bonds, vacation resorts, and funeral homes (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 1969). In addition, some law enforcement and government officials are corrupted through bribery, campaign contributions, and favors intended to buy them off.

Based on current economic problems in the United States, some criminologists believe that organized crime will have an even greater effect on our nation in the future. According to these analysts, organized crime may further weaken the U.S. economy because illegal activities such as tax evasion

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▲ Over the years, there have been many notorious leaders of organized crime syndicates. Shown here is John A. Gotti, who assumed control of the Gambino family after his father, John Gotti, was sentenced to life in prison for murder and racketeering. The younger Gotti also pled guilty to racketeering, in 1999, and spent six years in prison.

scams and cigarette trafficking bring about greater losses in tax revenue for state and federal governments. Organized crime groups that are involved in areas such as commodities, credit, insurance, stocks, securities, and investments will also have the ability to further weaken already-troubled financial and housing markets (see Finklea, 2009).

Political Crime   The term *political crime* refers to illegal or unethical acts involving the usurpation of power by government officials, or illegal/unethical acts perpetrated against the government by outsiders seeking to make a political statement, undermine the government, or overthrow it. Government officials may use their authority unethically or illegally for the purpose of material gain or political power (Simon, 2008). They may engage in graft (taking advantage of political position to gain money or property) through bribery, kickbacks, or "insider" deals that financially benefit them. For example, in the late 1980s, several top Pentagon officials were found guilty of receiving bribes for passing classified information on to major defense contractors that had garnered many lucrative contracts from the government (Simon, 2008).

Other types of corruption have been costly for taxpayers, including dubious use of public funds and public property, corruption in the regulation of commercial activities (such as food inspection), graft in zoning and land-use decisions, and campaign contributions and other favors to legislators that corrupt the legislative process. Whereas some political crimes are for personal material gain, others (such as illegal wiretapping and political "dirty tricks") are aimed at gaining or maintaining political office or influence.

Some acts committed by agents of the government against persons and groups believed to be threats to national security are also classified as political crimes. Four types of political deviance have been attributed to some officials: (1) secrecy and deception designed to manipulate public opinion, (2) abuse of power, (3) prosecution of individuals due to their political activities, and (4) official violence, such as police brutality against people of color or the use of citizens as unwilling guinea pigs in scientific research (Simon, 2008).

Political crimes also include illegal or unethical acts perpetrated against the government by

legitimate businesses and government officials might be tempted to cooperate with organized criminals.

• **Historical Perspective:** The Weather Underground was a politically left organization in the United States during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The group engaged in a number of violent terrorist activities in an effort to bring about political change during the escalating war in Vietnam. Have students examine historical work

on this group, including the 2002 documentary *The Weather Underground* (**upstatefilms.org/weather**).

• **IRM:** Internet Activity. Go to the Bureau of Justice Statistics website for recent data on terrorism and politically motivated crime.

outsiders seeking to make a political statement or to undermine or overthrow the government. Examples include treason, acts of political sabotage, and terrorist attacks on public buildings.

Crime Statistics

How useful are crime statistics as a source of information about crime? As mentioned previously, official crime statistics provide important information on crime; however, the data reflect only those crimes that have been reported to the police.

Why are some crimes not reported? People are more likely to report crime when they believe that something can be done about it (apprehension of the perpetrator or retrieval of their property, for example). About half of all assault and robbery victims do not report the crime because they may be embarrassed or fear reprisal by the perpetrator. Thus, the number of crimes reported to police represents only the proverbial "tip of the iceberg" when compared with all offenses actually committed. Official statistics are problematic in social science research because of these limitations.

▲ After an unsuccessful vice-presidential bid, Sarah Palin resigned as governor of Alaska in 2009 while facing at least eighteen ethics charges. Palin claimed that the personal expense and distraction caused by dealing with the charges made doing her job impossible.

The *National Crime Victimization Survey* was developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics as an alternative means of collecting crime statistics. In this annual survey, the members of 100,000 randomly selected households are interviewed to determine whether they have been the victims of crime, even if the crime was not reported to the police. The most recent victimization survey suggests that 50 percent of all violent crimes and 61 percent of all property crimes are not reported to the police and are thus not reflected in the UCR (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008). If these percentages are accurate, then reported crime is indeed the tip of the iceberg of all violent and property crimes committed in this country.

Studies based on anonymous self-reports of criminal behavior also reveal much higher rates of crime than those found in official statistics. For example, self-reports tend to indicate that adolescents of all classes violate criminal laws. However, official statistics show that those who are arrested and placed in juvenile facilities typically have limited financial resources, have repeatedly committed serious offenses, or both (Steffensmeier and Allan, 2000). Data collected for the Juvenile Court Statistics program also reflect class and racial bias in criminal justice enforcement. Not all children who commit juvenile offenses are apprehended and referred to court. Children from white, affluent families are more likely to have their cases handled outside the juvenile justice system (for example, a youth may be sent to a private school or hospital rather than to a juvenile correctional facility).

Many crimes committed by persons of higher socioeconomic status in the course of business are handled by an administrative or quasi-judicial body, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission or the Federal Trade Commission, or by civil courts. As a result, many elite crimes are never classified as "crimes," nor are the businesspeople who commit them labeled as "criminals."

> **political crime** illegal or unethical acts involving the usurpation of power by government officials, or illegal/unethical acts perpetrated against the government by outsiders seeking to make a political statement, undermine the government, or overthrow it.

• **Extra Examples:** Because the NCVS was designed to complement the UCR program, the two programs share many similarities. Both programs cover rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft. Rape, robbery, theft, and motor vehicle theft are defined virtually identically by both the UCR and NCVS (U.S. Department of Justice). Have students do research to further compare these two statistical measures.

Terrorism and Crime

In the twenty-first century, the United States and other nations are confronted with a difficult prospect: how to deal with terrorism. *Terrorism* is the calculated, unlawful use of physical force or threats of violence against persons or property in order to intimidate or coerce a government, organization, or individual for the purpose of gaining some political, religious, economic, or social objective. A frequently asked question today is this: What is the difference between terrorism and organized crime? According to authorities, the principal distinction between organized crime groups and terrorist groups is motivation: "Money motivates organized crime, and ideology motivates terrorism" (Finklea, 2009: 23). However, money is still the linking element between organized crime and terrorism because terrorist organizations typically obtain money for their activities from criminal acts such as money laundering and drug trafficking.

How are sociologists and criminologists to explain world terrorism, which may have its origins in more than one nation and include diverse "cells" of terrorists who operate in a somewhat ganglike manner but are believed to be following directives from leaders elsewhere? In order to deal with the aftermath of terrorist attacks, government officials typically focus on "known enemies" such as Osama bin Laden. The nebulous nature of the "enemy" and the problems faced by any one government trying to identify and apprehend the perpetrators of acts of terrorism have resulted in a global "war on terror." Social scientists who use a rational choice approach suggest that terrorists are rational actors who constantly calculate the gains and losses of participation in violent—and sometimes suicidal—acts against others. Chapter 13 ("Politics and the Economy in Global Perspective") further discusses the issue of terrorism.

Street Crimes and Criminals

Given the limitations of official statistics, is it possible to determine who commits crimes? We have much more information available about conventional (street) crime than elite crime; therefore, statistics concerning street crime do not show who commits all types of crime. Gender, age, class, and race are important factors in official statistics pertaining to street crime.

Gender and Crime

It goes without saying that there is a gender gap in crime statistics: Males are arrested for significantly more crimes than females. In 2008, almost 76 percent of all persons arrested nationwide were male. Males made up about 82 percent of persons arrested for violent crimes and 65 percent of all persons arrested for property crimes (FBI, 2009). Girls and women keep up with boys and men in only two areas of crime—forgery and fraud. Females have higher arrests rates than males for prostitution, embezzlement, and runaways, but in all other categories males have higher rates.

Before further consideration of differences in crime rates by males and females, three similarities should be noted. First, the three most common arrest categories for both men and women

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▲ Most of the crimes that women commit are nonviolent ones. Nevertheless, many women are incarcerated. What effects might a mother's imprisonment have on the lives of her children?

- **Research:** The National Counterterrorism Center reports that approximately 11,800 terrorist attacks occurred in various countries during 2008, resulting in over 54,000 deaths, injuries, and kidnappings. Compared to 2007, attacks decreased by 2,700, an 18 percent drop, while deaths decreased by 6,700, a 30 percent drop. As was the case in recent years, by far the largest number of reported terrorist incidents and deaths occurred in the Middle East and South Asia. These two regions were also the locations for 75 percent of all the 235 high-casualty attacks that killed 10 or more people.
- **Extra Examples:** Have students answer the following through research: How are arrest rates similar for women and men? How are they different? What factors might contribute to these differences?

	Males	Females
All offenses (excluding traffic charges)	75.5%	24.5%
Murder and non-negligent manslaughter	89.2%	10.8%
Robbery	88.4%	11.6%
Larceny-theft	58.7%	41.3%
Fraud	56.5%	43.5%
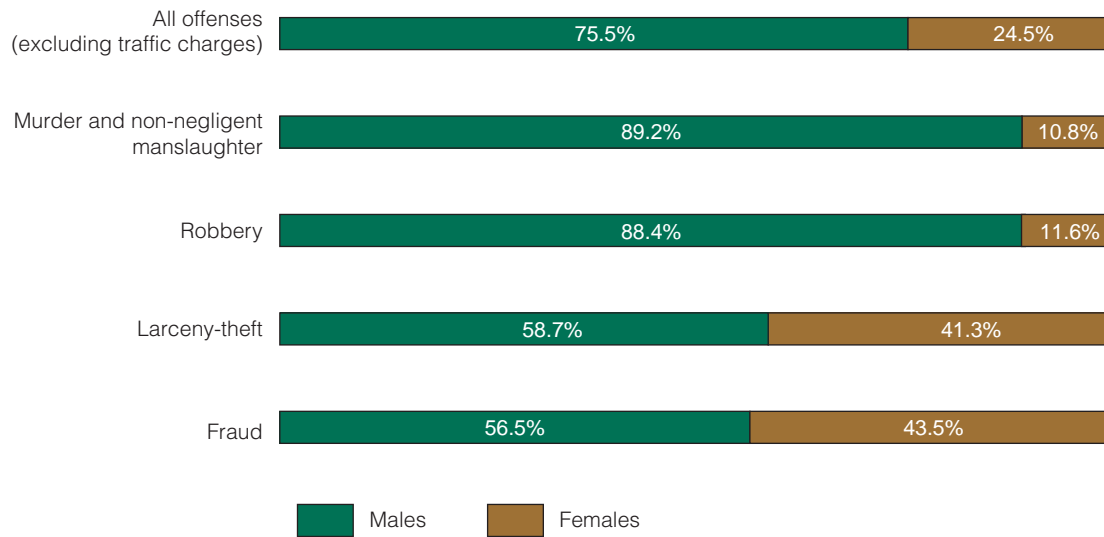
▲ **FIGURE 6.5** ARREST RATES BY GENDER, 2008 (SELECTED OFFENSES)

Source: FBI, 2009.

are driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (DUI), larceny, and minor or criminal mischief types of offenses. These three categories account for about 47 percent of all male arrests and about 49 percent of all female arrests. Second, liquor law violations (such as underage drinking), simple assault, and disorderly conduct are middle-range offenses for both men and women. Third, the rate of arrests for murder, arson, and embezzlement is relatively low for both men and women.

The most important gender differences in arrest rates are reflected in the proportionately greater involvement of men in major property crimes (such as robbery and larceny-theft) and violent crime, as shown in ▶ Figure 6.5. In 2008, men accounted for more than 88 percent of robberies and murders and about 59 percent of all larceny-theft arrests in the United States. Of these types of offenses, males under age 18 accounted for approximately 25 percent of the 2008 arrests. Property crimes for which women are most frequently arrested are nonviolent in nature, including shoplifting, theft of services, passing bad checks, credit card fraud, and employee pilferage. Often when women are arrested for serious violent and property crimes, they are seen as accomplices of the men who planned the crime and instigated its commission; however, this assumption frequently does not prove true today. Some studies have found that some women play an active role in planning and carrying out robberies and other major crimes.

Age and Crime   Of all factors associated with crime, the age of the offender is one of the most significant. Arrest rates for violent crime and property crime are highest for people between the ages of 13 and 25, with the peak being between ages 16 and 17. In 2008, persons under age 25 accounted for 46 percent of all arrests for violent crime and almost 56 percent of all arrests for property crime (FBI, 2009). Individuals under age 18 accounted for 27 percent of all arrests for robbery and 26 percent of all arrests for larceny-theft.

Scholars do not agree on the reasons for this age distribution. In one study, the sociologist Mark Warr (1993) found that peer influences (defined as exposure to delinquent peers, time spent with peers,

terrorism the calculated unlawful use of physical force or threats of violence against persons or property in order to intimidate or coerce a government, organization, or individual for the purpose of gaining some political, religious, economic, or social objective.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis
- **Active Learning:** Describe some of the complexities of the relationship between age and crime. Ask students to brainstorm the kinds of crimes that people are more likely to commit as they grow older. Have them check out their intuitions through Internet research.

- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students conduct research and write a short essay that addresses the ways in which juvenile court statistics might or might not reflect class and racial biases in criminal justice enforcement.

and loyalty to peers) tend to be more significant in explaining delinquent behavior than age itself. More recent studies have tended to confirm this finding. However, others argue that people simply "age out" of committing crimes, particularly those offenses that require physical strength or speed to get away from victims or law enforcement personnel.

The median age of those arrested for aggravated assault and homicide is somewhat older, generally in the late twenties. Typically, white-collar criminals are even older because it takes time to acquire both a high-ranking position and the skills needed to commit this particular type of crime.

Rates of arrest remain higher for males than females at every age and for nearly all offenses. This female-to-male ratio remains fairly constant across all age categories. The most significant gender difference in the age curve is for prostitution (a nonviolent crime). In 2008, 60 percent of all women arrested for prostitution were under age 35. For individuals over age 45, many more men than women are arrested for sex-related offenses (including procuring the services of a prostitute). This difference has been attributed to a more stringent enforcement of prostitution statutes when young females are involved (Chesney-Lind, 1997). It has also been suggested that opportunities for prostitution are greater for younger women. This age difference may not have the same impact on males, who continue to purchase sexual services from young females or males (Steffensmeier and Allan, 2000).

Class and Crime

Class and Crime Individuals from all classes commit crimes; they simply commit different kinds of crimes. Persons from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to be arrested for violent and property crimes. By contrast, persons from the upper part of the class structure generally commit white-collar or elite crimes, although only a very small proportion of these individuals will ever be arrested or convicted of a crime.

What about social class and violence by youths? Between 1992 and 2008, there were 683 violent deaths in U.S. schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Most of these deaths were not attributed to lower-income, inner-city youths, as popular stereotypes might suggest. Instead, these acts of violence largely were perpetrated by more affluent young people who had no apparent financial hardship.

Similarly, membership in today's youth gangs cannot be identified with just one class. Across class lines, the percentage of students reporting the presence of gangs at their school increased from 21 to 23 percent between 2003 and 2008. Students between the ages of 12 and 18 were asked to indicate if gangs were present at their school, regardless of whether or not gang members were involved in any violent or illegal activity. Twenty-five percent of students at public schools reported gang activity at their school, but only four percent of private school students reported that they had knowledge of gang members at their school. This is not surprising, given the fact that the U.S. Department of Education estimates that 50 percent of gang members are part of the nation's underclass—the class comprising families whose members are poor, seldom employed, and caught in patterns of long-term deprivation. According to studies from the Department of Education, however, about 35 percent of gang members are working class, whereas 15 percent are middle or upper-middle class. Today, females from working class and lower-income families are more visible in female gangs and in formerly all-male gangs.

In any case, official statistics are not an accurate reflection of the relationship between class and crime. Self-report data from offenders themselves may be used to gain information on family income, years of education, and occupational status; however, such reports rely on respondents to report information accurately and truthfully.

Race and Crime

Race and Crime Who is most likely to be arrested for committing a crime? In 2008, whites (including Hispanics or Latinos/as) accounted for about 69 percent of all arrests, as shown in ▶ Figure 6.6. Compared with African Americans, arrest rates for whites were higher for nonviolent property crimes such as fraud and larceny-theft but were lower for violent crimes such as robbery. In 2008, whites accounted for slightly more than 67 percent of all arrests for property crimes and about 58 percent of arrests for violent crimes. African Americans, who account for about 13 percent of the U.S. population, made up 39 percent of arrests for violent crimes and 30 percent of arrests for property crimes (FBI, 2008).

Although official arrest records reveal certain trends, these data tell us very little about the actual dynamics of crime by racial–ethnic category.

Offense	White (including Latinos/as)	African American	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian or Pacific Islander
All offenses (excluding traffic charges)	69.2%	28.3%	1.3%	1.1%
Murder and non-negligent manslaughter	47.9%	50.1%	1.0%	1.1%
Robbery	42.0%	56.7%	0.7%	0.9%
Larceny-theft	68.1%	29.3%	1.3%	1.4%
Fraud	67.5%	30.8%	0.8%	0.8%

▲ **FIGURE 6.6** **ARREST BY RACE, 2008 (SELECTED OFFENSES)**

Note: Classifications as used in the Uniform Crime Report.
Source: FBI, 2009.

According to official statistics, African Americans are overrepresented in arrest data. In 2008, African Americans made up about 13 percent of the U.S. population but accounted for about 28 percent of all arrests. More specifically, African Americans made up 75 percent of arrests for gambling, almost 57 percent of arrests for robbery, 51 percent of arrests for suspicion, and 50 percent of arrests for murder. Likewise, African Americans are more likely than people in other racial or ethnic classifications to become the victims of crime (FBI, 2009).

It is now impossible to separate out arrest rates for white (non-Hispanic) offenders and Hispanic (Latino/a) offenders because the Uniform Crime Report no longer reports these data separately. In 2007, the last year for which data were reported separately, Lationos/as made up about 13 percent of the U.S. population and accounted for about 13 percent of all arrests. Latinos have higher arrest rates for nonviolent drug offenses and immigration violations. In 2008, Latinos/as made up almost one-third (33 percent) of all inmates incarcerated in the federal prison system.

In 2008, Native Americans (designated in the UCR as "American Indian" or "Alaskan Native") accounted for 1.3 percent of all arrests; however, the majority of these arrests were for larceny-theft, assaults, vandalism, and alcohol- and drug-related violations (FBI, 2009). In that same year, 1.1 percent of all arrests were of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, or Pacific Islanders. Among the higher percentages of arrests for members of this category were prostitution, commercialized vice, and runaways under 18 years of age (FBI, 2009).

Are arrest statistics a true reflection of crimes committed? The Federal Bureau of Investigation indicates that they are not, as did the late criminologist Coramae Richey Mann (1993), who argued that arrest statistics are skewed because reporting practices differ in accordance with race and class. According to Mann, arrest statistics reflect the UCR's focus on violent and property crimes, especially property crimes, which are committed primarily by low-income people. This emphasis draws attention away from the white-collar and elite crimes committed by middle- and upper-income people. Police may also demonstrate bias and racism in their decisions regarding whom to question, detain, or arrest under certain circumstances (Mann, 1993). Some law enforcement officials believe that problems such as these primarily occurred in the past; however, issues still arise in the twenty-first century about police brutality against persons of color and about unequal treatment of individuals who reside in racially segregated, low-income areas of urban centers and rural communities.

Another reason that statistics may show a disproportionate number of people of color being arrested is because of the focus of law enforcement on certain types of crime and certain neighborhoods in which crime is considered more prevalent. As discussed previously, many poor, young, central-city males turn to forms of criminal activity due to their belief that no opportunities exist for them to earn a living wage through legitimate employment. Because of the trend of law enforcement efforts to focus on drug-related offenses, arrest rates for young people of color have risen rapidly. These young people are also more likely to live in central-city areas, where there are more police patrols to make arrests.

Immigration crackdowns in various cities, such as Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Antonio, have produced higher rates of arrests for Latinos/as who are in the United States legally, as well as those who are undocumented workers seeking to provide a living for family members "back home" in Mexico, South America, or other areas of the world. Individuals who are in possession of drugs or have outstanding warrants for other violations may be arrested by federal authorities conducting immigration stings even when the primary focus of such raids is to identify individuals who are illegally residing in the United States.

Finally, arrests should not be equated with guilt: Being arrested does not mean that a person is guilty of the crime with which he or she has been charged. In the United States, individuals accused of crimes are, at least theoretically, "innocent until proven guilty" (Mann, 1993).

Crime Victims

How can we learn more about crime victims? The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Justice Statistics, provides annual data about crimes (reported and not reported to the police)

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▲ The problems that some police departments have with racial issues can generate tragic consequences. Omar Edwards, an off-duty African American New York City police officer, was running after a man who had tried to break into Edwards's car. Three Caucasian plainclothes officers noticed the altercation and ordered the men to stop. When Edwards turned toward them with his gun in his hand, one of the officers shot him fatally.

- **For Discussion:** Have students address these questions: What are victimless crimes? Do you believe that this is an accurate categorization? Why or why not?
- **Active Learning:** Ask students to examine the crime victims section of the chapter and to create a list of important facts about

such victims. Students should compare their lists in small groups. What are some of the general indicators that seem to emerge from this list?

from which we can find out more about who is actually victimized by crime. Based on data from the 2008 NCVS, violent and property crime rates are at or near their lowest levels since the 1980s. The violent crime rate in 2008 was 19.3 victimizations per 1,000 people age 12 or over; the property crime rate was 135 victimizations per 1,000 households (Rand, 2009).

Victimization surveys indicate that men are the most frequent victims of most crimes of violence and theft. Among males who are now 12 years old, an estimated 89 percent will be the victims of a violent crime at least once during their lifetime, as compared with 73 percent of females. The elderly also tend to be more fearful of crime but are the least likely to be victimized. Young men of color between the ages of 12 and 24 have the highest criminal victimization rates. In 2008, African American males were more likely to be victimized than African American females, younger African Americans were more likely to be the victims of violent crime than older African Americans, African Americans with lower annual incomes were at greater risk of violence than those in households with higher annual incomes, and African Americans living in urban areas were more likely than those in suburban or rural areas to be victims of crime (Harrell, 2007).

A study by the Justice Department found that Native Americans are more likely to be victims of violent crimes than are members of any other racial category and that the rate of violent crimes against Native American women was about 50 percent higher than that for African American men (Perry, 2004). During the period covered in the study (from 1992 to 2002), Native Americans were the victims of violent crimes at a rate more than twice the national average. They were also more likely to be the victims of violent crimes committed by members of a race other than their own (Perry, 2004). According to the survey, the average annual rate at which Native Americans were victims of violent crime—101 crimes per 1,000 people, ages 12 or older—is about two-and-a-half times the national average of 41 crimes per 1,000 people who are above the age of 12. By comparison, the average annual rate for whites was 41 crimes per 1,000 people; for African Americans, 50 per 1,000; and for Asian Americans, 22 per 1,000 (Perry, 2004).

The burden of robbery victimization falls more heavily on some categories of people than others. NCVS data indicate that males are robbed at almost twice the rate of females. African Americans are more than twice as likely to be robbed as whites. Young people have a much greater likelihood of being robbed than middle-aged and older persons. Persons from lower-income families are more likely to be robbed than people from higher-income families (Harrell, 2007).

Victimization studies show that Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders have the lowest rates of both violent and property crime victimizations. These population groups comprise about 4 percent of the U.S. population but are victims in only 2 percent of nonfatal violent crimes and 3 percent of property crimes per year (Harrell, 2009). Asian Americans are less likely to be murdered by someone of their same race than white victims (78 percent) or black victims (92 percent), and most nonfatal crimes against Asians were committed by strangers (Harrell, 2009). Shifting to property crimes, Asian households had lower rates of property crime than non-Asian households at nearly every income level and in every U.S. region.

Across racial/ethnic categories, households in the lowest income group (less than $7,500 per year) experienced property crime rates that were about 1.5 times higher than the rates for households earning $75,000 or more per year. Property crime rates for burglary were more than three times higher in the lowest income group as compared with highest income category. Motor vehicle theft is the primary exception: No significant difference exists in the rates of motor vehicle theft across household income levels.

What can we learn from victimization studies? Because all crimes are not reported, we can find out more about the nature and extent to which people in specific regions of the country, income categories, racial or ethnic groupings, ages, and other demographic characteristics are victimized by violent and property crimes in the United States. These data can be compared with official crime statistics to see if arrest rates and convictions are an accurate reflection of crime in the United States. The NCVS particularly helps us to learn about the types and number of offenses that go unreported

to police or other law enforcement officials who are part of the criminal justice system.

The Criminal Justice System

Of all of the agencies of social control (including families, schools, and churches) in contemporary societies, only the criminal justice system has the power to control crime and punish those who are convicted of criminal conduct. The **criminal justice system refers to the more than 55,000 local, state, and federal agencies that enforce laws, adjudicate crimes, and treat and rehabilitate criminals.** The system includes the police, the courts, and corrections facilities, and it employs more than 2 million people in 17,000 police agencies, nearly 17,000 courts, more than 8,000 prosecutorial agencies, about 6,000 correctional institutions, and more than 3,500 probation and parole departments. More than $150 billion is spent annually for civil and criminal justice, which amounts to more than $500 for every person living in the United States (Siegel, 2006).

The term *criminal justice system* is somewhat misleading because it implies that law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional facilities constitute one large, integrated system, when, in reality, the criminal justice system is made up of many bureaucracies that have considerable discretion in how decisions are made. *Discretion* refers to the use of personal judgment by police officers, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice system officials regarding whether and how to proceed in a given situation (see ▶ Figure 6.7). The police are a prime example of discretionary processes because they have the power to selectively enforce the law and have on many occasions been accused of being too harsh or too lenient on alleged offenders.

The Police

The role of the police in the criminal justice system continues to expand. The police are responsible for crime control and maintenance of order, but local police departments now serve numerous other human-service functions, including improving community relations, resolving family disputes, and helping people during emergencies. It should be remembered that not all "police officers" are employed by local police departments; they are employed in more than 25,000 governmental agencies ranging from local jurisdictions to federal levels. However, we will focus primarily on metropolitan police departments because they constitute the vast majority of the law enforcement community.

Metropolitan police departments are made up of a chain of command (similar to the military), with ranks such as officer, sergeant, lieutenant, and captain, and each rank must follow specific rules and procedures. However, individual officers maintain a degree of discretion in the decisions they make as they respond to calls and try to apprehend fleeing or violent offenders. The problem of police discretion is most acute when decisions are made to use force (such as grabbing, pushing, or hitting a suspect)

Police
- Enforce specific laws
- Investigate specific crimes
- Search people, vicinities, buildings
- Arrest or detain people

Prosecutors
- File charges or petitions for judicial decision
- Seek indictments
- Drop cases
- Reduce charges
- Recommend sentences

Judges or Magistrates
- Set bail or conditions for release
- Accept pleas
- Determine delinquency
- Dismiss charges
- Impose sentences
- Revoke probation

▲ **FIGURE 6.7** DISCRETIONARY POWERS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** Bring in several copies of the local newspaper (or one from the nearest large city), and search through it as a class for examples of the work of the criminal justice system.
- **Media Coverage:** The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan announced that its "bicycling while black" lawsuit, filed eight years ago on behalf of 22 teenagers, has finally been settled in an out-of-court agreement. The $160,000 settlement comes after a federal court ruled that there was enough evidence of racial discrimination and illegal searches by the Eastpointe Police Department to take the case to a jury trial. The children represented were pulled over, questioned, and searched. Bikes were sometimes confiscated and later auctioned off by the police department (ACLU).

or deadly force (shooting and killing a suspect). Generally, deadly force is allowed only in situations in which a suspect is engaged in a felony, is fleeing the scene of a felony, or is resisting arrest and has endangered someone's life.

Although many police departments have worked to improve their public image in recent years, the practice of *racial profiling*—the use of ethnic or racial background as a means of identifying criminal suspects—remains a highly charged issue. Officers in some police departments have singled out for discriminatory treatment African Americans, Latinos/as, and other people of color, treating them more harshly than white (Euro-American) individuals. However, police department officials typically contend that race is only one factor in determining why individuals are questioned or detained as they go about everyday activities such as driving a car or walking down the street. By contrast, equal-justice advocacy groups argue that differential treatment of minority-group members amounts to a race-based double standard, which they believe exists not only in police work but throughout the criminal justice system (see Cole, 2000).

The belief that differential treatment takes place on the basis of race contributes to a negative image of police among many people of color who believe that they have been hassled by police officers, and this assumption is intensified by the fact that police departments have typically been made up of white male personnel at all levels. In recent years, this situation has slowly begun to change. Currently, about 22 percent of all *sworn officers*—those who have taken an oath and been given the powers to make arrests and use necessary force in accordance with their duties—are women and minorities (Cole and Smith, 2004). The largest percentage of minority and women police officers are located in cities with a population of 250,000 or more. African Americans make up a larger percentage of the police department in cities with a larger proportion of African American residents (such as Detroit), but Latinos/as constitute a larger percentage in cities such as San Antonio and El Paso, Texas, where Latinos/as make up a larger proportion of the population. Women officers of all races are more likely to be employed in departments in cities of more than 250,000 as compared with smaller communities (cities of less than 50,000),

where women officers constitute a small percentage of the force.

Police departments now place greater emphasis on *community-oriented policing*—an approach to law enforcement in which officers maintain a presence in the community, walking up and down the streets or riding bicycles, getting to know people, and holding public service meetings at schools, churches, and other neighborhood settings. Community-oriented policing is often limited by budget constraints and the lack of available personnel to conduct this type of "hands-on" community involvement. In many jurisdictions, police officers believe that they have only enough time to keep up with reports of serious crime and life-threatening occurrences and that the level of available personnel and resources does not allow officers to take on a greatly expanded role in the community.

The Courts

Criminal courts determine the guilt or innocence of those persons accused of committing a crime. In theory, justice is determined in an adversarial process in which the prosecutor (an attorney who represents the state) argues that the accused is guilty, and the defense attorney asserts that the accused is innocent. In reality, judges wield a great deal of discretion. Working with prosecutors, they decide whom to release and whom to hold for further hearings, and what sentences to impose on those persons who are convicted.

Prosecuting attorneys also have considerable leeway in deciding which cases to prosecute and when to negotiate a plea bargain with a defense attorney. As cases are sorted through the legal machinery, a steady attrition occurs. At each stage, various officials determine what alternatives will be available for those cases still remaining in the system.

About 90 percent of criminal cases are never tried in court; instead, they are resolved by plea

criminal justice system the more than 55,000 local, state, and federal agencies that enforce laws, adjudicate crimes, and treat and rehabilitate criminals.

- **Active Learning:** Ask students to bring to class examples of the most recent celebrity trials. They should include details about the charges, trial, and conviction and punishment (if applicable). Ask students to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of celebrity in court. Suggest Jeffery Toobin's article on Roman Polanski in the *New Yorker* (**newyorker.com**).

- **Popular Culture:** "The police are not going to run this court. The defendants are not going to run this court. The defense attorneys are not going to run this court. The district attorney is not going to run this court. I'm going to run this court" (Judge Paul King, District Court, Dorchester, Massachusetts). Have students compare this statement to TV depictions of courtrooms, such as *Law and Order*.

bargaining, a process in which the prosecution negotiates a reduced sentence for the accused in exchange for a guilty plea (Senna and Siegel, 2002). Defendants (especially those who are poor and cannot afford to pay an attorney) may be urged to plead guilty to a lesser crime in return for not being tried for the more serious crime for which they were arrested. Prison sentences given in plea bargains vary widely from one region to another and even from judge to judge within one state.

Those who advocate the practice of plea bargaining believe that it allows for individualized justice for alleged offenders because judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys can agree to a plea and to a punishment that best fits the offense and the offender. They also believe that this process helps reduce the backlog of criminal cases in the court system as well as the lengthy process often involved in a criminal trial. However, those who seek to abolish plea bargaining believe that this practice leads to innocent people pleading guilty to crimes they have not committed or pleading guilty to a crime other than the one they actually committed because they are offered a lesser sentence. More-serious crimes, such as murder, felonious assault, and rape, are more likely to proceed to trial than other forms of criminal conduct; however, many of these cases do not reach the trial stage.

One of the most important activities of the court system is establishing the sentence of the accused after he or she has been found guilty or has pleaded guilty. Typically, sentencing involves the following kinds of sentences or dispositions: fines, probation, alternative or intermediate sanctions (such as house arrest or electronic monitoring), incarceration, and capital punishment (Siegel, 2006). However, adult courts operate differently from those established for juvenile offenders.

Juvenile Courts Juvenile courts were established under a different premise than courts for adults. Under the doctrine of *parens patriae* (the state as parent), the official purpose of juvenile courts has been to care for, rather than punish, youthful offenders. In theory, less weight is given to offenses and more weight to the youth's physical, mental, or social condition. The juvenile court seeks to change or resocialize offenders through treatment or therapy, not to punish them. Consequently,

judges in juvenile courts are given relatively wide latitude, or discretion, in the decisions they mete out regarding young offenders.

Unlike adult offenders, juveniles are not always represented by legal counsel. A juvenile hearing is not a trial but rather an informal private hearing before a judge or probation officer, with only the young person and a parent or guardian present. No jury is convened, and the juvenile offender does not cross-examine her or his accusers. In addition, the offender is not "sentenced"; rather, the case is "adjudicated" or "disposed of." Finally, the offender is not "punished" but instead may be "remanded to the custody" of a youth authority in order to receive training, treatment, or care.

Because of judicial discretion, courts may treat juveniles differently based on gender. Considerable disparity exists in the disposition of juvenile cases, with much of the variation thought to result from judges' beliefs rather than objective facts in the case. Female offenders are more likely than males to be institutionalized for committing status offenses such as truancy, running away from home, and other offenses that serve as "buffer charges" for suspected sexual misconduct.

Disparity also exists on the basis of race and class. Judges tend to see youths from white, middle- or upper-class families as being very much like their own children and to believe that the families will take care of the problem on their own. They may view juveniles from lower-income families or other racial–ethnic groups as delinquents in need of attention from authorities. Furthermore, some judges view gang members from impoverished central cities as "guilty by association" because of their companions.

The political climate may have an effect on how judges dispose of juvenile cases. In the process of dealing with the public perception that the juvenile justice system is too lenient, some judges may have inadvertently contributed to other problems. Many more youths have been remanded to overcrowded juvenile detention facilities that are unable to provide necessary educational, health, and social services. Based on a judge's discretion, many juvenile offenders are incarcerated under indeterminate sentences and placed in a detention facility that may serve merely as a school for adult criminality.

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▲ Phoebe Nora Mary Prince, a 15-year-old Irish immigrant attending high school in South Hadley, Massachusetts, faced vicious bullying from several students who went after Prince in person, by phone, and online. On January 14, 2010, Prince hanged herself. Nine of her abusers—seven females and two males—now face a wide variety of criminal charges, and the two young men are charged with statutory rape. As of this writing, the prosecutors are planning to try some of the accused as juveniles and the others as adults.

Punishment and Corrections

Although the United States makes up less than 5 percent of the world's population, our nation accounts for almost 25 percent of the world's prison population. Some analysts suggest that our laws prescribe greater punishment for some offenses than those in other nations, resulting in Americans being locked up for crimes that rarely would result in prison sentences in other countries (Liptak, 2008). About 2.3 million people in the United States are being "punished" at any given time through jail terms and prison sentences. It should be noted that jails differ from prisons. Most jails are run by local governments or a sheriff's department. They are designed to hold people before they make bail, when they are awaiting trial, or when they are serving short sentences for committing a misdemeanor. By contrast, prisons are operated by state governments and the Federal Bureau of Prisons,

and are designed to hold individuals convicted of felonies. Some prisons are operated by private contractors that build and control the facilities while receiving public monies for their operation. Both jails and prisons are based on the assumption that punishment and/or corrections are necessary to protect the public good and to effectively deal with those who violate laws.

Punishment is any action designed to deprive a person of things of value (including liberty) because of some offense the person is thought to have committed (Barlow and Kauzlarich, 2002). Historically, punishment has had four major goals:

1. *Retribution* is punishment that a person receives for infringing on the rights of others (Cole and Smith, 2004). Retribution imposes a penalty on the offender and is based on the premise that the punishment should fit the crime: The greater the degree of social harm, the more the offender should be punished. For example, an individual who murders should be punished more severely than one who shoplifts.
2. *General deterrence* seeks to reduce criminal activity by instilling a fear of punishment in the general public. However, we most often focus on *specific deterrence,* which inflicts punishment on specific criminals to discourage them from committing future crimes. Recently, criminologists have debated whether imprisonment has a deterrent effect, given the fact that high rates (between 30 and 50 percent) of those who are released from prison become recidivists (previous offenders who commit new crimes).
3. *Incapacitation* is based on the assumption that offenders who are detained in prison or are executed will be unable to commit additional crimes. This approach is often expressed as "lock 'em up and throw away the key!" In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on *selective incapacitation,* which means that offenders who repeat certain kinds of crimes are sentenced to long prison terms (Cole and Smith, 2004).

punishment any action designed to deprive a person of things of value (including liberty) because of some offense the person is thought to have committed.

4. *Rehabilitation* seeks to return offenders to the community as law-abiding citizens by providing therapy or vocational or educational training. Based on this approach, offenders are treated, not punished, so that they will not continue their criminal activity. However, many correctional facilities are seriously understaffed and underfunded in the rehabilitation programs that exist. The job skills (such as agricultural work) that many offenders learn in prison do not transfer to the outside world, nor are offenders given any assistance in finding work that fits their skills once they are released.

Recently, newer approaches have been advocated for dealing with criminal behavior. Key among these is the idea of *restoration,* which is designed to repair the damage done to the victim and the community by an offender's criminal act (Cole and Smith, 2004). This approach is based on the *restorative justice perspective,* which states that the criminal justice system should promote a peaceful and just society; therefore, the system should focus on peacemaking rather than on punishing offenders. Advocates of this approach believe that punishment of offenders actually encourages crime rather than deterring it and are in favor of approaches such as probation with treatment. Opponents of this approach suggest that increased punishment of offenders leads to lower crime rates and that the restorative justice approach amounts to "coddling criminals." However, numerous restorative justice programs are now in operation, and many are associated with community policing programs as they seek to help offenders realize the damage that they have done to their victims and the community and to be reintegrated into society (Senna and Siegel, 2002).

Instead of the term *punishment,* the term *corrections* is often used. Criminologists George F. Cole and Christopher E. Smith (2004: 409) explain corrections as follows:

> Corrections refers to the great number of programs, services, facilities, and organizations responsible for the management of people accused or convicted of criminal offenses. In addition to prisons and jails, corrections includes probation, halfway houses, education and work release programs, parole supervision, counseling, and community service. Correctional programs operate in Salvation Army hostels, forest camps, medical clinics, and urban storefronts.

As Cole and Smith (2004) explain, corrections is a major activity in the United States today. Consider the fact that about 6.5 million adults (more than one out of every twenty men and one out of every hundred women) are under some form of correctional control. The rate of African American males under some form of

◀ After Phillip Alpert, 18, of Orlando, Florida, had an argument with his 16-year-old girlfriend, he used the Internet to send a nude photo of her to her friends and family, a practice called "sexting." Much to Alpert's dismay, he was arrested on a felony charge of distributing child pornography, was convicted and given five years' probation, and was placed on Florida's registered sex offenders list. His attorney—and others—see the last part of the punishment as an example of cultural lag, wherein the law has not yet appropriately addressed the cyber-technology, and the attorney is trying to get Alpert's name off the list.

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capital punishment. According to roughly a dozen recent studies, executions save lives. For each inmate put to death, the studies say, 3 to 18 murders are prevented" (*New York Times,* 11/07).
- **Media Coverage:** Ask students to respond to the following statement: "You believe an eye for an eye until you're put in that situation. If they kill those guys, it really doesn't mean much to me. My father is gone" (Michael Jordan on the murderers of his father, James). How does this statement relate to questions of retribution and closure for victims?

correctional supervision is even greater (one out of every six African American adult men and one out of every three African American men in their twenties). Some analysts believe that these figures are a reflection of centuries of underlying racial, ethnic, and class-based inequalities in the United States as well as sentencing disparities that reflect race-based differences in the criminal justice system. However, others argue that newer practices such as determinate or mandatory sentences may help to reduce such disparities over time. A *determinate sentence* sets the term of imprisonment at a fixed period of time (such as three years) for a specific offense. *Mandatory sentencing guidelines* are established by law and require that a person convicted of a specific offense or series of offenses be given a penalty within a fixed range. Although these practices limit judicial discretion in sentencing, many critics are concerned about the effects of these sentencing approaches. Another area of great discord within and outside the criminal justice system is the issue of the death penalty.

The Death Penalty

Historically, removal from the group has been considered one of the ultimate forms of punishment. For many years, capital punishment, or the death penalty, has been used in the United States as an appropriate and justifiable response to very serious crimes. In 2009, 52 inmates were executed (as contrasted with an all-time high of 98 in 1999), and about 3,300 people awaited execution, having received the death penalty under federal law or the laws of one of the states that have the death penalty (Death Penalty Information Center, 2010). By far, the largest number of people on death row are in states such as California, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Alabama (see ▶ Map 6.1).

Because of the finality of the death penalty, it has been a subject of much controversy and numerous Supreme Court debates about the decision-making process involved in capital cases. In 1972 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled (in *Furman v. Georgia*) that *arbitrary* application of the death penalty violates the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution but that the death penalty itself is not unconstitutional.

In other words, capital punishment is legal if it is fairly imposed. Although there have been a number of cases involving death penalty issues before the Supreme Court since that time, the court typically has upheld the constitutionality of this practice. Yet the fact remains that racial disparities are highly evident in the death row census. African Americans make up about 42 percent of the death row population but less than 13 percent of the U.S. population. In 96 percent of the states where there have been reviews of race and the death penalty, a distinct pattern emerged in regard to either race-of-victim or race-of-defendant discrimination: 243 black defendants were executed when the victim was white, while only 15 persons were executed in white defendant/black victim cases (Death Penalty Information Center, 2010).

People who have lost relatives and friends as a result of criminal activity often see the death penalty as justified. However, capital punishment raises many doubts for those who fear that innocent individuals may be executed for crimes they did not commit. For still others, the problem of racial discrimination in the sentencing process poses troubling questions. Other questions that remain today involve the execution of those who are believed to be insane and of those defendants who did not have effective legal counsel during their trial. In 2002, for example, the Supreme Court ruled (in *Atkins v. Virginia*) that executing the mentally retarded is unconstitutional. In another landmark case (*Ring v. Arizona*), the Court ruled that juries, not judges, must decide whether a convicted murderer should receive the death penalty (Cole and Smith, 2004).

Executions resumed in 2008 after a *de facto* moratorium was lifted by the Supreme Court when the justices decided to uphold lethal injection. However, only southern states returned to regular executions, and executions in the South accounted for over 80 percent of all executions in 2009. With 24 executions, Texas accounted for about 50 percent of all executions for that year (Death Penalty Information Center, 2010). Although only 106 new death sentences were handed down in 2009 (down from a high of 328 in 1994), the issue of the death penalty is far from resolved; the debate, which has taken place for more than two hundred years, no doubt will continue into the second and third decades of the twenty-first century.
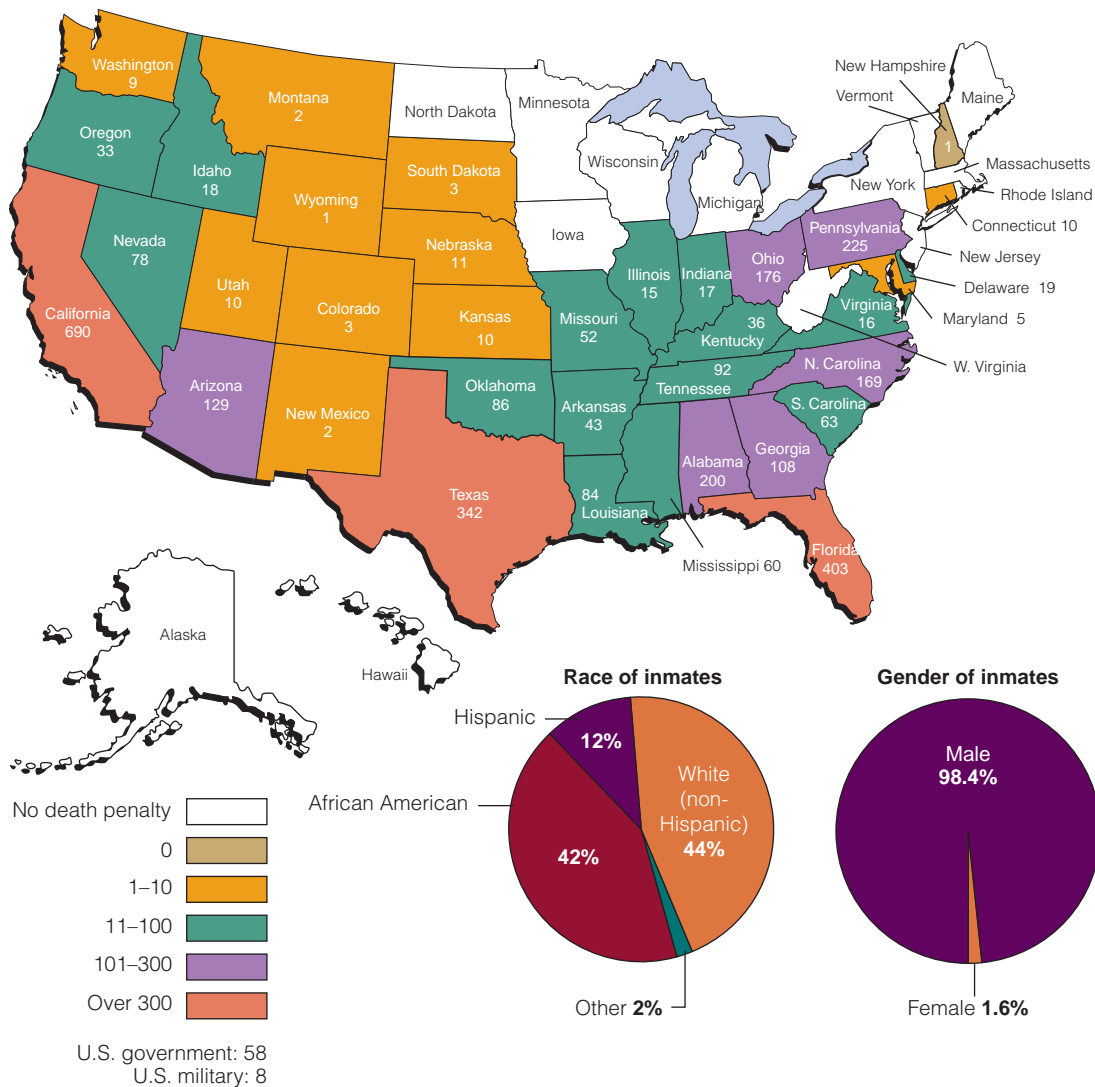
▲ **MAP 6.1 DEATH ROW CENSUS, JULY 1, 2009**

Death row inmates are heavily concentrated in certain states. African Americans, who make up less than 13 percent of the U.S. population, account for approximately 42 percent of inmates on death row. In addition to those persons held by state governments, 53 inmates were held on death row by the federal government or the U.S. military.

Source: Death Penalty Information Center, 2010.

U.S. Deviance and Crime in the Future

Two pressing questions pertaining to deviance and crime in the United States will face us in the future: Is the solution to our "crime problem" more law and order? Is equal justice under the law possible?

Although many people in the United States agree that crime is one of the most important problems in this country, they are divided over what to do about it. Some of the frustration about crime might be based on unfounded fears; studies show that the overall crime rate has been decreasing slightly in recent years.

One thing is clear: The existing criminal justice system cannot solve the "crime problem." If roughly 20 percent of all crimes result in arrest, only half of those lead to a conviction in serious cases, and

- **For Discussion:** If the existing criminal justice system cannot solve the crime problem, what changes might lessen this problem in the twenty-first century?
- **Active Learning:** Have students go online and examine the crimes punishable by death in each state of the United States (**www.deathpenaltyinfo.org**).

- **Map Note:** While students are comparing the numbers of death row inmates in each state, have them compare these data to population figures for those states. Death row inmates represent what percentage of the overall population of each state?

▲ In recent years, military-style boot camps such as this one have been used as an alternative to prison and long jail terms for nonviolent offenders under age 30. Critics argue that structural solutions—not stopgap measures such as these camps—are needed to reduce crime.

less than 5 percent of those result in a jail term, the "lock 'em up and throw the key away" approach has little chance of succeeding. Nor does the high rate of recidivism among those who have been incarcerated speak well for the rehabilitative efforts of our existing correctional facilities. Reducing street crime may hinge on finding ways to short-circuit criminal behavior.

One of the greatest challenges is juvenile offenders, who may become the adult criminals of tomorrow. However, instead of military-style boot camps or other stopgap measures, *structural solutions*—such as more and better education and jobs, affordable housing, more equality and less discrimination, and socially productive activities—are needed to reduce street crime. In the past, structural solutions such as these have made it possible for immigrants who initially committed street crimes to leave the streets, get jobs, and lead productive lives. Ultimately, the best approach for reducing delinquency and crime would be prevention: to work with young people *before* they become juvenile offenders to help them establish family relationships, build self-esteem, choose a career, and get an education that will help them pursue that career. Sociologist Elliott Currie (1998) has proposed that an initial goal in working to prevent delinquency and crime is to

pinpoint specifically what kinds of preventive programs work and to establish priorities that make prevention possible. Among these priorities are preventing child abuse and neglect, enhancing children's intellectual and social development, providing support and guidance to vulnerable adolescents, and working intensively with juvenile offenders (Currie, 1998).

Is equal justice under the law possible? As long as racism, sexism, classism, and ageism exist in our society, people will see deviant and criminal behavior through a selective lens. To solve the problems addressed in this chapter, we must ask ourselves what we can do to ensure the rights of everyone, including the poor, people of color, and women and men alike. Many of us can counter classism, racism, sexism, and ageism where they occur. Perhaps the only way that the United States can have equal justice under the law (and, perhaps, less crime as a result) in the future is to promote social justice for individuals regardless of their race, class, gender, or age.

The Global Criminal Economy

Consider this scenario:

> Con men operating out of Amsterdam sell bogus U.S. securities by telephone to Germans; the operation is controlled by an Englishman residing in Monaco, with his profits in Panama. Which police force should investigate? In which jurisdiction should a prosecution be mounted? There may even be a question about whether a crime has been committed, although if all the actions had taken place in a single country there would be little doubt. (United Nations Development Programme, 1999: 104)

As this example shows, international criminal activity poses new and interesting questions not only for those who are the victims of such actions but also for governmental agencies mandated to control crime.

Global crime—the networking of powerful criminal organizations and their associates in shared activities around the world—is a relatively new phenomenon (Castells, 1998). However, it is an extremely lucrative endeavor as criminal organizations have increasingly set up their operations on a transnational basis, using the latest communication and transportation technologies (see the Sociology in Global Perspective box).

- **Global Perspective:** More than 2,390 people were executed in 25 countries in 2008, Amnesty International reports. China accounted for 75 percent of the executions—more than the rest of the world combined—while most of the rest were in Iran, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States (amnesty.org).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #9 Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-National Content

- **Extra Examples:** Bring to class current examples of global crimes that have made the news. Use these to help students understand the ways that some crimes have become organized as a global phenomenon.
- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disk also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.

sociology in global perspective

The Global Reach of Russian Organized Crime

On a spring day when warm sunshine flooded the narrow, potholed streets, I took a taxi to Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC), an imposing collection of tomblike cinder block towers in lower Manhattan, to interview Monya Elson—one of the most dangerous Russian mobsters the feds ever netted. I passed through several layers of security before I was shepherded by an armed guard up an elevator and deposited in a small, antiseptic cubicle with booming acoustics where lawyers meet their clients. . . . At least half a dozen armed guards stood outside the door, which was closed but had an observation window. Elson, an edgy man with a dark mien, was brought into the room, his hands and feet chained. He is considered a maximum-security risk, and for good reason: a natural-born extortionist and killing machine, Elson is perhaps the most prolific hit man in Russian mob history. (Friedman, 2000: 1)

Does this passage sound like the beginning of a best-selling novel? Although it has all the mystery and intrigue of a good novel, this paragraph is the beginning of a nonfiction book, *Red Mafiya: How the Russian Mob Has Invaded America* by the journalist Robert I. Friedman (2000). Friedman and other analysts have documented how more than thirty Russian crime syndicates operate in the United States, particularly in cities such as New York, Miami, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Denver. And, as one New York state tax agent stated, "The Russian [mob] didn't come here to enjoy the American dream. They came here to steal it" (Friedman, 2000: Intro).

When and how did the Russian mob first become an international problem? Although Russian organized crime first gained a stronghold in the United States in the 1970s—a period of détente between this country and the Soviet Union—when Moscow allowed many Soviet Jews to emigrate to the United States and is believed to have sent many hard-core Russian criminals with them (*CBS News,* 2000), many experts believe that the breakup of the former Soviet Union in the late 1980s created a weakened and impoverished Russia that produced an active and vigorous Russian mob that rapidly extended its grip to more than fifty countries worldwide.

Today, in cities ranging from New York and San Francisco to Toronto and Hong Kong, the powerful Russian mafia traffics in prostitution and drugs such as heroin; commits acts of extortion, arson, murder, burglary, and money laundering; and engages in the illegal sale of guns and missiles (Lindberg and Markovic, 2001). It maintains its position by a combination of three attributes that are characteristic of other major international crime groups, as well: (1) *nonideology*—an absence of political motivations or goals, (2) *hierarchy*—a well-organized structure of specialized criminal cells controlled by a boss, and (3) *limited membership*—membership restrictions based on ethnicity, kinship, race, criminal record, and other factors deemed relevant by the group (Lindberg and Markovic, 2001).

What is the future of Russian organized crime on a global basis? Many analysts believe that organized crime not only remains out of control in Russia but that it is also growing in power and strength in the United States and other nations where it has infiltrated major financial institutions such as banks and brokerage firms. Is it something that we should be concerned about? Probably so. As Monya Elson, the mobster described at the beginning of this box, admits, "I am a criminal. And for you this is bad. . . . I am proud of what I am" (qtd. in Friedman, 2000: 1). Elson purportedly killed more than one hundred people before he was caught and sent to prison.

reflect & analyze

In recent years, most of U.S. attention to international crime has focused on terrorism. Should we turn some of our attention to the threat posed by international organized crime? Which type of crime concerns you more?

How much money and other resources change hands in the global criminal economy? Although the exact amount of profits and financial flows originating in the global criminal economy is impossible to determine, the United Nations Conference on Global Organized Crime estimated that more than $600 billion (in U.S. currency) per year is accrued in the global trade in drugs alone. Today, profits from all kinds of global criminal activities are estimated to range from $750 billion to more than $2 trillion per year (United Nations Development Programme, 2009). Some analysts believe that even these figures underestimate the true nature and extent of the global criminal economy (Castells, 1998). The highest-income-producing activities of global criminal organizations include trafficking in drugs, weapons,

- **Box Note:** Send your students to the Internet to discover more about Russian organized crime. Students can bring additional information to class to update that presented in the text.

and nuclear material; smuggling of things and people (including many migrants); trafficking in women and children for the sex industry; and trafficking in body parts such as corneas and major organs for the medical industry. Undergirding the entire criminal system is money laundering and various complex financial schemes and international trade networks that make it possible for people to use the resources they obtain through illegal activity for the purposes of consumption and investment in the ("legitimate") formal economy.

Can anything be done about global crime? Recent studies have concluded that reducing global crime will require a global response, including the cooperation of law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and intelligence services across geopolitical boundaries. However, this approach is problematic because countries such as the United States often have difficulty getting the various law enforcement agencies to cooperate within their own nation. Similarly, law enforcement agencies in high-income nations such as the United States and Canada are often suspicious of law enforcement agencies in low-income countries, believing that these law enforcement officers are corrupt. Regulation by the international community (for example, through the United Nations) would also be necessary to control global criminal activities such as international money laundering and trafficking in people and controlled substances such as drugs and weapons. However, development and enforcement of international agreements on activities such as the smuggling of migrants or the trafficking of women and children for the sex industry have been extremely limited thus far. Many analysts acknowledge that economic globalization has provided great opportunities for wealth through global organized crime (Castells, 1998; United Nations Development Programme, 2009).

chapter review

● How do sociologists view deviance?

Sociologists are interested in what types of behavior are defined by societies as "deviant," who does that defining, how individuals become deviant, and how those individuals are dealt with by society.

● What are the main functionalist theories for explaining deviance?

Functionalist perspectives on deviance include strain theory and opportunity theory. Strain theory focuses on the idea that when people are denied legitimate access to cultural goals, such as a good job or a nice home, they may engage in illegal behavior to obtain them. Opportunity theory suggests that for deviance to occur, people must have access to illegitimate means to acquire what they want but cannot obtain through legitimate means.

● How do conflict and feminist perspectives explain deviance?

Conflict perspectives on deviance focus on inequalities in society. Marxist conflict theorists link deviance and crime to the capitalist society, which divides people into haves and have-nots, leaving crime as the only source of support for those at the bottom of the economic ladder. Feminist approaches to deviance focus on the relationship between gender and deviance.

● How do symbolic interactionists view deviance?

According to symbolic interactionists, deviance is learned through interaction with others. Differential association theory states that individuals have a greater tendency to deviate from societal norms when they frequently associate with persons who tend toward deviance instead of conformity. According to social control theories, everyone is capable of committing crimes, but social bonding (attachments to family and to other social institutions) keeps many from doing so. According to labeling theory, deviant behavior is that which is labeled deviant by those in powerful positions.

● What is the postmodernist view on deviance?

Postmodernist views on deviance focus on how the powerful control others through discipline

and surveillance. This control may be maintained through largely invisible forces such as the Panoptican, as described by Michel Foucault, or by newer technologies that place everyone—not just "deviants"—under constant surveillance by authorities, who use their knowledge as power over others.

● How do sociologists classify crime?

Sociologists identify six main categories of crime: violent crime (murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault), property crime (burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, and arson), public order crimes (sometimes referred to as "morals" crimes), occupational (white-collar) crime, organized crime, and political crime.

● What are the main sources of crime statistics?

Official crime statistics are taken from the Uniform Crime Report, which lists crimes reported to the police, and the National Crime Victimization Survey, which interviews households to determine the incidence of crimes, including those not reported to police. Studies show that many more crimes are committed than are officially reported.

● How are age and class related to crime statistics?

Age is the key factor in crime statistics. Persons under age 25 account for almost one-half of all arrests for violent crime and almost 55 percent of all arrests for property crime. Persons from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to be arrested for violent and property crimes; white-collar crime is more likely to occur among the upper socioeconomic classes.

● Who are the most frequent victims of crime?

Young males of color between ages 12 and 24 have the highest criminal victimization rates. The elderly tend to be fearful of crime but are the least likely to be victimized.

● How is discretion used in the criminal justice system?

The criminal justice system, including the police, the courts, and prisons, often has considerable discretion in dealing with offenders. The police use discretion in deciding whether to act on a situation. Prosecutors and judges use discretion in deciding which cases to pursue and how to handle them.

key terms

corporate crime 184

crime 168

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criminology 170

deviance 166

differential association theory 177

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victimless crimes 184

violent crime 183

questions for critical thinking

1. Does public toleration of deviance lead to increased crime rates? If people were forced to conform to stricter standards of behavior, would there be less crime in the United States?

2. Should so-called victimless crimes, such as prostitution and recreational drug use, be decriminalized? Do these crimes harm society?

3. As a sociologist armed with a sociological imagination, how would you propose to deal with the problem of crime in the United States and around the world?

turning to video

Watch the ABC video *MS-13: Suburban Gang* (running time 3:06), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video introduces you to MS-13, a gang commonly considered to be one of the most dangerous in the United States. As you watch the video, think about your assumptions about—or experience with—gangs: Do you think of gangs as being primarily active in urban areas? Why or why not? After you watch the video, try answering these questions: How are the factors that contribute to individuals joining gangs the same in both urban and suburban areas? How are they different? What is significant about the similarities and differences?

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Class and Stratification in the United States

President Barack Obama: Of the many responsibilities granted to a President by our Constitution, few are more serious or more consequential than selecting a Supreme Court Justice. The members of our highest court are granted life tenure, often serving long after the Presidents who appointed them…. So I don't take this decision lightly….

After completing this exhaustive process, I have decided to nominate an inspiring woman who I believe will make a great Justice: Judge Sonia Sotomayor of the great state of New York. Over a distinguished career that spans three decades, Judge Sotomayor has worked at almost every level of our judicial system, providing her with a depth of experience and a breadth of perspective that will be invaluable as a Supreme Court Justice….

But as impressive and meaningful as Judge Sotomayor's sterling credentials in the law is her own extraordinary journey. Born in the South Bronx, she was raised in a housing project not far from Yankee Stadium, making her a lifelong Yankees fan. I hope this will not disqualify her—in the eyes of the New Englanders in the Senate.

Sonia's parents came to New York from Puerto Rico during the Second World War, her mother as part of the Women's Army Corps…. Sonia's father was a factory worker with a third-grade education who didn't speak

© AP Photo/Alex Brandon

▲ **On August 8, 2009, Sonia Sotomayor, shown here with President Barack Obama, was sworn in as the first Latina/o member of the U.S. Supreme Court. To many observers, Sotomayor's career is emblematic of the American Dream.**

English. But like Sonia's mother, he had a willingness to work hard, a strong sense of family, and a belief in the American Dream….

Judge Sonia Sotomayor: Thank you, Mr. President, for the most humbling honor of my life. You have nominated me to serve on the country's highest court, and I am deeply moved…. Although I grew up in very modest and challenging circumstances, I consider my life to be immeasurably rich. I was raised in a Bronx public housing project, but studied at two of the nation's finest universities. I did work as an assistant district attorney, prosecuting violent crimes that devastate our communities. But then I joined a private law firm and worked with international corporations doing business in the United States. I have had the privilege of serving as a Federal District trial judge, and am now serving as a Federal Appellate Circuit Court judge.…

It is a daunting feeling to be here. Eleven years ago, during my confirmation process for appointment to the Second Circuit, I was given a private tour of the White House. It was an overwhelming experience for a kid from the South Bronx. Yet never in my wildest childhood imaginings did I ever envision that moment, let alone did I ever dream that I would live this moment.

—remarks by President Barack Obama and Judge Sonia Sotomayor upon her nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court (White House.gov, 2009b)

Chapter Focus Question

How is the American Dream influenced by social stratification?

The remarkable success of Judge Sonia Sotomayor has been described by media analysts and by the judge herself as a contemporary version of the American Dream, which culminated in her nomination by the Obama administration to serve as a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Like Judge Sotomayor, many other highly successful people in this nation started in humble origins, living in housing projects or inner-city slums, and eventually rising to top positions in their respective fields. For example, among the many people who grew up in one of the 400,000 public housing residences owned by the New York City Housing Authority are past and current members of Congress, top executives who head up corporations such as Starbucks and Xerox, and highly paid entertainers and athletes, including Jay-Z, Wesley Snipes, Marc Anthony, and Mike Tyson (Alvarez and Wilson, 2009).

Judge Sotomayor and many other upwardly mobile individuals describe their life experiences as "living the American Dream." This brings us to an important question in studying class and stratification in the United States: What is the American Dream? Simply stated, the American Dream is the belief that if people work hard and play by the rules, they will have a chance to get ahead. Moreover, each generation will be able to have a higher standard of living than that of its parents (Danziger and Gottschalk, 1995). The American Dream is based on the assumption that people in the United States have equality of opportunity regardless of their race, creed, color, national origin, gender, or religion.

For middle- and upper-income people, the American Dream typically means that each subsequent generation will be able to acquire more material possessions and wealth than people in the preceding generation. To some people, achieving the American Dream means having a secure job, owning a home, and getting a good education for their children. To others, it is the promise that anyone may rise from poverty to wealth (from "rags to riches") if he or she works hard enough. In the case of Judge Sotomayor and other high-level judges or members of Congress, achieving the American Dream means that they have acquired a unique opportunity to influence the course of legal and/or governmental history in the United States.

When we talk about the American Dream, it is important to realize that not all people, even those who work hard for many years—or even for their entire lifetime—will achieve the sort of success that Judge Sotomayor and others who have risen to the tops of their respective professions have accomplished. The way a society is stratified has a major influence on a person's position in the class structure. In this chapter, we examine systems of social stratification and how the U.S. class system may make it easier for some individuals to attain (or maintain) top positions in society while others have great difficulty moving up from poverty or low-income origins. Before we explore class and stratification, test your knowledge of wealth, poverty, and the American Dream by taking the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz.

What Is Social Stratification?

Social stratification **is the hierarchical arrangement of large social groups based on their control over basic resources** (Feagin and Feagin, 2008). Stratification involves patterns of structural inequality that are associated with membership in each of these groups, as well as the ideologies that support inequality. Sociologists examine the social groups that make up the hierarchy in a society and seek to determine how inequalities are structured and persist over time.

Max Weber's term *life chances* **refers to the extent to which individuals have access to important societal resources such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care.** According to sociologists, more-affluent people typically have better life chances than the less affluent because they have greater access to quality education, safe neighborhoods, high-quality nutrition and health care, police and private security protection, and an extensive array of other goods and services. In contrast, persons with low- and poverty-level incomes tend to have limited access to these resources. *Resources* are anything valued in a society, ranging from money and property to medical care and education; they are considered to be scarce because of their unequal distribution among social categories. If we think about the valued resources available in the United States, for example, the differences in life chances are readily apparent. As one analyst suggested, "Poverty narrows and closes life chances. The victims of poverty experience a kind of arteriosclerosis of opportunity. Being poor not only means economic

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disk provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint® slides, videos, PowerPoint® and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.

- **Sociological Imagination:** Before getting too far into the chapter, ask students to write a brief essay on what they believe about their own life chances. Have them approach the exercise as an act of sociological imagination, considering various social, economic, and other factors that will influence these chances.

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Wealth, Poverty, and the American Dream?

True	False	
T	**F**	1. People no longer believe in the American Dream.
T	**F**	2. Individuals over age 65 have the highest rate of poverty.
T	**F**	3. Men account for two out of three impoverished adults in the United States.
T	**F**	4. About 5 percent of U.S. residents live in households whose members sometimes do not get enough to eat.
T	**F**	5. Income is more unevenly distributed than wealth.
T	**F**	6. People who are poor usually have personal attributes that contribute to their impoverishment.
T	**F**	7. A number of people living below the official poverty line have full-time jobs.
T	**F**	8. One in three U.S. children will be poor at some point in their childhood.

Answers on page 210.

insecurity, it also wreaks havoc on one's mental and physical health" (Ropers, 1991: 25). Our life chances are intertwined with our class, race, gender, and age.

All societies distinguish among people by age. Young children typically have less authority and responsibility than older persons. Older persons, especially those without wealth or power, may find themselves at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Similarly, all societies differentiate between females and males: Women are often treated as subordinate to men. From society to society, people are treated differently as a result of their religion, race/ethnicity, appearance, physical strength, disabilities, or other distinguishing characteristics. All of these differentiations result in inequality. However, systems of stratification are also linked to the specific economic and social structure of a society and to a nation's position in the system of global stratification, which is so significant for understanding social inequality that we will devote the next chapter to this topic (Chapter 8).

Systems of Stratification

Around the globe, one of the most important characteristics of systems of stratification is their degree of flexibility. Sociologists distinguish among such systems based on the extent to which they are open or closed. In an *open system,* the boundaries between levels in the hierarchies are more flexible and may be influenced (positively or negatively) by people's achieved statuses. Open systems are assumed to have some degree of social mobility. *Social mobility is the movement of individuals or groups from one level in a stratification system to another* (Rothman, 2005). This movement can be either upward or downward. *Intergenerational mobility is the social movement experienced by family members from one generation to the next.* For example, Sarah's father is a carpenter who makes good wages in good economic times but is often unemployed when the construction industry slows to a standstill. Sarah becomes a neurologist, earning

social stratification the hierarchical arrangement of large social groups based on their control over basic resources.

life chances Max Weber's term for the extent to which individuals have access to important societal resources such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care.

social mobility the movement of individuals or groups from one level in a stratification system to another.

intergenerational mobility the social movement (upward or downward) experienced by family members from one generation to the next.

- **Active Learning:** Ask students to work on the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz on their own and then compare their answers in small groups. Go over the correct answers, and talk about those that were most frequently missed. Use these to guide your lectures and presentations during the rest of the chapter.
- **Extra Examples:** "A record $45 trillion will move from one generation to another over the next 55 years. That adds up to $7,000 for every person on Earth. About one-third of the money will go to baby-boomers, while the rest will flow mainly to their children" (*Fortune* magazine). Have students discuss these facts in the context of social stratification.

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Wealth, Poverty, and the American Dream

1. **False.** The American Dream appears to be alive and well. U.S. culture places a strong emphasis on the goal of monetary success, and many people use legal or illegal means to attempt to achieve that goal.

2. **False.** As a group, children have a higher rate of poverty than the elderly. Government programs such as Social Security have been indexed for inflation, whereas many of the programs for the young have been scaled back or eliminated. However, many elderly individuals still live in poverty.

3. **False.** Women, not men, account for two out of three impoverished adults in the United States. Reasons include the lack of job opportunities for women, lower pay than men for comparable jobs, lack of affordable day care for children, sexism in the workplace, and a number of other factors.

4. **True.** It is estimated that about 5 percent of the U.S. population (1 in 20 people) resides in household units where members do not get enough to eat.

5. **False.** Wealth is more unevenly distributed among the U.S. population than is income. However, both wealth and income are concentrated in very few hands compared with the size of the overall population.

6. **False.** According to one widely held stereotype, the poor are lazy and do not want to work. Rather than looking at the structural characteristics of society, people cite the alleged personal attributes of the poor as the reason for their plight.

7. **True.** Many of those who fall below the official poverty line are referred to as the "working poor" because they work full time but earn such low wages that they are still considered to be impoverished.

8. **True.** According to recent data from the Children's Defense Fund, one in three U.S. children will live in a family that is below the official poverty line at some point in their childhood. For some of these children, poverty will be a persistent problem throughout their childhood and youth.

Sources: Based on Children's Defense Fund, 2001; Gilbert, 2010; and U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

$350,000 a year, and moves from the working class to the upper-middle class. Between her father's generation and her own, Sarah has experienced upward social mobility.

By contrast, *intragenerational mobility is the social movement of individuals within their own lifetime.* Consider, for example, RaShandra, who began her career as a high-tech factory worker and through increased experience and taking specialized courses in her field became an entrepreneur, starting her own highly successful Internet-based business. RaShandra's advancement is an example of upward intragenerational social mobility. However, both intragenerational mobility and intergenerational mobility may be downward as well as upward.

In a *closed system,* the boundaries between levels in the hierarchies of social stratification are rigid, and people's positions are set by ascribed status. Open and closed systems are ideal-type constructs; no actual

▲ Social mobility is the movement from one level in a stratification system to another. The background of the photo shows a traditional Indian marketplace; however, the man in the foreground shows signs of upward mobility.

© Zubin Shroff/Stone/Getty Images

stratification system is completely open or closed. The systems of stratification that we will examine—slavery, caste, and class—are characterized by different hierarchical structures and varying degrees of mobility. Let's examine these three systems of stratification to determine how people acquire their positions in each and what potential for social movement they have.

Slavery

Slavery is an extreme form of stratification in which some people are owned by others. It is a closed system in which people designated as "slaves" are treated as property and have little or no control over their lives. According to some social analysts, throughout recorded history only five societies have been slave societies—those in which the social and economic impact of slavery was extensive: ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, the United States, the Caribbean, and Brazil (Finley, 1980). Others suggest that slavery also existed in the Americas prior to European settlement, and throughout Africa and Asia (Engerman, 1995).

Those of us living in the United States are most aware of the legacy of slavery in our own country. Beginning in the 1600s, slaves were forcibly imported to the United States as a source of cheap labor. Slavery was defined in law and custom by the 1750s, making it possible for one person to own another person (Healey, 2002). In fact, early U.S. presidents including George Washington, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson owned slaves. As practiced in the United States, slavery had four primary characteristics: (1) it was for life and was inherited (children of slaves were considered to be slaves); (2) slaves were considered property, not human beings; (3) slaves were denied rights; and (4) coercion was used to keep slaves "in their place" (Noel, 1972). Although most slaves were powerless to bring about change, some were able to challenge slavery—or at least their position in the system—by engaging in activities such as sabotage, intentional carelessness, work slowdowns, or running away from owners and working for the abolition of slavery (Healey, 2002). Despite the fact that slavery in this country officially ended many years ago, sociologists such as Patricia Hill Collins (1990) believe that its legacy is deeply embedded in current patterns of prejudice and discrimination against African Americans.

Slavery is not simply an unfortunate historical legacy. Although legal slavery no longer exists, economist Stanley L. Engerman (1995: 175) believes that the world will not be completely free of slavery as long as there are "debt bondage, child labor, contract labor, and other varieties of coerced work for limited periods of time, with limited opportunities for mobility, and with limited political and economic power." See the Sociology in Global Perspective box for a discussion of global slavery in the twenty-first century.

The Caste System

Like slavery, caste is a closed system of social stratification. A *caste system* is a system of social inequality in which people's status is permanently determined at birth based on their parents' ascribed characteristics. Vestiges of caste systems exist in contemporary India and South Africa.

In India, caste is based in part on occupation; thus, families typically perform the same type of work from generation to generation. By contrast, the caste system of South Africa was based on racial classifications and the belief of white South Africans (Afrikaners) that they were morally superior to the black majority. Until the 1990s, the Afrikaners controlled the government, the police, and the military by enforcing *apartheid*—the separation of the races. Blacks were denied full citizenship and restricted to segregated hospitals, schools, residential neighborhoods, and other facilities. Whites held almost all of the desirable jobs; blacks worked as manual laborers and servants.

In a caste system, marriage is endogamous, meaning that people are allowed to marry only within their own group. In India, parents traditionally have selected marriage partners for their children. In South Africa, interracial marriage was illegal until 1985.

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intragenerational mobility the social movement (upward or downward) of individuals within their own lifetime.

slavery an extreme form of stratification in which some people are owned by others.

caste system a system of social inequality in which people's status is permanently determined at birth based on their parents' ascribed characteristics.

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sociology in global perspective

Slavery in the Twenty-First Century: A Global Problem

> When it is mentioned we tend to think of people, almost always black people; degraded, abused and bound in chains, and we tend to think of such images, and the word *slavery* itself, as belonging to another era. We do not see slavery as belonging to our world, not as something which is still happening today.
> —Rageh Omaar (2007), a BBC journalist, introducing his TV documentary on the world of modern child slavery

It is very uncomfortable for many of us to think about ways in which people traffic in human beings—particularly children in slavery. According to the United States Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, trafficking is "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion" (qtd. in Woods, 2010). Based on this definition, a person does not have to be physically transported from one location to another to be considered a trafficking victim. Estimates suggest that about 12.3 million people are trafficked or enslaved as forced laborers or sex workers. Some experts place the number much higher, as many as 27 million worldwide, depending on what definition of forced labor is used.

Although the legacy of slavery and forced labor remains a shameful part of the history of the United States, many people in this country prefer to think of slavery as something that occurred in the past but no longer exists. Unfortunately, social scientists, journalists, human rights activists, and other social analysts have systematically documented the presence of twenty-first-century slavery in the form of forced labor, child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and other types of economic exploitation. In some cases, forced labor is imposed by the state, such as situations in which individuals are made to work by a government, a penal system, the military, or a rebel group. About 25 percent of forced labor is state imposed, while 75 percent is imposed by private operators who engage in prostitution, other commercial sexual activity, bonded labor, or forced domestic or agricultural labor (*BBC News*, 2005).

Globalization has further intensified the problem of slavery and trading in human beings. Tens of thousands of people from Asia, Latin America, Central Europe, and Eastern Europe have been trafficked into the United States or Canada, where they have been forced into prostitution, domestic work, agricultural labor, or factory work. In Latin America and the Caribbean, forced labor is found not only in urban areas but also in rural or indigenous populations in remote areas. Sexual exploitation and labor are two primary reasons why people are trafficked in Latin America, and children have been particularly vulnerable to domestic slavery (Skinner, 2008).

As with many other nations, child slavery has been a pressing problem in Africa and India. Chattel slavery has been found in some countries of Africa, where hundreds of thousands are born into slavery. Others are sold by their parents or abducted and required to work in various forms of labor. In India, E. Benjamin Skinner (2008), an international journalist, found that at least half a million children were in bondage, working in places ranging from private residences and tea stalls to carpet and sari factories around Delhi. Anti-Slavery International has documented the bondage of the children Skinner describes:

> Most slaves do not make products for export. Thousands of children work for no pay under threat of violence in begging stables around Mumbai or Diwali fireworks factories in Tamil Nadu. Across the country, perhaps 8 million toil in the oldest form of bondage, agricultural slavery. Some farmers enslave girls in cotton fields because, lore had it, the crops would not replenish if men reaped the harvest. In 2001, investigators found farm slaves literally in chains. . . . In southern India, tens of thousands of girls are *devadasi*—ritual sex slaves. (Skinner, 2008: 208–209)

Overall, Skinner's work documents trafficking networks and slave sales on five continents in the twenty-first century, so it comes as little surprise that he also found such practices in urban and suburban America. In describing the working conditions of "sex slaves" in spas and massage parlors in Houston, who were brought to the United States from Thailand, the journalist Mimi Swartz (2010: 107) stated that "The customers rarely seemed to grasp that the women were captives. They didn't see the other rooms. . . . These so-called spas were as tightly run as maximum-security prisons: Without permission, no one got in—or out."

From the works of journalists such as Skinner and Swartz, we learn that slavery has not disappeared; instead, it has become more global. However, it also happens in places very close to our own homes and our daily lives, whether or not we are observant of these harsh conditions of life.

reflect & analyze

Why is it important for us to be aware of problems such as human slavery even if we might believe they have no relevance to our life? Is there any relationship between the American Dream and the exploitation of people on a global basis?

- **Global Perspective:** Have students read *New York Times* reporter Nicholas Kristof's account of buying the freedom of sexual slaves in Cambodia and his reporting on the global epidemic of sexual slavery (nytimes.com). For a more comprehensive project, have them read *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide.*

- **Research:** Have students do research on the complicated economic relationships between wealthy Westerners and the plight of indentured servants and other impoverished individuals in the developing world. What choices do we have about participating in these dynamics?

Cultural beliefs and values sustain caste systems. Hinduism, the primary religion of India, reinforced the caste system by teaching that people should accept their fate in life and work hard as a moral duty. Caste systems grow weaker as societies industrialize; the values reinforcing the system break down, and people start to focus on the types of skills needed for industrialization.

As we have seen, in closed systems of stratification, group membership is hereditary, and it is almost impossible to move up within the structure. Custom and law frequently perpetuate privilege and ensure that higher-level positions are reserved for the children of the advantaged (Rothman, 2005).

▼ Systems of stratification include slavery, caste, and class. As shown in these photos, the life chances of people living in each of these systems differ widely.

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The Class System

The *class system* **is a type of stratification based on the ownership and control of resources and on the type of work people do** (Rothman, 2005). At least theoretically, a class system is more open than a caste system because the boundaries between classes are less distinct than the boundaries between castes. In a class system, status comes at least partly through achievement rather than entirely by ascription.

In class systems, people may become members of a class other than that of their parents through both intergenerational and intragenerational mobility, either upward or downward. Horizontal mobility occurs when people experience a gain or loss in position and/or income that does not produce a change in their place in the class structure. For example, a person may get a pay increase and a more prestigious title but still not move from one class to another. By contrast, movement up or down the class structure is *vertical mobility*. Martin, a commercial artist who owns his own firm, is an example of vertical, intergenerational mobility:

> My family came out of a lot of poverty and were eager to escape it. . . . My [mother's parents] worked in a sweatshop. My grandfather to the day he died never earned more than $14 a week. My grandmother worked in knitting mills while she had five children. . . . My father quit school when he was in eighth grade and supported his mother and his two sisters when he was twelve years old. My grandfather died when my father was four and he basically raised his sisters. He got a man's job when he was twelve and took care of the three of them. (qtd. in Newman, 1993: 65)

Martin's situation reflects upward mobility; however, people may also experience downward mobility, caused by any number of reasons, including a lack of jobs, low wages and employment instability, marriage to someone with fewer resources and less power than oneself, and changing social conditions (Newman, 1988, 1993).

Classical Perspectives on Social Class

Early sociologists grappled with the definition of class and the criteria for determining people's location in the class structure. Both Karl Marx and Max Weber viewed class as an important determinant of social inequality and social change, and their works have had a profound influence on how we view the U.S. class system today.

Karl Marx: Relationship to the Means of Production

According to Karl Marx, class position and the extent of our income and wealth are determined by our work situation, or our relationship to the means of production. As we have previously seen, Marx stated that capitalistic societies consist of two classes—the capitalists and the workers. The *capitalist class (bourgeoisie)* **consists of those who own the means of production**—the land and capital necessary for factories and mines, for example. The *working class (proletariat)* **consists of those who must sell their labor to the owners in order to earn enough money to survive** (see ▶ Figure 7.1).

According to Marx, class relationships involve inequality and exploitation. The workers are exploited as capitalists maximize their profits by paying workers less than the resale value of what they produce but do not own. This exploitation results in workers' *alienation—*a feeling of powerlessness and estrangement from other people and from oneself. In Marx's view, alienation develops as workers

Capitalists

- Own and control means of production
- Achieve wealth through capital

Workers

- Work for wages
- Vulnerable to displacement by machines or cheap labor
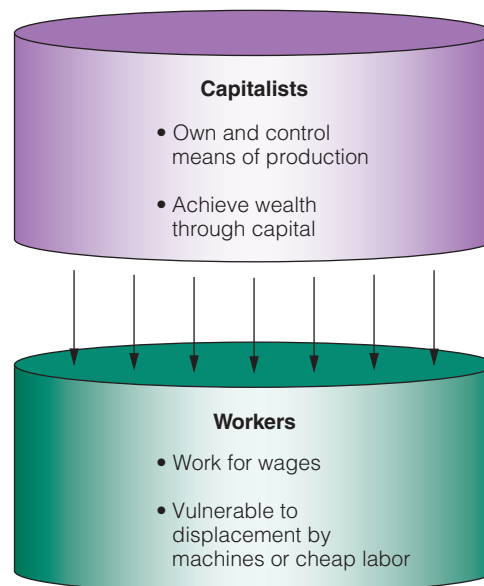
▲ **FIGURE 7.1** **MARX'S VIEW OF STRATIFICATION**

- **For Discussion:** Provide your class with some examples of horizontal and vertical mobility. Ask the class to think about which kind of mobility is more prevalent in the United States and why.
- **Research:** "Overall, the evidence suggests that the playing field is becoming more level in the United States. Socioeconomic origins today are less important than they used to be. Further, such origins have little or even no impact for individuals with a college degree, and the ranks of such individuals continue to increase. Still, family background continues to matter. While the playing field may be becoming more level, family factors still significantly shape the economic outcomes of children" (Daniel P. McMurrer, Mark Condon, and Isabel V. Sawhill, the Urban Institute [www.urban.org]).
- **Extra Examples:** The status attainment theory, as formulated by Duncan, Featherman, and Duncan (1972), assumes that the social

manufacture goods that embody their creative talents but the goods do not belong to them. Workers are also alienated from the work itself because they are forced to perform it in order to live. Because the workers' activities are not their own, they feel self-estrangement. Moreover, workers are separated from others in the factory because they individually sell their labor power to the capitalists as a commodity.

In Marx's view, the capitalist class maintains its position at the top of the class structure by control of the society's *superstructure,* which is composed of the government, schools, churches, and other social institutions that produce and disseminate ideas perpetuating the existing system of exploitation. Marx predicted that the exploitation of workers by the capitalist class would ultimately lead to *class conflict—the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class.* According to Marx, when the workers realized that capitalists were the source of their oppression, they would overthrow the capitalists and their agents of social control, leading to the end of capitalism. The workers would then take over the government and create a more egalitarian society.

Why has no workers' revolution occurred? According to the sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf (1959), capitalism may have persisted because it has changed significantly since Marx's time. Individual capitalists no longer own and control factories and other means of production; today, ownership and control have largely been separated. For example, contemporary transnational corporations are owned by a multitude of stockholders but run by paid officers and managers. Similarly, many (but by no means all) workers have experienced a rising standard of living, which may have contributed to a feeling of complacency. During the twentieth century, workers pressed for salary increases and improvements in the workplace through their activism and labor union membership. They also gained more legal protection in the form of workers' rights and benefits such as workers' compensation insurance for job-related injuries and disabilities (Dahrendorf, 1959). For these reasons, and because of a myriad of other complex factors, the workers' revolution predicted by Marx never came to pass. However, the failure of his prediction does not mean that his analysis of capitalism and his theoretical contributions to sociology are without validity.

Marx had a number of important insights into capitalist societies. First, he recognized the economic basis of class systems (Gilbert, 2010). Second, he noted the relationship between people's social location in the class structure and their values, beliefs, and behavior. Finally, he acknowledged that classes may have opposing (rather than complementary) interests. For example, capitalists' best interests are served by a decrease in labor costs and other expenses and a corresponding increase in profits; workers' best interests are served by well-paid jobs, safe working conditions, and job security.

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▲ Although unions have lost some of their importance over the last fifty years, this 2009 United Auto Workers rally in support of the Employee Free Choice Act—legislation that would make it easier for employees to join a union—shows that many workers still believe in a collective response to workplace issues.

class system a type of stratification based on the ownership and control of resources and on the type of work that people do.

capitalist class (or **bourgeoisie**) Karl Marx's term for the class that consists of those who own and control the means of production.

working class (or **proletariat**) those who must sell their labor to the owners in order to earn enough money to survive.

alienation a feeling of powerlessness and estrangement from other people and from oneself.

class conflict Karl Marx's term for the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class.

status of parents affects the educational level achieved by children, which in turn affects occupational level and status. Have students report on their own families' experiences compared to this theory.

- **U.S. Census:** Even though women have made progress in entering occupations predominantly held by men (especially executive and professional specialty occupations), the majority of women are still in traditional "female" occupations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Quote, Unquote:** "Society does not consist of individuals but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand" (Karl Marx). Have students compare Marx's idea of alienation to Weber's idea of disenchantment.

Max Weber: Wealth, Prestige, and Power

Max Weber's analysis of class builds upon earlier theories of capitalism (particularly those by Marx) and of money (particularly those by Georg Simmel, as discussed in Chapter 2). Living in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Weber was in a unique position to see the transformation that occurred as individual, competitive, entrepreneurial capitalism went through the process of shifting to bureaucratic, industrial, corporate capitalism. As a result, Weber had more opportunity than Marx to see how capitalism changed over time.

Weber agreed with Marx's assertion that economic factors are important in understanding individual and group behavior. However, Weber emphasized that no single factor (such as economic divisions between capitalists and workers) was sufficient for defining the location of categories of people within the class structure. According to Weber, the access that people have to important societal resources (such as economic, social, and political power) is crucial in determining people's life chances. To highlight the importance of life chances for categories of people, Weber developed a multidimensional approach to social stratification that reflects the interplay among wealth, prestige, and power. In his analysis of these dimensions of class structure, Weber viewed the concept of "class" as an *ideal type* (that can be used to compare and contrast various societies) rather than as a specific social category of "real" people (Bourdieu, 1984).

Wealth is the value of all of a person's or family's economic assets, including income, personal property, and income-producing property. Weber placed categories of people who have a similar level of wealth and income in the same class. For example, he identified a privileged commercial class of *entrepreneurs*—wealthy bankers, ship owners, professionals, and merchants who possess similar financial resources. He also described a class of *rentiers*—wealthy individuals who live off their investments and do not have to work. According to Weber, entrepreneurs and rentiers have much in common. Both are able to purchase expensive consumer goods, control other people's opportunities to acquire wealth and property, and monopolize costly status privileges (such as education) that provide contacts and skills for their children.

Weber divided those who work for wages into two classes: the middle class and the working class. The middle class consists of white-collar workers, public officials, managers, and professionals. The working class consists of skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled workers.

The second dimension of Weber's system of stratification is *prestige*—the respect or regard with which a person or status position is regarded by others. Fame, respect, honor, and esteem are the most common forms of prestige. A person who has a high level of prestige is assumed to receive deferential and respectful treatment from others. Weber suggested that individuals who share a common level of social prestige belong to the same status group regardless of their level of wealth. They tend to socialize with one another, marry within their own group of social

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▲ In this still from a 2007 episode of *The Real Housewives of Orange County,* the housewives go shopping for dresses. In your opinion, what accounts for the level of social prestige that these women so obviously enjoy?

- **For Discussion:** Have students brainstorm answers to the following questions: What are the causes of alienation in society? What are the remedies? What aspects of work today lead to feelings of alienation?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to write a brief essay on what the American Dream means to them. How has their social-class status contributed to their ability to achieve those dreams?
- **For Discussion:** Have the class compare and contrast Weber's and Marx's approach to defining social class. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each method?
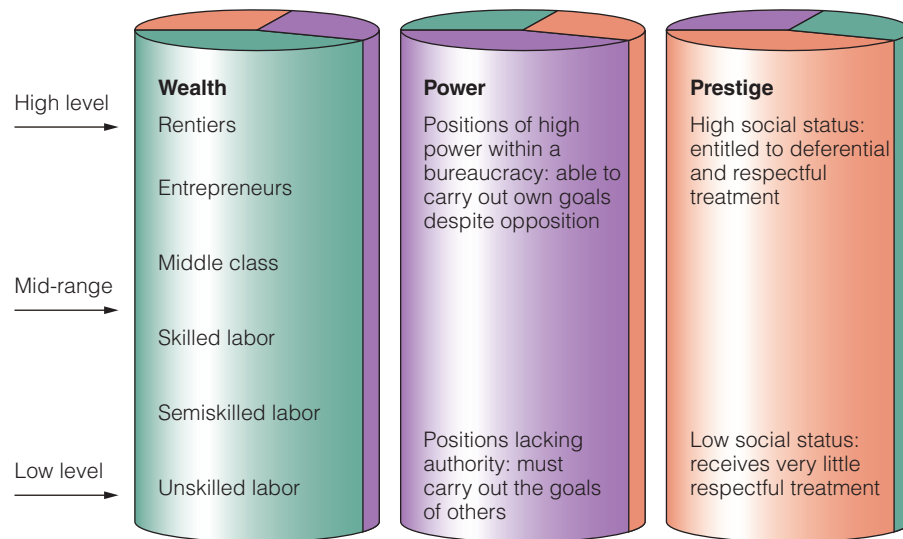
▲ **FIGURE 7.2** **WEBER'S MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO SOCIAL STRATIFICATION**
According to Max Weber, wealth, power, and prestige are separate continuums. Individuals may rank high in one dimension and low in another, or they may rank high or low in more than one dimension. Also, individuals may use their high rank in one dimension to achieve a comparable rank in another. How does Weber's model compare with Marx's approach as shown in Figure 7.1?

equals, spend their leisure time together, and safeguard their status by restricting outsiders' opportunities to join their ranks (Beeghley, 2008).

The other dimension of Weber's system is *power—the ability of people or groups to achieve their goals despite opposition from others.* The powerful can shape society in accordance with their own interests and direct the actions of others (Tumin, 1953). According to Weber, social power in modern societies is held by bureaucracies; individual power depends on a person's position within the bureaucracy. Weber suggested that the power of modern bureaucracies was so strong that even a workers' revolution (as predicted by Marx) would not lessen social inequality (Hurst, 2007).

Weber stated that wealth, prestige, and power are separate continuums on which people can be ranked from high to low, as shown in ▶ Figure 7.2. Individuals may be high on one dimension while being low on another. For example, people may be very wealthy but have little political power (for example, a recluse who has inherited a large sum of money). They may also have prestige but not wealth (for instance, a college professor who receives teaching excellence awards but lives on a relatively low income). In Weber's multidimensional approach, people are ranked on all three dimensions. Sociologists often use the term *socioeconomic status* (SES) **to refer to a combined measure that attempts to classify individuals, families, or households in terms of factors such as income, occupation, and education to determine class location.**

Weber's analysis of social stratification contributes to our understanding by emphasizing that people behave according to both their economic interests

wealth the value of all of a person's or family's economic assets, including income, personal property, and income-producing property.

prestige the respect or regard with which a person or status position is regarded by others.

power according to Max Weber, the ability of people or groups to achieve their goals despite opposition from others.

socioeconomic status (SES) a combined measure that, in order to determine class location, attempts to classify individuals, families, or households in terms of factors such as income, occupation, and education.

- **Active Learning:** Have the class create an occupational prestige scale for contemporary U.S. life. Use this to help students understand the construction of socioeconomic status. First record how students rate various occupations themselves; then compare their perceptions with the SES rating. Use this activity to help students understand the relationship among occupational prestige, income, and education.

- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to rephrase the following statement and to evaluate its claims: "Many people object to business managers who take away in pay, bonuses, and stock options hundreds of millions of dollars from their companies. Indeed, there is a legitimate question whether the behavior of today's capitalists promotes the general acceptance of capitalism. But individual wealth becomes a problem only if and when it

and their values. He also added to Marx's insights by developing a multidimensional explanation of the class structure and by identifying additional classes. Both Marx and Weber emphasized that capitalists and workers are the primary players in a class society, and both noted the importance of class to people's life chances. However, they saw different futures for capitalism and the social system. Marx saw these structures being overthrown; Weber saw the increasing bureaucratization of life even without capitalism.

Contemporary Sociological Models of the U.S. Class Structure

How many social classes exist in the United States? What criteria are used for determining class membership? No broad consensus exists about how to characterize the class structure in this country. In fact, many people deny that class distinctions exist (see Eisler, 1983; Parenti, 1994). Most people like to think of themselves as middle class; it puts them in a comfortable middle position—neither rich nor poor. Sociologists have developed two models of the class structure: One is based on a Weberian approach, the other on a Marxian approach. We will examine both models briefly.

The Weberian Model of the U.S. Class Structure

Expanding on Weber's analysis of class structure, sociologist Dennis Gilbert (2010) uses a model of social classes based on three elements: (1) education, (2) occupation of family head, and (3) family income (see ▶ Figure 7.3).

The Upper (Capitalist) Class   The upper class is the wealthiest and most powerful class in the United States. About 1 percent of the population is included in this class, whose members own substantial income-producing assets and operate on both the national and international levels. According to Gilbert (2010), people in this class have an influence on the economy and society far beyond their numbers.

Some models further divide the upper class into upper-upper ("old money") and lower-upper ("new money") categories (Warner and Lunt, 1941;
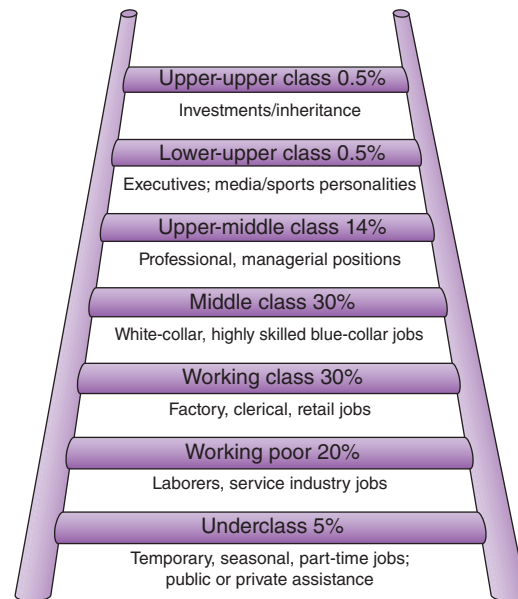
▲ **FIGURE 7.3** STRATIFICATION BASED ON EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, AND INCOME

Coleman and Rainwater, 1978; Kendall, 2002). Members of the upper-upper class come from prominent families, which possess great wealth that they have held for several generations. Family names—such as Rockefeller, Mellon, Du Pont, and Kennedy—are well-known and often held in high esteem. Persons in the upper-upper class tend to have strong feelings of ingroup solidarity. They belong to the same exclusive clubs and support high culture (such as the opera, symphony orchestras, ballet, and art museums). Children are educated in prestigious private schools and Ivy League universities; many acquire strong feelings of privilege from birth, as upper-class author Lewis H. Lapham (1988: 14) states:

> Together with my classmates and peers, I was given to understand that it was sufficient accomplishment merely to have been born. Not that anybody ever said precisely that in so many words, but the assumption was plain enough, and I could confirm it by observing the mechanics of the local society. A man might become a drunkard, a concert pianist or an owner of companies, but none of these occupations would have an important bearing on his social rank.

Children of the upper class are socialized to view themselves as different from others; they also learn that they are expected to marry within their own

can be used to restrict others' chances of participation" (Ralf Dahrendorf).

- **U.S. Census:** The financial circumstances of older people have improved dramatically, although there are wide variations in income and wealth. The proportion of people aged 65 and older in poverty decreased from 35 percent in 1959 to 10 percent in 2003, mostly attributed to the support of Social Security. In 2000

the poorest fifth of senior households had a net worth of $3,500 ($44,346 including home equity), and the wealthiest had $328,432 ($449,800 including home equity) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

- **For Discussion:** "Between richer and poorer classes in a free country a mutually respecting antagonism is much healthier than pity on the one hand and dependence on the other, as is, perhaps, the next best thing to fraternal feeling" (Charles Horton Cooley).

class (Warner and Lunt, 1941; Mills, 1959a; Domhoff, 1983; Kendall, 2002).

Members of the lower-upper class may be extremely wealthy but not have attained as much prestige as members of the upper-upper class. The "new rich" have earned most of their money in their own lifetime as entrepreneurs, presidents of major corporations, sports or entertainment celebrities, or top-level professionals. For some members of the lower-upper class, the American Dream has become a reality. Others still desire the respect of members of the upper-upper class.

The Upper-Middle Class

Persons in the upper-middle class are often highly educated professionals who have built careers as physicians, attorneys, stockbrokers, or corporate managers. Others derive their income from family-owned businesses. According to Gilbert (2010), about 14 percent of the U.S. population is in this category. A combination of three factors qualifies people for the upper-middle class: university degrees, authority and independence on the job, and high income. Of all the class categories, the upper-middle class is the one that is most shaped by formal education. Over the past fifty years, Asian Americans, Latinos/as, and African Americans have placed great importance on education as a means of attaining the American Dream. Many people of color have moved into the upper-middle class by acquiring higher levels of education.

The Middle Class

In past decades, a high school diploma was necessary to qualify for most middle-class jobs. Today, two-year or four-year college degrees have replaced the high school diploma as an entry-level requirement for employment in many middle-class occupations, including medical technicians, nurses, legal and medical assistants, lower-level managers, semiprofessionals, and non-retail salesworkers. An estimated 30 percent of the U.S. population is in the middle class even though most people in this country think of themselves as middle class. Nowhere is this myth of the vast middle class more prevalent than in television situation comedies, which for decades have focused on an idealized notion of the middle class or the debunking of that myth.

Traditionally, most middle-class occupations have been relatively secure and have provided more opportunities for advancement (especially with increasing levels of education and experience) than working-class positions. Recently, however, four factors have eroded the American Dream for this class: (1) escalating housing prices, (2) occupational insecurity, (3) blocked mobility on the job, and (4) the cost-of-living squeeze that has penalized younger workers, even when they have more education and better jobs than their parents (Newman, 1993).

The Working Class

An estimated 30 percent of the U.S. population is in the working class. The core of this class is made up of semiskilled machine operators who work in factories and elsewhere. Members of the working class also include some workers in the service sector, as well as clerks and salespeople whose job responsibilities involve routine, mechanized tasks requiring little skill beyond basic literacy and a brief period of on-the-job training (Gilbert, 2010). Some people in the working class are employed in *pink-collar occupations—relatively low-paying, nonmanual, semiskilled positions primarily held by women,* such as day-care workers, checkout clerks, cashiers, and restaurant servers.

How does life in the working-class family compare with that of individuals in middle-class families? According to sociologists, working-class families not only earn less than middle-class families, but they also have less financial security, particularly because of high rates of layoffs and plant closings in some regions of the country. Few people in the working class have more than a high school diploma, and many have less, which makes job opportunities scarce for them in a "high-tech" society (Gilbert, 2010). Others find themselves in low-paying jobs in the service sector of the economy, particularly fast-food restaurants, a condition that often places them among the working poor.

The Working Poor

The working poor account for about 20 percent of the U.S. population. Members of the working-poor class live from just above

> **pink-collar occupations** relatively low-paying, nonmanual, semiskilled positions primarily held by women, such as day-care workers, checkout clerks, cashiers, and restaurant servers.

to just below the poverty line; they typically hold unskilled jobs, seasonal migrant jobs in agriculture, lower-paid factory jobs, and service jobs (such as counter help at restaurants). Employed single mothers often belong to this class; consequently, children are overrepresented in this category. African Americans and other people of color are also overrepresented among the working poor. To cite only one example, in the United States today, there are two white hospital orderlies to every one white physician, whereas there are twenty-five African American orderlies to every one African American physician (Gilbert, 2010). For the working poor, living from paycheck to paycheck makes it impossible to save money for emergencies such as periodic or seasonal unemployment, which is a constant threat to any economic stability they may have.

Social critic and journalist Barbara Ehrenreich (2001) left her upper-middle-class lifestyle for a period of time to see if it was possible for the working poor to live on the wages that they were being paid as restaurant servers, salesclerks at discount department stores, aides at nursing homes, housecleaners for franchise maid services, or similar jobs. She conducted her research by actually holding those jobs for periods of time and seeing if she could live on the wages that she received. Through her research, Ehrenreich persuasively demonstrated

▲ In *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*, Barbara Ehrenreich (left) recounts her attempt to replicate the lives of the working poor by working a series of low-paying jobs and trying to survive on her wages.

that people who work full time, year-round, for poverty-level wages must develop survival strategies that include such things as help from relatives or constantly moving from one residence to another in order to have a place to live. Like many other researchers, Ehrenreich found that minimum-wage jobs cannot cover the full cost of living, such as rent, food, and the rest of an adult's monthly needs, even without taking into consideration the needs of children or other family members.

At some point in our lives, most of us have held a job paying the minimum wage, and we know the limitations of trying to survive on such low earnings. The federal *minimum wage* is the hourly rate that (with certain exceptions) is the lowest amount an employer can legally pay its employees (each state may adopt a higher minimum wage, but not a lower one). In 2009 the federal minimum wage was raised to $7.25 per hour, where it remains today. A person earning minimum wage and working forty hours every week, fifty-two weeks per year (in other words, no time off, no vacation), would still earn an amount slightly above the *official poverty line* (and slightly below that line for a person with two children). A few states have a minimum wage above the federal requirement: Washington state's minimum wage is $8.55 per hour. Increasing social and economic inequality in the United States has been partly attributed to the vast divide between the low wages paid to workers, based on a low federal minimum wage, and the astronomically high salaries and compensation packages given to some major corporate CEOs.

The Underclass According to Gilbert (2010), people in the *underclass* are poor, seldom employed, and caught in long-term deprivation that results from low levels of education and income and high rates of unemployment. Some are unable to work because of age or disability; others experience discrimination based on race/ethnicity. Single mothers are overrepresented in this class because of the lack of jobs, lack of affordable child care, and many other impediments to the mother's future and that of her children. People without a "living wage" often must rely on public or private assistance programs for their survival. About 3 to 5 percent of the U.S. population is in this category, and the chances of their children moving out of poverty are about fifty-fifty (Gilbert, 2010).
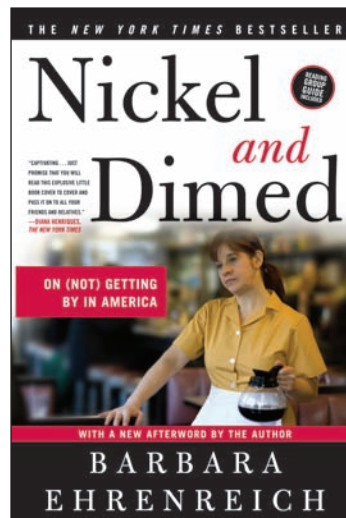
same pattern has always reasserted itself, just as a gyroscope will always return to equilibrium, however far it is pushed one way or the other. The aims of these three groups are entirely irreconcilable" (George Orwell). Have students rephrase this statement in their own words and discuss it.
- **Extra Examples:** "Of all the nasty outcomes predicted for women's liberation . . . none was more alarming, from a feminist point of

view, than the suggestion that women would eventually become just like men" (Barbara Ehrenreich). Have students discuss what Ehrenreich means by this statement.
- **Media Coverage:** "The percentage of immigrants (including those unlawfully present) in the United States has been creeping upward for years. At 12.6 percent, it is now higher than at any point since

Studies by various social scientists have found that meaningful employment opportunities are the critical missing link for people on the lowest rungs of the class ladder. According to these analysts, job creation is essential in order for people to have the opportunity to earn a decent wage; have medical coverage; live meaningful, productive lives; and raise their children in a safe environment (see Fine and Weis, 1998; Nelson and Smith, 1999; Newman, 1999; Wilson, 1996). These issues are closely tied to the American Dream we have been discussing in this chapter.

The Marxian Model of the U.S. Class Structure

The earliest Marxian model of class structure identified ownership or nonownership of the means of production as the distinguishing feature of classes. From this perspective, classes are social groups organized around property ownership, and social stratification is created and maintained by one group in order to protect and enhance its own economic interests. Moreover, societies are organized around classes in conflict over scarce resources. Inequality results from the more powerful exploiting the less powerful. Contemporary Marxian (or conflict) models examine class in terms of people's relationship to others in the production process. For example,

▲ In which segment of the class structure would sociologists place clerical workers such as those in this office mail room? What are the key elements of that social class?

conflict theorists attempt to determine the degree of control that workers have over the decision-making process and the extent to which they are able to plan and implement their own work. They also analyze the type of supervisory authority, if any, that a worker has over other workers. According to this approach, most employees are a part of the working class because they do not control either their own labor or that of others.

Erik Olin Wright (1979, 1985, 1997), one of the leading stratification theorists to examine social class from a Marxian perspective, has concluded that Marx's definition of "workers" does not fit the occupations found in advanced capitalist societies. For example, many top executives, managers, and supervisors who do not own the means of production (and thus would be "workers" in Marx's model) act like capitalists in their zeal to control workers and maximize profits. Likewise, some experts hold positions in which they have control over money and the use of their own time even though they are not owners. Wright views Marx's category of "capitalist" as being too broad as well. For instance, small-business owners might be viewed as capitalists because they own their own tools and have a few people working for them, but they have little in common with large-scale capitalists and do not share the interests of factory workers. ▶ Figure 7.4 compares Marx's model and Wright's model.

Wright (1979) also argues that classes in modern capitalism cannot be defined simply in terms of different levels of wealth, power, and prestige, as in the Weberian model. Consequently, he outlines four criteria for placement in the class structure: (1) ownership of the means of production, (2) purchase of the labor of others (employing others), (3) control of the labor of others (supervising others on the job), and (4) sale of one's own labor (being employed by someone else). Wright (1978) assumes that these criteria can be used to determine the class placement of all workers, regardless of race/ethnicity, in a capitalist society. Let's take a brief look at Wright's (1979, 1985) four classes—(1) the capitalist

underclass those who are poor, seldom employed, and caught in long-term deprivation that results from low levels of education and income and high rates of unemployment.

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the mid-1920s. The number (an estimated 37.9 million) is bigger than at any previous time in history" (*Newsweek,* 12/2007).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** Have students compare Erik Olin Wright's perspective on social class with the view of Karl Marx. How do they differ from functionalist explanations of social class?

- **Sociological Imagination:** "Radical egalitarianism means a commitment to the end of socially structured forms of economic inequality, economic inequalities rooted in the social positions people occupy within the social division of labor" (Erik Olin Wright). Have students write short paragraphs describing what they think radical egalitarianism would look like today.

Marx's Model	Wright's Model
Based on relationship to the means of production:	Takes into account both ownership and control of the means of production and the labor of others:

Capitalist class

Working class

Capitalist class

Managerial class

Small-business class
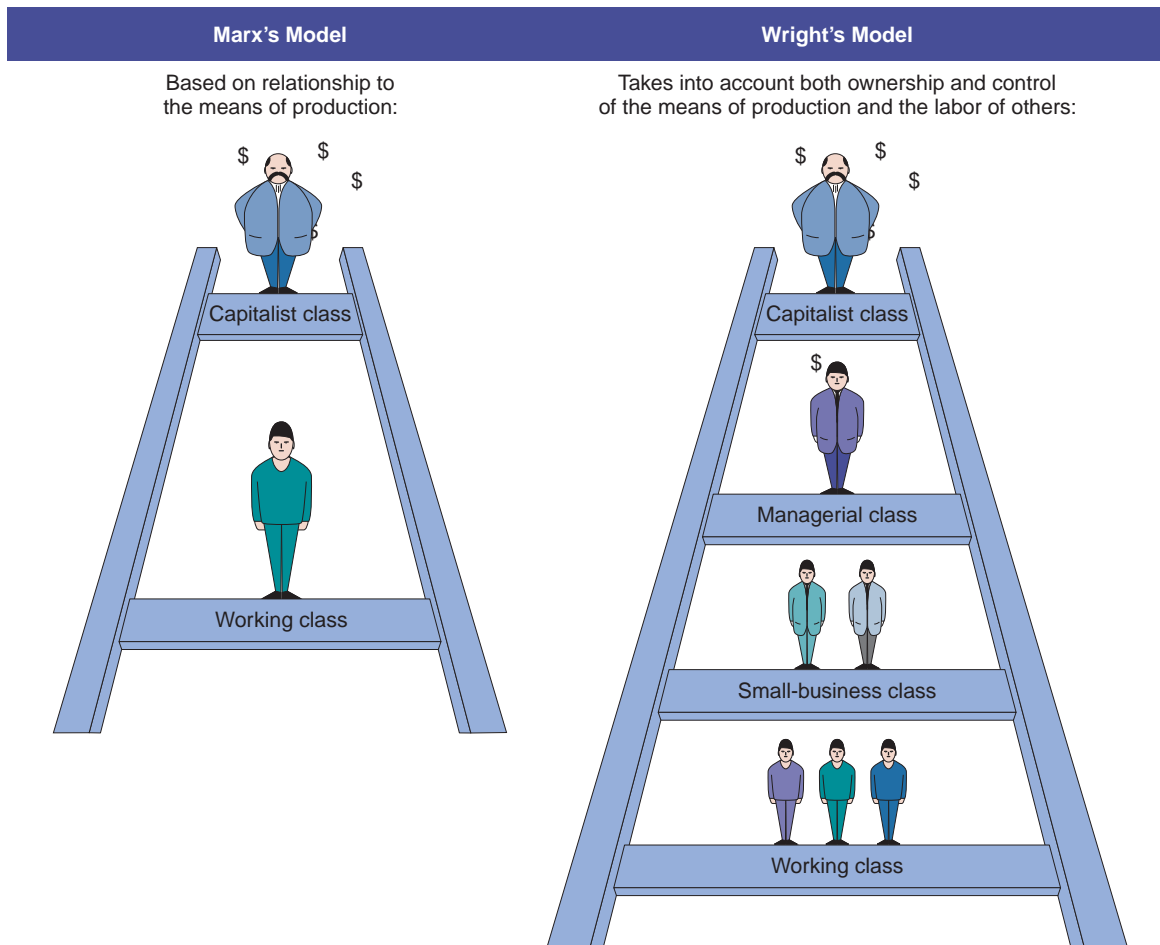
Working class

▲ **FIGURE 7.4** **COMPARISON OF MARX'S AND WRIGHT'S MODELS OF CLASS STRUCTURE**

class, (2) the managerial class, (3) the small-business class, and (4) the working class—so that you can compare them to those found in the Weberian model.

The Capitalist Class   According to Wright, this class holds most of the wealth and power in society through ownership of capital—for example, banks, corporations, factories, mines, news and entertainment industries, and agribusiness firms. The "ruling elites," or "ruling class," within the capitalist class hold political power and are often elected or appointed to influential political and regulatory positions (Parenti, 1994).

This class is composed of individuals who have inherited fortunes, own major corporations, or are top corporate executives with extensive stock holdings or control of company investments. Even

though many top executives have only limited *legal ownership* of their corporations, they have substantial economic ownership and exert extensive control over investments, distribution of profits, and management of resources. The major sources of income for the capitalist class are profits, interest, and very high salaries. Members of this class make important decisions about the workplace, including which products and services to make available to consumers and how many workers to hire or fire.

According to *Forbes* magazine's 2010 list of the richest people in the world, Bill Gates (cofounder of Microsoft Corporation, the world's largest microcomputer software company) was the second wealthiest capitalist, with a net worth of $53 billion, down from his $63-billion figure in 2000 (*Forbes,* 2010). Investor Warren Buffet came in

- **Research:** The Affluent Market Research Program conducted a study to determine which counties in the United States host the most millionaires. According to their findings, Los Angeles County tops the list with roughly 262,800 millionaire households. Next is Cook County, Illinois, followed by Orange County, California.

▲ After founding Microsoft and becoming one of the world's richest people, Bill Gates (top) has devoted recent years to the foundation that he began with his wife, Melinda, to combat poverty and disease in Africa. His career has followed a traditional version of the American Dream: the entrepreneur who becomes very wealthy and then philanthropic. The extended family of George and Barbara Bush (bottom) is a current example of another type of success story, following Erik Olin Wright's theory of the interplay of money and political power: Three generations of the Bush family have held federal office.

third, with $47 billion. The title for wealthiest billionaire in the world went to Carlos Slim Helu, the Mexican telecom entrepreneur, whose net worth was $53.5 billion. Although men who made the *Forbes* list of the wealthiest people gained their fortunes through entrepreneurship or being CEOs of large corporations, many women who made the list acquired their wealth typically through inheritance, marriage, or both. Women celebrities and television entrepreneurs such as Oprah Winfrey ($2.3 billion net worth) typically have far less wealth, relatively speaking, than the top male billionaires.

The Managerial Class People in the managerial class have substantial control over the means of production and over workers. However, these upper-level managers, supervisors, and professionals usually do not participate in key corporate decisions such as how to invest profits. Lower-level managers may have some control over employment practices, including the hiring and firing of some workers.

Top professionals such as physicians, attorneys, accountants, and engineers may control the structure of their own work; however, they typically do not own the means of production and may not have supervisory authority over more than a few people. Even so, they may influence the organization of work and the treatment of other workers. Members of the capitalist class often depend on these professionals for their specialized knowledge.

The Small-Business Class This class consists of small-business owners and craftspeople who may hire a small number of employees but largely do their own work. Some members own businesses such as "mom-and-pop" grocery stores, retail clothing stores, and jewelry stores. Others are doctors and lawyers who receive relatively high incomes from selling their own services. Some of these professionals now share attributes with members of the capitalist class because they have formed corporations that hire and control the employees who produce profits for the professionals.

It is in the small-business class that we find many people's hopes of achieving the American Dream. Recent economic trends, including corporate downsizing, telecommuting, and the movement of jobs to other countries, have encouraged more people to think about starting their own business. As a result, more people today are self-employed or own a small business than at any time in the past (U.S. Department of Labor, 2003). More women of all races and people of color are in the small-business class than was true previously. According to recent statistics, for example, women own 34 percent of all small

• **For Discussion:** According to Wright, why do members of the managerial class occupy a contradictory class location? Have students debate the merits of Wright's perspective.

• **For Discussion:** "Traditionally, Americans have sought to realize the American dream of success, fame, and wealth through thrift and hard work. However, the industrialization of the 19th and 20th centuries began to erode the dream, replacing it with a philosophy of 'get rich quick.' A variety of seductive but elusive strategies have evolved, and today the three leading ways to instant wealth are large-prize television game shows, big-jackpot state lotteries, and compensation lawsuits" (Matthew Warshauer). How do your students define the American Dream? What do they make of this diagnosis of its decline?

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▲ Many immigrants believe that they can achieve the American Dream by starting a small business, such as the stores shown here in San Francisco's Chinatown. Skilled laborers and tradespeople sometimes take another approach to small business by offering services such as landscaping, plumbing, carpentry, and, as seen here, mobile dog grooming.

the American Dream. Over the past decade, the number of businesses owned by subordinate-group members has increased dramatically, but the share of such businesses owned by people of color is still not proportionate to their numbers in the overall population. African Americans make up about 13 percent of the U.S. population but own less than 5 percent of businesses; Latinos/as make up more than 13 percent of the population yet own slightly more than 5 percent of all businesses. Asian Americans are closest to being proportional in business ownership: They constitute about 3.6 percent of the population and own about 3.5 percent of all U.S. businesses (U.S. Department of Labor, 2003).

The Working Class   The working class is made up of a number of subgroups, one of which is blue-collar workers, some of whom are highly skilled and well paid and others of whom are unskilled and poorly paid. Skilled blue-collar workers include electricians, plumbers, and carpenters; unskilled blue-collar workers include janitors and gardeners.

White-collar workers are another subgroup of the working class. Referred to by some as a "new middle class," these workers are actually members of the working class because they do not own the means of production, do not control the work of others, and are relatively powerless in the workplace. Secretaries, other clerical workers, and salesworkers are members of the white-collar faction of the working class. They take orders from others and tend to work under constant supervision. Thus, these workers are at the bottom of the class structure in terms of domination and control in the workplace. The working class contains about half of all employees in the United States.

Although Marxian and Weberian models of the U.S. class structure show differences in people's occupations and access to valued resources, neither fully reflects the nature and extent of inequality in

businesses. However, gaps in revenues persist between businesses owned by women and those owned by men, with women-owned businesses earning on average about 40 percent less than businesses owned by men (U.S. Department of Labor, 2003). Small-business ownership may have shifted during the economic recession of the twenty-first century; however, the U.S. Department of Labor has not issued new data to show what, if any, change has occurred in minority-owned and/or women-owned businesses.

Throughout U.S. history, immigrants and people of color have owned small businesses (Butler, 1991), seeing such enterprises as a way to achieve

- **U.S. Census:** As of 2000, Buffalo County, South Dakota, had a per capita income that made it the poorest county in the United States. The Crow Creek Indian Reservation, inhabited by the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, made up the majority of Buffalo County. Unemployment was 57 percent; many homes lacked indoor plumbing and electricity (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).
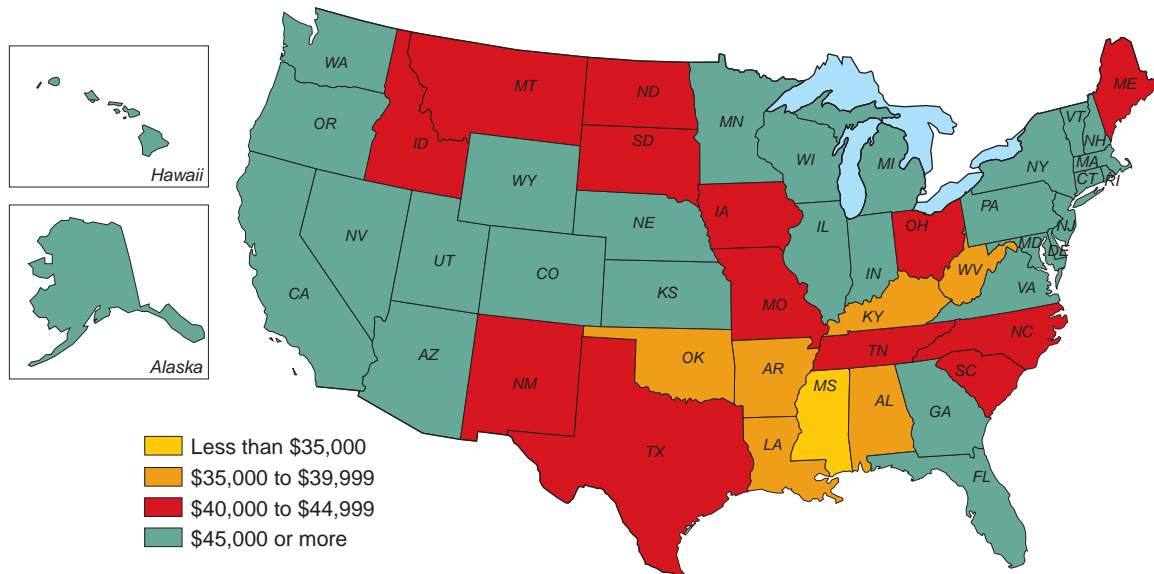
▲ **MAP 7.1** **MEDIAN INCOME BY STATE**

What factors contribute to the uneven distribution of income in the United States?

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

the United States. In the next section, we will take a closer look at the unequal distribution of income and wealth in the United States and the effects of inequality on people's opportunities and life chances.

Inequality in the United States

Throughout human history, people have argued about the distribution of scarce resources in society. Disagreements often center on whether the share we get is a fair reward for our effort and hard work. Recently, social analysts have pointed out that (except during temporary economic downturns) the old maxim "the rich get richer" continues to be valid in the United States. To understand how this happens, we must take a closer look at the distribution of income and wealth in this country.

Distribution of Income and Wealth

Money is essential for acquiring goods and services. People without money cannot purchase food, shelter, clothing, medical care, legal aid, education, and the other things they need or desire. Money—in the form of both income and wealth—is very unevenly distributed in the United States. Median household income varies widely from one state to another, for example (see ▶ Map 7.1). For the entire nation, the

median household income is estimated at about $48,500, down from $50,303 in 2008. Real median household income has fallen in recent years, and the decline has been widespread since the recession that started in December 2007 (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith, 2009). Some estimates of household income are adjusted for inflation while others are not, so these figures can be tricky to interpret. However, one fact remains across decades of reporting of median household income: Among high-income nations, the United States remains number one in inequality of income distribution.

Income Inequality *Income* **is the economic gain derived from wages, salaries, income transfers (governmental aid), and ownership of property** (Beeghley, 2008). Or, to put it another way, "income refers to money, wages, and payments that periodically are received as returns for an occupation or investment" (Kerbo, 2000: 19). Data from the U.S. Census Bureau typically provide income estimates that are based solely on money income before taxes

> **income** the economic gain derived from wages, salaries, income transfers (governmental aid), and ownership of property.

- **Research:** As of 2007, the highest-paying occupations in the United States included physician specialists, dentist specialists, and chief executives, while dishwashers, fast-food cooks, and combined food preparation and serving workers were among the lowest-paying occupations (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Have students research the growth of the service industry in the United States.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Research:** Retail salespersons, cashiers, general office clerks, combined food preparation and serving workers, and registered nurses were among the occupations with the highest U.S. employment in 2007, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

and do not include the value of noncash benefits such as health care coverage or retirement benefits.

Sociologist Dennis Gilbert (2010) compares the distribution of income to a national pie that has been sliced into portions, ranging in size from stingy to generous, for distribution among segments of the population. As shown in ▶ Figure 7.5, in 2006 the wealthiest 20 percent of households received about 50 percent of the total income "pie" while the poorest 20 percent of households received less than 4 percent of all income. The top 5 percent *alone* received more than 20 percent of all income—an amount greater than that received by the bottom 40 percent of all households (Bucks, Kennickell, and Moore, 2006).

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the gulf between the rich and the poor widened in the United States. Since the 1970s, the rich have pulled away from everyone else in regard to the amount of annual income they take home: The poor have been more likely to stay poor, and the affluent have been more likely to stay affluent. Between 1994 and 2006, the income of the top one-fifth of U.S. families increased by more than 40 percent; during that same period of time, the income of the bottom one-fifth of families increased by only 5.6 percent (Tax Policy Center, 2009) (see ▶ Figure 7.6). However, by 2009 the rich were no longer getting richer at the same rate as in the past. According to one media account, "For every investment banker whose pay has recovered

Next 20% of U.S. population

Next-wealthiest 15% of U.S. population

Wealthiest 20% of U.S. population

Next 40% of U.S. population

Wealthiest 5% of U.S. population

Poorest 20% of U.S. population

▲ **FIGURE 7.5** DISTRIBUTION OF PRETAX INCOME IN THE UNITED STATES

Thinking of personal income in the United States (before taxes) as a large pizza helps us to see which segments of the population receive the largest and smallest portions. What part do taxes play in redistributing parts of the pizza?

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

to its prerecession levels, there are several who have lost their jobs—as well as many wealthy investors who have lost millions. As a result, economists and other analysts say, a 30-year period in which the super-rich became both wealthier and more numerous may now be ending" (Leonhardt and Fabrikant, 2009). Of course, this does not mean that they were becoming poor. For the richest, this might mean that their income dropped by several million dollars and that they had to modify their affluent lifestyle. The net worth of people such as Bill Gates and Warren E. Buffett, top U.S. billionaires, may have dropped several billion dollars in a year, but they are far from living in poverty. However, the picture is far different for those located in the middle and bottom sectors of the income pie, who are faced with mortgage or rent payments, bills for food and clothing, and increasing costs for fuel, transportation, and other necessities.

Income distribution varies by race/ethnicity as well as class. ▶ Figure 7.7 compares median household income by race/ethnicity, showing not only the disparity among groups but also the consistency of that disparity over sixteen years. More recently, overall median household income has declined from $50,303 in 2008 to $48,500 as of this writing. Although households across all racial/ethnic categories have experienced some decline in real annual median income, the income gap between African American households and white and Asian and Pacific Islanders is striking. In 2008, African American households had the lowest median income, $34,218, as compared with Asian households, which had the highest median, $65,637. Non-Hispanic white households had a median income of $55,530, as compared with Hispanic households, $37,913.
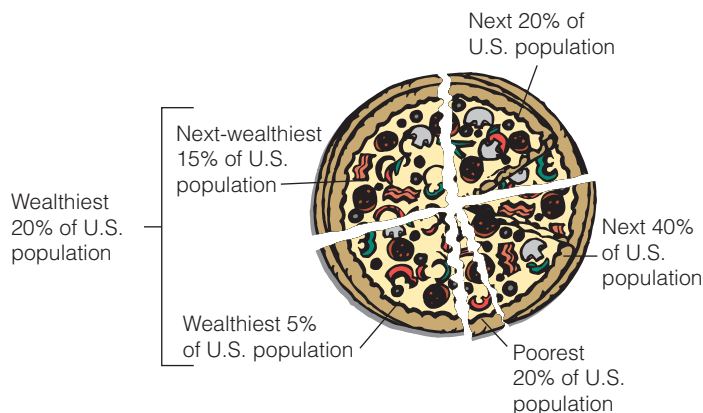
Wealth Inequality   Income is only one aspect of wealth. Wealth includes property such as buildings, land, farms, houses, factories, and cars, as well as other assets such as bank accounts, corporate stocks, bonds, and insurance policies. Wealth is computed by subtracting all debt obligations and converting the remaining assets into cash (U.S. Congress, 1986). For most people in the United States, wealth is invested primarily in property that generates no income, such as a home or car. By contrast, the wealth of a

- **U.S. Census:** Use the "American FactFinder" section of the U.S. Census website to learn the economic characteristics of ZIP codes represented by students in your class (**http://factfinder.census.gov**).
- **Research:** Send your students to **www.payscale.com** to find out predicted salaries for various career fields.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **Extra Examples:** Explain a number of federal, state, and local tax policies to help students to see the relationship among class, employment, and taxes. Debate the merits of the "flat tax" and "consumption tax" ideas. How would these kinds of tax plans affect the middle class, the working class, and the wealthy?
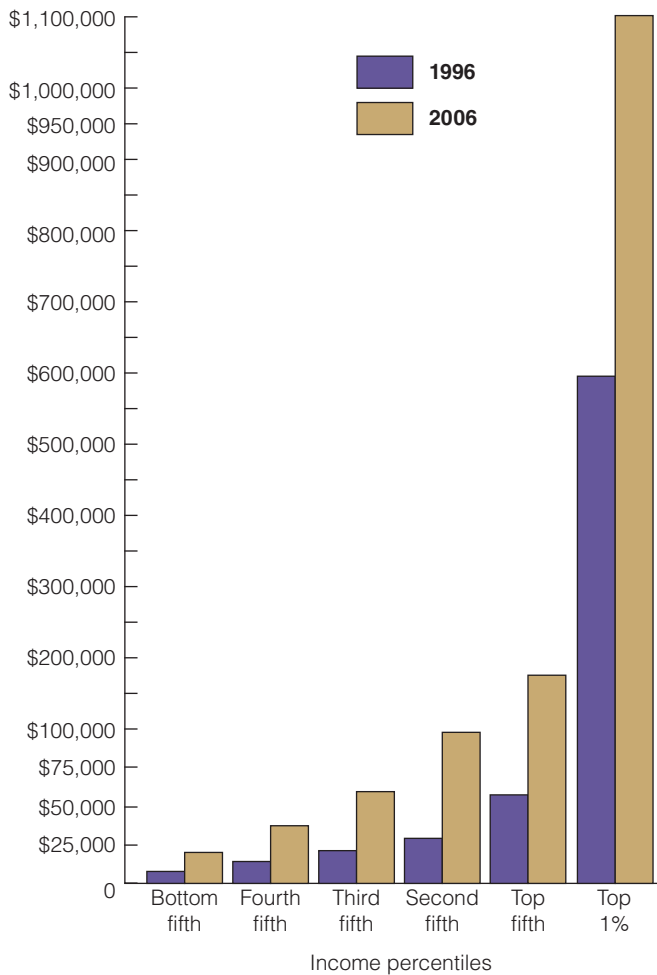
◀ **FIGURE 7.6 AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME IN THE UNITED STATES**
This chart shows the distribution of after-tax family income in the United States. Notice the dramatic increase in income for the top 1 percent of U.S. families. During the past decade the difference in income between the richest and poorest has become even more pronounced.

Source: Tax Policy Center, 2009.
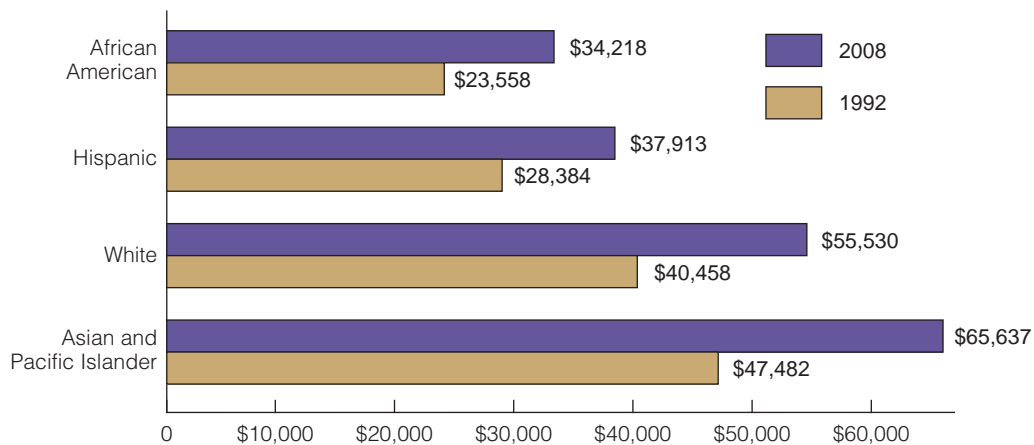
▲ **FIGURE 7.7 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN THE UNITED STATES**
Amounts shown in constant dollars.

Sources: DeNavas-Walt, Cleveland, and Webster, 2003; DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith, 2009.

- **Research:** At a time when Americans' ratings of the country and of the nation's economy are near record lows, the percentage of U.S. workers feeling "completely satisfied" with their jobs—now 48 percent—is at the high end of the range seen in the past 8 years. Another 42 percent of part-time and full-time workers in the United States say they are "somewhat satisfied." Only 9 percent are dissatisfied to any degree (Gallup Organization, 8/2008).

small number of elites is often in the form of income-producing property.

To see how wealth inequality has increased in recent decades, let's compare two studies. An earlier study by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress divided the population into four categories: (1) the super-rich (0.5 percent of households), who own 35 percent of the nation's wealth, with net assets averaging almost $9 million; (2) the very rich (the next 0.5 percent of households), who own about 7 percent of the nation's wealth, with net assets ranging from $1.4 million to $2.5 million; (3) the rich (9 percent of households), who own 30 percent of the wealth, with net assets of a little over $400,000; and (4) everybody else (the bottom 90 percent), who own about 28 percent of the nation's wealth. However, by 1995 another study indicated that the holdings of super-rich households had risen from 35 percent to almost 40 percent of all assets in the nation (stocks, bonds, cash, life insurance policies, paintings, jewelry, and other tangible assets) (Rothchild, 1995).

In 2007 the wealthiest 1 percent of families owned about one-third (33.8 percent) of total family wealth in the United States. The next wealthiest 9 percent owned about 37.7 percent, leaving the rest (90 percent of families) with the remaining 28 percent of wealth.

For the upper class, wealth often comes from interest, dividends, and inheritance (Haseler, 2000). One analysis of the *Forbes* 400 list of the wealthiest U.S. citizens found that nearly half of the people on that list had inherited sufficient wealth to put them on the list (Gilbert, 2010). Inheritors are often three or four generations removed from the individuals who amassed the original wealth (Odendahl, 1990). After inheriting a fortune, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., stated that "I was born into [wealth] and there was nothing I could do about it. It was there, like air or food or any other element. The only question with wealth is what to do with it" (qtd. in Glastris, 1990: 26). On the other hand, across generations, wealth sometimes dissipates as it is passed on to increasing numbers of family members, who divide into smaller segments what was formerly a large fortune.

Consequences of Inequality

Income and wealth are not simply statistics; they are intricately related to the American Dream and our individual life chances. Persons with a high income

or substantial wealth have more control over their own lives. They have greater access to goods and services; they can afford better housing, more education, and a wider range of medical services. Persons with less income, especially those living in poverty, must spend their limited resources to acquire the basic necessities of life.

Physical Health, Mental Health, and Nutrition   People who are wealthy and well educated and who have high-paying jobs are much more likely to be healthy than are poor people. As people's economic status increases, so does their health status. The poor have shorter life expectancies and are at greater risk for chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, as well as infectious diseases such as tuberculosis.

Children born into poor families are at much greater risk of dying during their first year of life. Some die from disease, accidents, or violence. Others are unable to survive because they are born with low birth weight, a condition linked to birth defects and increased probability of infant mortality. Low birth weight in infants is attributed, at least in part, to the inadequate nutrition received by many low-income pregnant women. Most of the poor do not receive preventive medical and dental checkups; many do not receive adequate medical care after they experience illness or injury.

Many high-poverty areas lack an adequate supply of doctors and medical facilities. Even in areas where such services are available, the inability to pay often prevents people from seeking medical care when it is needed. Some "charity" clinics and hospitals may provide indigent patients (those who cannot pay) with minimal emergency care but make them feel stigmatized in the process. For many of the working poor, health insurance is out of the question. The Census Bureau classifies health insurance coverage as private coverage or government coverage. Private health insurance is a plan provided through an employer or a union, or is purchased by an individual from a private company. By contrast, government health insurance includes such programs as Medicare, Medicaid, military health care, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and individual state health plans.

Approximately 47 million people in the United States were without health insurance coverage in 2008—an increase of more than 2 million from

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Active Learning:** Get your class thinking about some of the health risks that people at the bottom of the economic ladder typically

experience (manual labor, poor living conditions, lack of access to health care). Have them conduct research and interviews in the community to gauge the health impacts of poverty.

the preceding year (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith, 2009). Many people rely on their employers for health coverage; however, some employers are cutting back on health coverage, particularly for employees' family members. Despite passage of the 1996 Kassenbaum–Kennedy bill by Congress, which makes insurance more readily available for millions of people who change their jobs or lose them, many unemployed workers and their families remain without medical coverage. However, the uninsured are a changing group in the United States—not everyone who becomes uninsured for a month or more remains uninsured throughout a given year. Of all age groups, persons between the ages of 18 and 34 are the most likely to be uninsured; Medicare and other benefit programs provide medical care to most persons 65 and over (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith, 2009). As shown in ▶ Figure 7.8, a high percentage of poor persons do not have health insurance.

Many lower-paying jobs are often the most dangerous and have the greatest health hazards. Black lung disease, cancer caused by asbestos, and other environmental hazards found in the workplace are more likely to affect manual laborers and low-income workers, as are job-related accidents.

Although the precise relationship between class and health is not known, analysts suggest that people with higher income and wealth tend to smoke less, exercise more, maintain a healthy body weight, and eat nutritious meals. As a category, more-affluent persons tend to be less depressed and face less psychological stress, conditions that tend to be directly proportional to income, education, and job status (*Mental Medicine,* 1994).
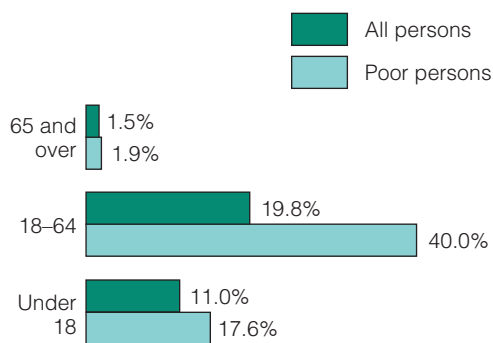
▲ **FIGURE 7.8** **PERCENTAGE OF U.S. POPULATION WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE**

Source: De Navas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith, 2009.

Good health is basic to good life chances; in turn, adequate nutrition is essential for good health. Hunger is related to class position and income inequality. Surveys estimate that 13 percent of children under age 12 are hungry or at risk of being hungry. Among the working poor, almost 75 percent of the children are thought to be in this category. After spending 60 percent of their income on housing, low-income families are unable to provide adequate food for their children. Between one-third and one-half of all children living in poverty consume significantly less than the federally recommended guidelines for caloric and nutritional intake (Children's Defense Fund, 2008). Lack of adequate nutrition has been linked to children's problems in school.

Studying the problem of hunger has become more complex in recent years because the Department of Agriculture stopped using the word "hunger" in its reports in 2006. "Food insecure" is now used to identify people in various categories, including those who are unable to afford the basics, those who are unable to get to the grocery store, and those who are unable to find fresh, nutritious produce and other foods to eat because they are surrounded with fast-food stores that do not provide foods with proper nutrition (Dolnick, 2010).

Between 2007 and 2009, the number of people who received food stamps in the United States increased by nearly a third. By 2010, the program was feeding more than 36 million people, or one in eight Americans and one in four children (DeParle and Gebeloff, 2009). Almost 90 percent of people using food stamps live near or below the federal poverty line (about $22,000 a year for a family of four). Some of them are newly jobless while others are chronically unemployed. Government officials now refer to food stamps as "nutritional aid," in an effort to reduce the stigma attached to using the stamps as being a form of "public assistance" or "welfare" (DeParle and Gebeloff, 2009, 2010).

Housing   As discussed in Chapter 4 ("Social Structure and Interaction in Everyday Life"), homelessness is a major problem in the United States. The lack of affordable housing is a pressing concern for many low-income individuals and families. With the economic prosperity of the 1990s, low-cost housing units in many cities were replaced with expensive condominiums and luxury single-family residences for affluent people. Since then, housing costs have

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• **Research:** "Overall, nearly 50,000 poor New Orleanians lived in neighborhoods where the poverty rate exceeded 40 percent.... In these places, the average household earned barely more than $20,000 annually, only one in twelve adults held a college degree, four in five children were raised in single-parent families, and four in ten working-age adults—many of them disabled—were not connected to the labor force" (Alan Berube and Bruce Katz, 10/2006). Have students conduct research to understand how these conditions aggravated the impact of Hurricane Katrina.

Although the American Dream of rags to riches may be an elusive goal for many people, most of us still believe that a person in the United States can get ahead by gaining a good education, through hard work, by marketing a creative idea, by winning the lottery, or by some other means. Whether or not they can ultimately rise to the top economic and social tiers of society, many people still strive to attain their personal—although perhaps scaled down—version of the American Dream.

Some sociological perspectives suggest that vast inequalities between the rich and the poor create such a large divide that upward mobility is virtually impossible for those in the lower economic tiers of society. However, other perspectives are based on the assumption that human capital—in the form of education, hard work, and outstanding achievement—can help a person move up the socioeconomic ladder.

Regardless of which perspective you or I might subscribe to, millions of people in the United States and around the world see this country as the land in which dreams can come true and in which a person can create a better life for his or her family.

As you view the pictures on these three pages, think about the ways in which various people seek out their own American Dream. Doing so helps us gain a better understanding of some of the issues relating to social stratification.

© COREY LOWENSTEIN/MCT/Landov

▲ Quick and easy ways to attain the American Dream—such as winning a very large lottery drawing—have great appeal to many people in the United States and throughout the world. However, despite the widespread publicity that winners receive, only a very small fraction of those persons who attain the American Dream of wealth do so through lotteries or gambling.

© AP Photo/James Branaman/The Kitsap Sun

▶ **LONG HOURS AND HARD WORK**

This single mother with four children seeks the American Dream by working three different jobs as a practical nurse while attending college. For some people, getting ahead requires 24/7 commitment, but she believes that it will be worth the effort to become a registered nurse and earn better pay with fewer hours than she now works.

© Frances M. Roberts/Alamy

◀ **SMALL BUSINESSES AND THE AMERICAN DREAM**

We often think of "big-ticket" entrepreneurs such as Bill Gates or Michael Dell as having achieved the American Dream. However, sidewalk vendors who own their own business may believe that they, too, have achieved their dream, especially when they come from nations where no similar dream would have even been possible.

▶ **SOCIAL INTERACTION AND RESILIENCE**

From homeless person to millionaire stockbroker sounds like the plot line of a movie, which it is: *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006), starring Will Smith. But it is also the real-life story of Chris Gardner, chief executive of Gardner Rich LLC, a multimillion-dollar Chicago brokerage firm, on whose autobiography *The Pursuit of Happyness* is based. Although Gardner never attended college, he has been highly successful in his financial endeavors and is now hoping to get investors to help him create a billion-dollar investment fund to promote economic opportunities for South Africans. Here you see him on a visit to the soup kitchen at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco, California, where he used to eat.

© Liz Hafalia/San Francisco Chronicle/Corbis News/Corbis

© AP Photo/Tim Boyd

◄ **THE COST OF AN EDUCATION**

For individuals who were not born into affluent families, education is important for attaining the American Dream of upward mobility. Here you see a Latina high school student looking over a federal application for student aid during a conference held at the University of New Hampshire. The university is hosting the conference to encourage minority students to consider attending there. Students often turn to student aid programs as a source of funding in the hope that they can obtain a college education. What will happen to the American Dream for students such as the woman shown here if this funding is reduced or eliminated in the future?

reflect & analyze

1. Since the U.S. economic recession started in 2007, the number of undocumented workers in this country has shrunk dramatically. Do you think that the workers have given up their hope of achieving the American Dream, or have they deferred it?
2. Does the U.S. government have the obligation to keep the American Dream alive for people of lower incomes? Are there alternatives to government-funded student aid programs, for example?
3. Do you know anyone whose life was changed as a result of playing a state lottery? Was the change positive or detrimental to the person's life? What conclusions can you draw from this person's experience?

▶ turning to video

Watch the ABC video *India Inc: Economic Explosion* (running time 2:38), available on the Kendall Companion Website and through Cengage Learning eResources accounts. Because of India's growing economy (it's the second-fastest growing economy in the world), there are more middle-class Indians with buying power than the entire U.S. population. Many U.S. jobs are being outsourced to India, and India has even begun hiring out-of-work Americans. As you watch this news report, think about the photographs, commentary, and questions that you encountered in this photo essay. After you've watched the video, consider two more questions: How does another country's growth affect the American Dream, and to what degree is it possible that India will replace the United States as the land of opportunity?

remained high compared to many families' ability to pay for food, shelter, clothing, and other necessities.

Lack of *affordable* housing is one central problem brought about by economic inequality. Another concern is *substandard* housing, which refers to facilities that have inadequate heating, air conditioning, plumbing, electricity, or structural durability. Structural problems—due to faulty construction or lack of adequate maintenance—exacerbate the potential for other problems such as damage from fire, falling objects, or floors and stairways collapsing.

Education   Educational opportunities and life chances are directly linked. Some functionalist theorists view education as the "elevator" to social mobility. Improvements in the educational achievement levels (measured in number of years of schooling completed) of the poor, people of color, and white women have been cited as evidence that students' abilities are now more important than their class, race, or gender. From this perspective, inequality in education is declining, and students have an opportunity to achieve upward mobility through achievements at school. Functionalists generally see the education system as flexible, allowing most students the opportunity to attend college if they apply themselves (Ballantine and Hammack, 2009).

© Image Source/Getty Images

▲ Conflict theorists see schools as agents of the capitalist class system that perpetuate social inequality: Upper-class students are educated in well-appointed environments such as the one shown here, whereas children of the poor tend to go to antiquated schools with limited facilities.

In contrast, most conflict theorists stress that schools are agencies for reproducing the capitalist class system and perpetuating inequality in society. From this perspective, education perpetuates poverty. Parents with limited income are not able to provide the same educational opportunities for their children as are families with greater financial resources.

Today, great disparities exist in the distribution of educational resources. Because funding for education comes primarily from local property taxes, school districts in wealthy suburban areas generally pay higher teachers' salaries, have newer buildings, and provide state-of-the-art equipment. By contrast, schools in poorer areas have a limited funding base. Students in central-city schools and poverty-stricken rural areas often attend dilapidated schools that lack essential equipment and teaching materials. Author Jonathan Kozol (1991, qtd. in Feagin and Feagin, 1994: 191) documented the effect of a two-tiered system on students:

> Kindergartners are so full of hope, cheerfulness, high expectations. By the time they get into fourth grade, many begin to lose heart. They see the score, understanding they're not getting what others are getting.... They see suburban schools on television. . . . They begin to get the point that they are not valued much in our society. By the time they are in junior high, they understand it. "We have eyes and we can see; we have hearts and we can feel. . . . We know the difference."

Poverty extracts such a toll that many young people will not have the opportunity to finish high school, much less enter college.

Poverty in the United States

When many people think about poverty, they think of people who are unemployed or on welfare. However, many hardworking people with full-time jobs live in poverty. The U.S. Social Security Administration has established an ***official poverty line,*** **which is based on what is considered to be the minimum amount of money required for living at a subsistence level.** The poverty level is computed by determining the cost of a minimally nutritious diet

official poverty line the federal income standard that is based on what is considered to be the minimum amount of money required for living at a subsistence level.

(a low-cost food budget on which a family could survive nutritionally on a short-term, emergency basis) and multiplying this figure by three to allow for nonfood costs. In 2008, 39.8 million people lived below the official government poverty level of $22,207 for a family of four with no children present under the age of 18 (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith, 2009). The official poverty rate in 2008 was 13.2 percent of the U.S. population, up from 12.5 percent in 2007.

When sociologists define poverty, they distinguish between absolute and relative poverty. ==*Absolute poverty* exists when people do not have the means to secure the most basic necessities of life.== This definition comes closest to that used by the federal government. Absolute poverty often has life-threatening consequences, such as when a homeless person freezes to death on a park bench. By comparison, ==*relative poverty* exists when people may be able to afford basic necessities but are still unable to maintain an average standard of living.== A family must have income substantially above the official poverty line in order to afford the basic necessities, even when these are purchased at the lowest possible cost. At about 155 percent of the official poverty line, families could live on an economy budget. What is it like to live on the economy budget? John Schwarz and Thomas Volgy (1992: 43) offer the following distressing description:

> Members of families existing on the economy budget never go out to eat, for it is not included in the food budget; they never go out to a movie, concert, or ball game or indeed to any public or private establishment that charges admission, for there is no entertainment budget; they have no cable television, for the same reason; they never purchase alcohol or cigarettes; never take a vacation or holiday that involves any motel or hotel or, again, any meals out; never hire a baby-sitter or have any other paid child care; never give an allowance or other spending money to the children; never purchase any lessons or home-learning tools for the children; never buy books or records for the adults or children, or any toys, except in the small amounts available for birthday or Christmas presents ($50 per person over the year); never pay for a haircut; never buy a magazine; have no money for the feeding or veterinary care of any pets; and, never spend any money for preschool for the children, or educational trips for them away from home, or any summer camp or other activity with a fee.

Who Are the Poor?

Poverty in the United States is not randomly distributed, but rather is highly concentrated according to age and race/ethnicity.

Age Today, children are at a much greater risk of living in poverty than are older persons. In the past, persons over age 65 were at the greatest risk of being poor; however, government programs such as Social Security and pension plans have been indexed for inflation and thus provide for something closer to an adequate standard of living than do other social welfare programs (see ▶ Figure 7.9). Even so, older
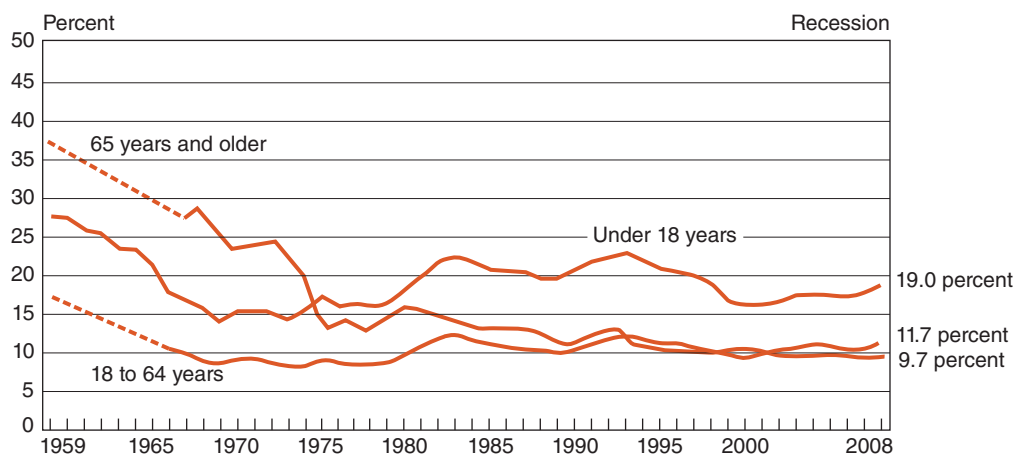
▲ **FIGURE 7.9 POVERTY RATES BY AGE: 1959 TO 2008**

Note: The data points are placed at the midpoints of the respective years. Data for people aged 18 to 64 and 65 and older are not available from 1960 to 1965.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Current Population Survey, 1960 to 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss the classic American dream of owning a business as a way out of poverty and a good start for immigrants. Is this option still realistic for most people? What obstacles stand in the way?

- **For Discussion:** Ask students to rephrase and discuss the following statement: "In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists" (Eric Hoffer).

women are twice as likely to be poor as older men; older African Americans and Latinos/as are much more likely to live below the poverty line than are non-Latino/a whites.

As shown in Figure 7.9, the age category most vulnerable to poverty today is the very young. In 2008, both the poverty rate and the number in poverty increased for children under 18 years old, rising to 19 percent from 18 percent in 2007. The number of children in poverty increased to 14.13 million in 2008, as compared with 13.2 million in 2007 and 12.8 million in 2006. One out of every three persons below the poverty line is under 18 years of age, and a large number of children hover just above the official poverty line. The precarious position of African American and Latino/a children is even more striking. In 2008, almost 35 percent of all African Americans under age 18 lived in poverty; 29 percent of Latino/a children were also poor, as compared with almost 15 percent of non-Latino/a white children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

What do such statistics indicate about the future of our society? Children as a group are poorer now than they were at the beginning of the 1980s, whether they live in one- or two-parent families. The majority live in two-parent families in which one or both parents are employed. However, children in single-parent households headed by women have a much greater likelihood of living in poverty: Approximately 30 percent of white (non-Latino/a) children under age 18 in female-headed households live below the poverty line, as sharply contrasted with more than 50 percent of Latina/o and 49 percent of African American children in the same category (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Mills, 2004). Nor does the future look bright: Many governmental programs established to alleviate childhood poverty and malnutrition have been seriously cut back or eliminated altogether.

Gender   About two-thirds of all adults living in poverty are women. In 2008, single-parent families headed by women had a 28.7 percent poverty rate as compared with a 13.8 percent rate for male-householder-with-no-wife-present families and a 5.5 percent rate for two-parent families. Sociologist Diana Pearce (1978) coined a term to describe this problem: The *feminization of poverty* refers to the trend in which women are disproportionately represented among individuals living in poverty. According to Pearce (1978), women have a higher risk of being poor because they bear the major economic and emotional burdens of raising children when they are single heads of households but earn between 70 and 80 cents for every dollar a male worker earns. More women than men are unable to obtain regular, full-time, year-round employment, and lack of adequate, affordable day care exacerbates this problem.

Does the feminization of poverty explain poverty in the United States today? Is poverty primarily a women's issue? On the one hand, this thesis highlights a genuine problem—the link between gender and poverty. On the other hand, several major problems exist with this argument. First, women's poverty is not a new phenomenon. Women have always been more vulnerable to poverty (see Katz, 1989). Second, all women are not equally vulnerable to poverty. Many in the upper and upper-middle classes have the financial resources, education, and skills to support themselves regardless of the presence of a man in the household. Third, event-driven poverty does not explain the realities of poverty for many women of color, who instead may experience "reshuffled poverty"—a condition of deprivation that follows them regardless of their marital status or the type of family in which they live. Research by Mary Jo Bane (1986; Bane and Ellwood, 1994) demonstrates that two out of three African American families headed by a woman were poor before the family event that made the woman a single mother. In addition, the poverty risk for a two-parent African American family is more than twice that for a white two-parent family.

Finally, poverty is everyone's problem, not just women's. When women are impoverished, so are their children. Moreover, many of the poor in our

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absolute poverty a level of economic deprivation that exists when people do not have the means to secure the most basic necessities of life.

relative poverty a condition that exists when people may be able to afford basic necessities but are still unable to maintain an average standard of living.

feminization of poverty the trend in which women are disproportionately represented among individuals living in poverty.

- **Active Learning:** Have students interview historians on campus to compare contemporary poverty to that of ancient history. Have them evaluate this statement: "The poverty of our century is unlike that of any other. It is not, as poverty was before, the result of natural scarcity, but of a set of priorities imposed upon the rest of the world by the rich. Consequently, the modern poor are not pitied . . . but written off as trash. The twentieth-century consumer economy has produced the first culture for which a beggar is a reminder of nothing" (John Berger).
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss why children run a much greater risk of living in poverty than do older persons. Ask them to compile a list of reasons.

▲ Many women are among the "working poor," who, although employed full time, have jobs in service occupations that are typically lower paying and less secure than jobs in other sectors of the labor market. Does the nature of women's work contribute to the feminization of poverty in the United States?

are estimated to be as high as 33 percent by some analysts, but this information is not compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Economic and Structural Sources of Poverty

Social inequality and poverty have both economic and structural sources. Unemployment is a major cause of contemporary poverty. Tough economic times provide fewer opportunities for individuals to get an entry-level position that may help them to gain a toehold in American society. Massive plant closings and layoffs in various employment sectors contribute to a trickle-down effect that causes workers in many fields throughout the nation to lose their jobs or take severe pay cuts.

Low wages paid for many jobs is another major cause: Half of all families living in poverty are headed by someone who is employed, and one-third of those family heads work full time. A person with full-time employment in a minimum-wage job cannot keep a family of four from sinking below the official poverty line.

Structural problems contribute to both unemployment and underemployment. Corporations have been disinvesting in the United States, displacing millions of people from their jobs. Economists refer to this displacement as the *deindustrialization* of America (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982). Even as they have closed their U.S. factories and plants, many corporations have opened new facilities in other countries where "cheap labor" exists because people will, of necessity, work for lower wages. **_Job deskilling_—a reduction in the proficiency needed to perform a specific job that leads to a corresponding reduction in the wages for that job**—has resulted from the introduction of computers and other technology (Hodson and Parker, 1988). The shift from manufacturing to service occupations has resulted in the loss of higher-paying positions and their replacement with lower-paying and less-secure positions that do not offer the wages, job stability, or advancement potential of the disappearing manufacturing jobs. Many of the new jobs are located in the suburbs, thus making them inaccessible to central-city residents.

The problems of unemployment, underemployment, and poverty-level wages are even greater for people of color and young people in declining central

society are men, especially the chronically unemployed, older persons, the homeless, persons with disabilities, and men of color who have spent their adult lives without hope of finding work.

Race/Ethnicity According to some stereotypes, most of the poor and virtually all welfare recipients are people of color. However, this stereotype is false; white Americans (non-Latinos/as) account for approximately two-thirds of those below the official poverty line. However, such stereotypes are perpetuated because a disproportionate percentage of the impoverished in the United States is made up of African Americans, Latinos/as, and Native Americans. About 25 percent of African Americans and 23 percent of Latinas/os were among the officially poor in 2008, as compared with 8.6 percent of non-Latino/a whites. The poverty rate for Asian Americans was almost 12 percent (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith, 2009). Native American poverty rates

cities. The unemployment rate for African Americans is almost double that of whites (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). African Americans have also experienced gender differences in employment that may produce different types of economic vulnerability. African American men who find employment typically earn more than African American women; however, the men's employment is often less secure. In the past few decades, African American men have been more likely to lose their jobs because of declining employment in the manufacturing sector (Bane, 1986; Collins, 1990; Bane and Ellwood, 1994).

Solving the Poverty Problem

The United States has attempted to solve the poverty problem in several ways. One of the most enduring is referred to as social welfare. When most people think of "welfare," they think of food stamps and programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the earlier program it replaced, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). However, the primary beneficiaries of social welfare programs are not poor. Some analysts estimate that approximately 80 percent of all social welfare benefits are paid to people who do not qualify as

▲ This California electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card represents a modern approach to helping people of limited income purchase groceries. Data-encoded cards such as this one were developed to prevent the trading or selling of traditional food stamps. However, one drawback of this technology is that many of California's popular farmers' markets are not able to process EBT cards.

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"poor." For example, many recipients of Social Security are older people in middle- and upper-income categories.

When older persons, including members of Congress, accept Social Security payments, they are not stigmatized. Similarly, veterans who receive benefits from the Veterans Benefits Administration are not viewed as "slackers," and farmers who profit because of price supports are not considered to be lazy and unwilling to work. Unemployed workers who receive unemployment compensation are viewed with sympathy because of the financial plight of their families. By contrast, poor women and children who receive minimal benefits from welfare programs tend to be stigmatized and sometimes humiliated, even when our nation describes itself as having compassion for the less fortunate (see "Sociology Works!").

Sociological Explanations of Social Inequality in the United States

Obviously, some people are disadvantaged as a result of social inequality. Therefore, is inequality always harmful to society?

Functionalist Perspectives

According to the sociologists Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore (1945), inequality is not only inevitable but also necessary for the smooth functioning of society. The Davis–Moore thesis, which has become the definitive functionalist explanation for social inequality, can be summarized as follows:

1. All societies have important tasks that must be accomplished and certain positions that must be filled.
2. Some positions are more important for the survival of society than others.
3. The most important positions must be filled by the most qualified people.
4. The positions that are the most important for society and that require scarce talent, extensive training, or both must be the most highly rewarded.

> **job deskilling** a reduction in the proficiency needed to perform a specific job that leads to a corresponding reduction in the wages for that job.

- **Research:** The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law notes that Iraq and Afghanistan U.S. veterans have "substantially higher rates of unemployment than the general population." Have students research the economic plight of returning veterans and brainstorm possible solutions to their specialized problems.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **U.S. Census:** In 2007 the median annual household income rose 1.3 percent to $50,233.00. The median income per household member (including all working and nonworking members above the age of 14) was $26,036 in 2006. The aggregate income distribution is highly concentrated toward the top, with the top 6.37 percent earning roughly one-third of all income, and those with upper-middle incomes controlling a large, though declining,

sociology works!

Reducing Structural Barriers to Achieving the American Dream

Our society recognizes a moral obligation to provide a helping hand to those in need, but those in poverty have been getting only the back of the hand. They receive little or no public assistance. Instead, they are scolded and told that they have caused their own misfortunes. This is our "compassion gap"—a deep divide between our moral commitments and how we actually treat those in poverty.

In this statement the sociologists Fred Block, Anna C. Korteweg, and Kerry Woodward (2008: 166) describe the contradiction between our nation's alleged moral commitment to alleviating poverty and how we actually treat people who live in poverty. Children, single mothers with children, and people of color (particularly African Americans and Latinos/as) make up a disproportionate segment of the nation's poorest groups, and individuals in these categories are the persons most disadvantaged by arguments asserting that the poor have no one but themselves to blame for their poverty.

Numerous sociological studies regarding wealth and poverty demonstrate how structural factors contribute to the ability of some individuals to achieve the American Dream whereas others are hampered in achieving that goal by factors that are beyond their control. Yet, according to the Economic Mobility Project, policy makers do little to alleviate poverty in the United States because of the widely held belief that the American Dream should provide everyone with equality of *opportunity* but not necessarily equality of *outcome:* "The belief in America as a land of opportunity may also explain why rising inequality in the United States has yielded so little in terms of responsiveness from policy makers: if the American Dream is alive and well, then there is no need for government intervention to smooth the rough edges of capitalism. Diligence and skill, the argument goes, will yield a fair

distribution of rewards" (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2007). However, research continues to reveal that structural factors beyond the control of individuals are important in determining where a person's place will be in the U.S. class system.

Can we keep the American Dream alive for all? According to Block, Korteweg, and Woodward (2008), we must take a number of specific steps to revitalize the American Dream for more people in this country and to reverse the compassion gap. We must make people aware of how far social reality has departed from the ideals of the American Dream. As a nation, we must also take action to deal with the costs of four critical services that have risen much more rapidly than people's wages and the rate of inflation. These four critical services are *health care, higher education, high-quality child care,* and *housing.* As sociologists and other social analysts have suggested, if we as a nation are to claim that we have a commitment to compassion, we must make it our collective responsibility to help remove the structural barriers that currently reduce opportunities, mobility, and a chance for a better way of life for millions of Americans: "True compassion requires that we build a society in which every person has a first chance, a second chance, and, if needed, a third and fourth chance, to achieve the American Dream. We . . . need to use every instrument we have—faith groups, unions, community groups, and most of all government programs—to address the structural problems that reproduce poverty in our affluent society" (Block, Korteweg, and Woodward, 2008: 175).

reflect & analyze

Consider the area where you live. Do you know of people there whose situations could be improved if they were given a greater opportunity to take charge of their lives? How could such a change happen?

5. The most highly rewarded positions should be those that are functionally unique (no other position can perform the same function) and on which other positions rely for expertise, direction, or financing.

Davis and Moore use the physician as an example of a functionally unique position. Doctors are very important to society and require extensive training,

but individuals would not be motivated to go through years of costly and stressful medical training without incentives to do so. The Davis–Moore thesis assumes that social stratification results in *meritocracy—a hierarchy in which all positions are rewarded based on people's ability and credentials.*

Critics have suggested that the Davis–Moore thesis ignores inequalities based on inherited wealth and intergenerational family status (Rossides, 1986).

share of the total earned income. Income inequality in the United States, which had decreased slowly after World War II until 1970, began to increase slowly in the 1970s, but declined in 2007.
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss this statement and its possible relation to social class: "The individual may desire, earn, and deserve deference, but by and large he is not allowed to give it to himself, being forced to seek it from others. In seeking it from others,

he finds he has added reason for seeking them out, and in turn society is given added assurance that its members will enter into interaction and relationships with one another" (Erving Goffman).
- **Research:** Talk about some of the structural sources of poverty. As examples, have students research specific jobs that have been deskilled in our economy.

The thesis assumes that economic rewards and prestige are the only effective motivators for people and fails to take into account other intrinsic aspects of work, such as self-fulfillment (Tumin, 1953). It also does not adequately explain how such a reward system guarantees that the most qualified people will gain access to the most highly rewarded positions.

Conflict Perspectives

From a conflict perspective, people with economic and political power are able to shape and distribute the rewards, resources, privileges, and opportunities in society for their own benefit. Conflict theorists do not believe that inequality serves as a motivating force for people; they argue that powerful individuals and groups use ideology to maintain their favored positions at the expense of others. Core values in the United States emphasize the importance of material possessions, hard work, individual initiative to get ahead, and behavior that supports the existing social structure. These same values support the prevailing resource distribution system and contribute to social inequality.

Are wealthy people smarter than others? According to conflict theorists, certain stereotypes suggest that this is the case; however, the wealthy may actually be "smarter" than others only in the sense of having "chosen" to be born to wealthy parents from

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▲ According to a functionalist perspective, people such as these Harvard Law School graduates attain high positions in society because they are the most qualified and they work the hardest. Is our society a meritocracy? How would conflict theorists answer this question?

whom they could inherit assets. Conflict theorists also note that laws and informal social norms support inequality in the United States. For the first half of the twentieth century, both legalized and institutionalized segregation and discrimination reinforced employment discrimination and produced higher levels of economic inequality. Although laws have been passed to make these overt acts of discrimination illegal, many forms of discrimination still exist in educational and employment opportunities.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives

Symbolic interactionists focus on microlevel concerns and usually do not analyze larger structural factors that contribute to inequality and poverty. However, many significant insights on the effects of wealth and poverty on people's lives and social interactions can be derived from applying a symbolic interactionist approach. Using qualitative research methods and influenced by a symbolic interactionist approach, researchers have collected the personal narratives of people across all social classes, ranging from the wealthiest to the poorest people in the United States.

A few studies provide rare insights into the social interactions between people from vastly divergent class locations. Sociologist Judith Rollins's (1985) study of the relationship between household workers and their employers is one example. Based on in-depth interviews and participant observation, Rollins examined rituals of deference that were often demanded by elite white women of their domestic workers, who were frequently women of color. According to the sociologist Erving Goffman (1967), *deference* is a type of ceremonial activity that functions as a symbolic means whereby appreciation is regularly conveyed to a recipient. In fact, deferential behavior between nonequals (such as employers and employees) confirms the inequality of the relationship and each party's position in the relationship relative to the other. Rollins identified three types of linguistic deference between domestic workers and their employers: use of the first names of the workers, contrasted with titles and last names (Mrs. Adams, for example) of the employers; use of the term *girls* to refer to female household workers

> **meritocracy** a hierarchy in which all positions are rewarded based on people's ability and credentials.

- **Active Learning:** Assign your students to small groups, and have them design a model meritocracy in which all positions are rewarded based on people's ability and credentials. Ask each group these questions: What kinds of ability would you reward most highly? Least? What types of credentials are most important for the society? Least?

- **For Discussion:** Ask the class, according to conflict theorists, which occupational categories make up the working class? Would functionalists agree with this categorization? Why or why not?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

<mark>regardless of their age; and deferential references to employers, such as "Yes, ma'am."</mark> Spatial demeanor, including touching and how close one person stands to another, is an additional factor in deference rituals across class lines. Rollins (1985: 232) concludes that

> The employer, in her more powerful position, sets the essential tone of the relationship; and that tone . . . is one that functions to reinforce the inequality of the relationship, to strengthen the employer's belief in the rightness of her advantaged class and racial position, and to provide her with justification for the inegalitarian social system.

Many concepts introduced by the sociologist Erving Goffman (1959, 1967) could be used as springboards for examining microlevel relationships between inequality and people's everyday interactions. What could you learn about class-based inequality in the United States by using a symbolic interactionist approach to examine a setting with which you are familiar?

The Concept Quick Review summarizes the three major perspectives on social inequality in the United States.

U.S. Stratification in the Future

The United States is facing one of the greatest economic challenges it has experienced since the Great Depression, in the 1930s. Although we have strong hopes that the American Dream will remain alive and well, many people are concerned that the current economic slump will create a lack of upward mobility for Americans. The nationwide slump in housing and jobs has distressed people across all income levels, and rising rates of unemployment and a shifting stock market bring about weekly predictions that things are either getting better or becoming worse.

So this brings us to an important final question in this chapter: Will social inequality in the United States increase, decrease, or remain the same in the future? Many social scientists believe that existing trends point to an increase. First, the purchasing power of the dollar has stagnated or declined since the early 1970s. As families started to lose ground financially, more family members (especially women) entered the labor force in an attempt to support themselves and their families (Gilbert, 2010). Economist and former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich (1993) has noted that in recent years the employed have been traveling on two escalators—one going up and the other going down. The gap between the earnings of workers and the income of managers and top executives has widened even in an era when large salaries and even larger bonuses for CEOs have been frowned on by political leaders and everyday people.

Second, wealth continues to become more concentrated at the top of the U.S. class structure. As the rich have grown richer, more people have found themselves among the ranks of the poor. Third, federal tax laws in recent years have benefited corporations and wealthy families at the expense of middle- and lower-income families, and even if changes are made in the tax code, wealthier individuals and corporations typically find new ways to shelter their incomes. Finally, as previously mentioned, structural sources of upward mobility are shrinking, whereas the rate of downward mobility has increased.

Are we sabotaging our future if we do not work constructively to eliminate poverty? It has been said that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. If

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[concept quick review 7.1]

Sociological Explanations of Social Inequality in the United States

Functionalist perspectives	Some degree of social inequality is necessary for the smooth functioning of society (in order to fill the most important positions) and thus is inevitable.
Conflict perspectives	Powerful individuals and groups use ideology to maintain their favored positions in society at the expense of others, and wealth is not necessary in order to motivate people.
Symbolic interactionist perspectives	The beliefs and actions of people reflect their class location in society.

- **Active Learning:** Have students work in small groups to come up with examples of rituals of deference that members of lower social classes give to members of higher classes.
- **For Discussion:** What keeps people from changing the world? Have students respond to the following statements: "If you can't feed a hundred people, then just feed one" (Mother Teresa). "It's really very simple, Governor. When people are hungry they die. So spare me your politics and tell me what you need and how you're going to get it to these people" (Bob Geldof, Live Aid Founder). "There is a spiritual hunger in the world today—and it cannot be satisfied by better cars on longer credit terms" (Adlai Stevenson).
- **Table Note:** Use the Concept Quick Review table to prepare students for the next exam. Introduce situations of inequality,

you can make a difference

Feeding the Hungry

> The great fear among us all is that we are going to have to feed even more people. . . . It's not enough to just hand food out anymore.
> —Robert Egger, director of the nonprofit Central Kitchen in Washington, D.C. (qtd. in Clines, 1996)

Egger is one of the people responsible for an innovative chef's training program that feeds hope as well as hunger. At the Central Kitchen, located in the nation's capital, staff and guest chefs annually train around 48 homeless persons in three-month-long kitchen-arts courses. While the trainees are learning about food preparation, which will help them get starting jobs in the restaurant industry, they are also helping feed about 3,000 homeless persons each day. Much of the food is prepared using donated goods such as turkeys that people have received as gifts at office parties and given to the kitchen, and leftover food from grocery stores including 7-Eleven stores, restaurants such as Pizza Hut, hotel food services, and college cafeterias. Central Kitchen got its start using leftovers from President George H. W. Bush's inaugural banquet in the late 1980s (Clines, 1996). Recently, donated food has gotten a boost from the Good Samaritan law passed in 1996, which exempts nonprofit organizations and *gleaners*—volunteers who collect what is left in the field after harvesting—from liability for problems with food that they contribute in good faith (see Burros, 1996).

Can you think of ways that leftover food could be recovered from places where you eat so the food could be redistributed to persons in need? Have you thought about suggesting that members of an organization to which you belong might donate their time to help the Salvation Army, Red Cross, or other voluntary organization to collect, prepare, and serve food to others? If you would like to know more,

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▲ Many community volunteers try to make a difference during holiday seasons by providing food for people who otherwise might have none. Serving dinner for the homeless at a Los Angeles mission is an example. However, some programs empower homeless persons by teaching them kitchen arts so that they can prepare food for themselves and for others.

- "A Citizens Guide to Food Recovery" is available to help individuals participate in food recovery. Call 800-GLEAN-IT, or call the Salvation Army in your community. On the Internet: **www.salvationarmy.org**

- WhyHunger has projects such as Reinvesting in America that try to end hunger: **www.whyhunger.org**
- Contact the American Red Cross: **www.redcross.org**

we apply this idea to the problem of poverty, then it is to our advantage to see that those who cannot find work or do not have a job that provides a living wage receive adequate training and employment. Innovative programs can combine job training with producing something useful to meet the immediate needs of people living in poverty. Children of today—the adults of tomorrow—need nutrition, education, health care, and safety as they grow up (see the You Can Make a Difference box).

and ask students to use each perspective to construct an explanation.
- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disk also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.
- **Applied Sociology:** Ask leaders from your own campus and community organizations to drop by class and introduce

opportunities to feed the hungry in your own neighborhoods. What happens to leftover food from your campus cafeterias?
- **CourseMate:** The Sociology CourseMate for this text gives your students access to an interactive ebook, flashcards, video, and other study and learning tools, including quizzes that provide immediate feedback. It's easiest for students to log in at **www .cengagebrain.com**.

Some social analysts believe that the United States will become a better nation if it attempts to regain the American Dream by attacking poverty. According to the sociologist Michael Harrington (1985: 13), if we join in solidarity with the poor, we will "rediscover our own best selves . . . we will regain the vision of America."

chapter review

● What is social stratification, and how does it affect our daily life?

Social stratification is the hierarchical arrangement of large social groups based on their control over basic resources. People are treated differently based on where they are positioned within the social hierarchies of class, race, gender, and age.

● What are the major systems of stratification?

Stratification systems include slavery, caste, and class. Slavery, an extreme form of stratification in which people are owned by others, is a closed system. The caste system is also a closed one in which people's status is determined at birth based on their parents' position in society. The class system, which exists in the United States, is a type of stratification based on ownership of resources and on the type of work that people do.

● How did classical sociologists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber view social class?

Karl Marx and Max Weber acknowledged social class as a key determinant of social inequality and social change. For Marx, people's relationship to the means of production determines their class position. Weber developed a multidimensional concept of stratification that focuses on the interplay of wealth, prestige, and power.

● What are some of the consequences of inequality in the United States?

The stratification of society into different social groups results in wide discrepancies in income and wealth and in variable access to available goods and services. People with high income or wealth have greater opportunity to control their own lives. People with less income have fewer life chances and must spend their limited resources to acquire basic necessities.

● How do sociologists view poverty?

Sociologists distinguish between absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty exists when people do not have the means to secure the basic necessities of life. Relative poverty exists when people may be able to afford basic necessities but still are unable to maintain an average standard of living.

● Who are the poor?

Age, gender, and race tend to be factors in poverty. Children have a greater risk of being poor than do the elderly, and women have a higher rate of poverty than do men. Although whites account for approximately two-thirds of those below the poverty line, people of color account for a disproportionate share of the impoverished in the United States.

● What is the functionalist view on class?

Functionalist perspectives view classes as broad groupings of people who share similar levels of privilege on the basis of their roles in the occupational structure. According to the Davis–Moore thesis, stratification exists in all societies, and some inequality is not only inevitable but also necessary for the ongoing functioning of society. The positions that are most important within society and that require the most talent and training must be highly rewarded.

● What is the conflict view on class?

Conflict perspectives on class are based on the assumption that social stratification is created and maintained by one group (typically the capitalist class) in order to enhance and protect its own economic interests. Conflict theorists measure class according to people's relationships with others in the production process.

● **What is the symbolic interactionist view on class?**

Unlike functionalist and conflict perspectives that focus on macrolevel inequalities in societies, symbolic interactionist views focus on microlevel inequalities such as how class location may positively or negatively influence one's identity and everyday social interactions. Symbolic interactionists use terms such as "social cohesion" and "deference" to explain how class binds some individuals together while categorically separating out others.

key terms

absolute poverty 234

alienation 214

capitalist class (bourgeoisie) 214

caste system 211

class conflict 215

class system 214

feminization of poverty 235

income 225

intergenerational mobility 209

intragenerational mobility 210

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slavery 211

social mobility 209

social stratification 208

socioeconomic status (SES) 217

underclass 220

wealth 216

working class (proletariat) 214

questions for critical thinking

1. Based on the Weberian and Marxian models of class structure, what is the class location of each of your ten closest friends or acquaintances? What is their location in relationship to yours? To one another's? What does their location tell you about friendship and social class?

2. Should employment be based on meritocracy, need, or affirmative action policies?

3. What might happen in the United States if the gap between rich and poor continues to widen?

turning to video

Watch the CBS video *Economic Meltdown* (running time 2:22), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video asks the question, Will the new economic realities change the way Americans looks at money and possessions? As you watch the video, think about your own attitudes toward money and possessions before the recession—was there anything "excessive" about the way you lived then? After you've watched the video, consider these questions: Do you believe Americans have undergone a cultural shift in regard to personal finances? Why or why not?

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8 Global Stratification

Marathon running has taken me a long way from my roots in the small town of Baringo in Kenya's Rift Valley. I grew up knowing what it was like to be poor and hungry. Whenever I come to London or other cities in the developed world to compete in marathons, I enter a different universe where choice, opulence and opportunity characterize people's lives.

It has been fascinating to follow the debate in Britain about school meals. I have listened to the arguments about whether children should be allowed to eat Turkey Twizzlers, or beefburgers and chips. I wish it could be the same the world over. While nutrition is a serious matter for any child, for me and my classmates [in Kenya] it was never really a case of what we might choose to eat, but rather whether we would eat at all.

Most kids in Baringo had to help their families earn a living. Education was out of the question or, at best, something only one child in the family could pursue. For the lucky ones like me, who could go to school, the three-mile trek each morning on an empty stomach made it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to concentrate on lessons.

When I was eight, that changed. The United Nations began distributing food at the schools in the area and a heavy burden was lifted from our shoulders. My friends and I no longer worried about being hungry in class. We ate a

▲ The success story of marathon world-record-holder Paul Tergat, who grew up poor and hungry, calls our attention to issues of global stratification and inequality.

© AP Photo/Herbert Knosowski

simple meal each day and could stay focused during lessons. . . .
I often ask myself: without the benefit of school meals, would I
have become a literate, healthy, successful long-distance runner?

—Paul Tergat (2005), a marathon world record holder and winner of two silver Olympic medals,
describing his early childhood, marked by poverty and hunger in Kenya

Chapter Focus Question

How do global stratification and economic inequality affect the life chances of people around the world?

Marathoner Paul Tergat speaks for millions of people around the world who have experienced poverty and hunger, and he continues to be a spokesperson for hungry children. Tergat encourages others to get involved in campaigns against hunger, illiteracy, pollution, homelessness, and other problems that limit people's life chances and opportunities. He also highlights the fact that although students in high-income nations have many food choices, some of which may be bad for them, students in low-income nations have very little food and extremely limited choices in life without intervention from the outside (Hattori, 2006).

Regardless of where people live in the world, social and economic inequalities are pressing daily concerns. Poverty and inequality know no political boundaries or national borders. In this chapter, we examine global stratification and inequality, and discuss perspectives that have been developed to explain the nature and extent of this problem. Before reading on, test your knowledge of global wealth and poverty by the taking the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz.

Wealth and Poverty in Global Perspective

What do we mean by global stratification? *Global stratification* refers to the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and prestige on a global basis, resulting in people having vastly different lifestyles and life chances both within and among

the nations of the world. Just as the United States is divided into classes, the world is divided into unequal segments characterized by extreme differences in wealth and poverty. For example, the income gap between the richest and the poorest 20 percent of the world population continues to widen (see ▶ Figure 8.1). However, when we compare social and economic inequality within other nations, we find gaps that are more pronounced than they are in the United States.

As previously defined, *high-income countries* are nations characterized by highly industrialized economies; technologically advanced industrial, administrative, and service occupations; and relatively high levels of national and per capita (per person) income. In contrast, *middle-income countries* are nations with industrializing economies, particularly in urban areas, and moderate levels of national and personal income. *Low-income countries* are primarily

In this chapter

- Wealth and Poverty in Global Perspective
- Problems in Studying Global Inequality
- Classification of Economies by Income
- Measuring Global Wealth and Poverty
- Global Poverty and Human Development Issues
- Theories of Global Inequality
- Global Inequality in the Future

global stratification the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and prestige on a global basis, resulting in people having vastly different lifestyles and life chances both within and among the nations of the world.

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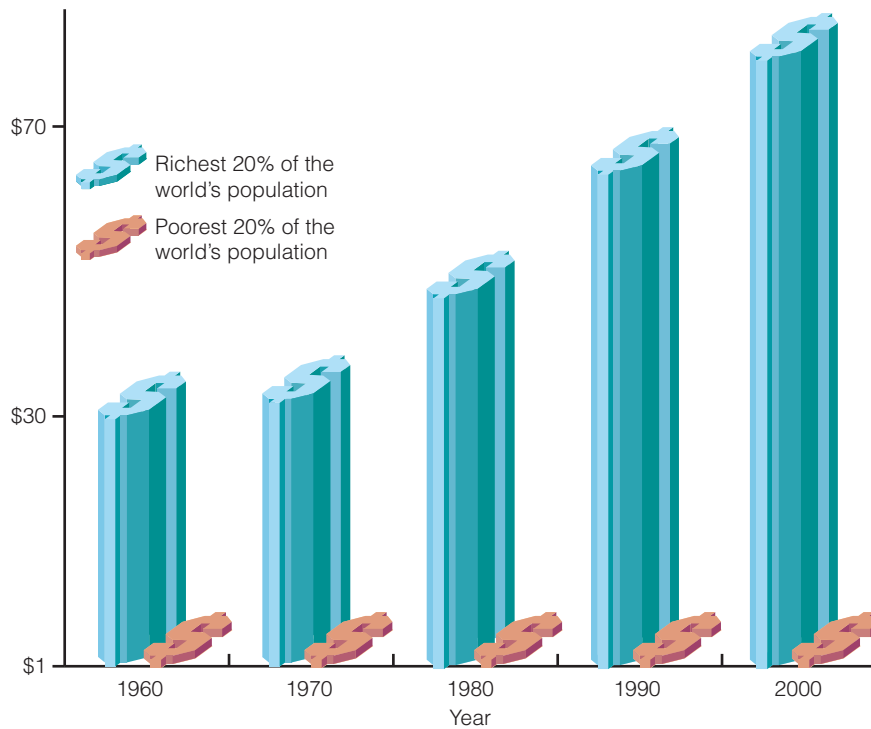
▲ **FIGURE 8.1** **INCOME GAP BETWEEN THE WORLD'S RICHEST AND POOREST PEOPLE**
The income gap between the richest and poorest people in the world continued to grow
between 1960 and 2000. As this figure shows, in 1960 the highest-income 20 percent of the
world's population received $30 for each dollar received by the lowest-income 20 percent.
By 2000, the disparity had increased: $74 to $1.

Sources: International Monetary Fund, 1992; United Nations Development Programme, 2003.

agrarian nations with little industrialization and low levels of national and personal income. Within some nations, the poorest one-fifth of the population has an income that is only a slight fraction of the overall average per capita income for that country. For example, in Brazil, Bolivia, and Honduras, less than 3 percent of total national income accrues to the poorest one-fifth of the population (World Bank, 2005).

Just as the differences between the richest and poorest people in the world have increased, the gap in global income differences between rich and poor countries has continued to widen over the past fifty years. In 1960, the wealthiest 20 percent of the world population had more than thirty times the income of the poorest 20 percent. By 2000, the wealthiest 20 percent of the world population had almost seventy-five times the income of the poorest 20 percent (United Nations Development Programme, 2008).

Income disparities *within* countries were even more pronounced.

Dramatic changes in the global economy in recent years have brought about an economic crisis that affects all of the nations of the world; however, this financial crisis had its origins in the United States, where a real estate asset bubble, fed by a boom in subprime mortgage lending, burst. At the same time, a number of major banks experienced liquidity and solvency problems. Prior to the 2008 global crisis, economic growth had been strong across many low- and middle-income countries even though the growth rate for high-income nations had continued to move downward. As a result of these economic problems, many analysts believe that the world may experience a global recession that will greatly affect rich and poor nations alike. As is generally true, however, they believe that the poorer nations will bear the larger impact of the financial

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disk provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint® slides,

videos, PowerPoint® and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Global Wealth and Poverty?

True	False	
T	F	1. Poverty has been increasing in the United States but decreasing in other nations because of globalization.
T	F	2. The assets of the 200 richest people are more than the combined income of over 40 percent of the world's population.
T	F	3. More than one billion people worldwide live below the international poverty line, earning less than $1.25 each day.
T	F	4. Although poverty is a problem in most areas of the world, relatively few people die of causes arising from poverty.
T	F	5. In low-income countries, the problem of poverty is unequally shared between men and women.
T	F	6. The majority of people with incomes below the poverty line live in urban areas of the world.
T	F	7. Most analysts agree that the World Bank was created to serve the poor of the world and their borrowing governments.
T	F	8. Poor people in low-income countries meet most of their energy needs by burning wood, dung, and agricultural wastes, which increases health hazards and environmental degradation.

Answers on page 248.

crisis. For example, low-income economies are the most vulnerable to potential losses of official aid, pay for workers, and foreign direct investment. The slowdown in trade harms low-income nations such as Nigeria, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, and Zimbabwe, which export commodities to middle- and high-income nations. According to the World Bank (2009), the global economic crisis may trap 46 million more people below the poverty line, which this organization now defines as living on less than $1.25 per day (the previous poverty line was $1.00 per day). An additional 53 million people will be living on less than $2.00 a day. Overall, nearly 40 percent of low- and middle- income nations are highly exposed to the poverty effects of this crisis, and most of them do not have the ability to raise funds within their own economies or from international financial sources to reduce the severe effects that this downturn will have on their economies and on the lives of their people.

Many people have sought to address the issue of world poverty and to determine ways in which resources can be used to meet the urgent challenge of poverty. However, not much progress has been made on this front despite a great deal of talk and

billions of dollars in "foreign aid" flowing from high-income nations to low-income nations. The idea of "development" has become the primary means used in attempts to reduce social and economic inequalities and alleviate the worst effects of poverty in the less industrialized nations of the world. Often, the nations that have not been able to reduce or eliminate poverty are chastised for not making the necessary social and economic reforms to make change possible (Myrdal, 1970). Or, as another social analyst has suggested,

> The *problem* of inequality lies not in poverty, but in excess. "The problem of the world's poor," defined more accurately, turns out to be "the problem of the world's rich." This means that the solution to the problem is not a massive change in the culture of poverty so as to place it on the path of development, but a massive change in the culture of superfluity in order to place it on the path of counterdevelopment. It does not call for a new value system forcing the world's majority to feel shame at their traditionally moderate consumption habits, but for a new value system forcing the world's rich to see the shame and vulgarity of their overconsumption habits, and

- **Global Perspective:** "Kenya's free and compulsory education system has increased gross enrollment rates to over 90 percent nationally. But poor children still cannot afford to attend school; 9 out of 10 children from poor households fail to complete their basic education. School dropout rates are increasing, especially in drought-affected areas" (UNICEF). Ask students what these facts indicate about the challenges of global stratification.

- **For Discussion:** Have students come up with their own definitions of *global stratification,* and discuss how it contributes to economic inequality.
- **Global Perspective:** "Foreign aid has at times been a spectacular success. Botswana and the Republic of Korea in the 1960s, Indonesia in the 1970s, Bolivia and Ghana in the late 1980s, and Uganda and Vietnam in the 1990s are all examples of countries

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Global Wealth and Poverty

1. **False.** In the twenty-first century, the income gap between the richest and poorest has increased on a global basis as well as in the United States.

2. **True.** Assets of the 200 richest people are more than the combined income of 41 percent of the world's population (United Nations Development Programme, 2003).

3. **True.** The World Bank estimates that more than 1.4 billion people worldwide live below the international poverty line, which is defined as earning less than $1.25 each day (World Bank, 2009).

4. **False.** One of the consequences of extreme poverty is hunger, and millions of people—including 6 million children under the age of 5 years—die of hunger-related diseases or chronic malnutrition each year (PBS, 2008).

5. **True.** In almost all low-income countries (as well as middle- and high-income countries), poverty is a more chronic problem for women due to sexual discrimination, resulting in a lack of educational and employment opportunities (Hauchler and Kennedy, 1994).

6. **False.** Although the number of poor people residing in urban areas is growing rapidly, the majority of people with incomes below the poverty line live in rural areas of the world (United Nations DPCSD, 1997).

7. **False.** Some analysts point out the linkages between the World Bank and the transnational corporate sector in both the borrowing and lending ends of its operation. Although the bank is supposedly owned by its members' governments and lends money only to governments, many of its projects involve vast financial dealings with transnational construction companies, consulting firms, and procurement contractors (see Korten, 1996).

8. **True.** Although these fuels are inefficient and harmful to health, many low-income people cannot afford appliances, connection charges, and so forth. In some areas, electric hookups are not available (United Nations DPCSD, 1997).

the double vulgarity of standing on other people's shoulders to achieve those consumption habits. (Lummis, 1992: 50)

As this statement suggests, the increasing interdependence of all the world's nations was largely overlooked or ignored until increasing emphasis was placed on the global marketplace and the global economy. In addition, there are a number of problems inherent in studying global stratification, one of which is what terminology should be used to describe various nations.

Problems in Studying Global Inequality

One of the primary problems encountered by social scientists studying global stratification and social and economic inequality is what terminology should be used to refer to the distribution of resources in various nations. During the past fifty years, major changes have occurred in the way that inequality is addressed by organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. Most definitions of inequality are based on comparisons of levels of income or economic development, whereby countries are identified in terms of the "three worlds" or upon their levels of economic development.

The "Three Worlds" Approach

After World War II, the terms "First World," "Second World," and "Third World" were introduced by social analysts to distinguish among nations on the basis of their levels of economic development and the standard of living of their citizens. *First World* nations were said to consist of the rich, industrialized nations that primarily had capitalist economic systems and democratic political systems. The most frequently noted First World nations were the United

that have gone from crisis to rapid development. On the flip side, foreign aid has also been, at times, an unmitigated failure. While the former Zaire's Mobuto Sese Seko was reportedly amassing one of the world's largest personal fortunes (invested, naturally, outside his own country), decades of large-scale foreign assistance left not a trace of progress (World Bank).

- **Active Learning:** Divide students into smaller groups, and ask them to identify some contemporary dynamics to which this description might apply: "The horror of class stratification, racism, and prejudice is that some people begin to believe that the security of their families and communities depends on the oppression of others, that for some to have good lives there must be others whose lives are truncated and brutal" (Dorothy Allison).

States, Canada, Japan, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. *Second World* nations were said to be countries with at least a moderate level of economic development and a moderate standard of living. These nations included China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and portions of the former Soviet Union. According to social analysts, although the quality of life in Second World nations was not comparable to that of life in the First World, it was far greater than that of people living in the *Third World*—the poorest countries, with little or no industrialization and the lowest standards of living, shortest life expectancies, and highest rates of mortality.

The Levels of Development Approach

Among the most controversial terminology used for describing world poverty and global stratification has been the language of development. Terminology based on levels of development includes concepts such as developed nations, developing nations, less-developed nations, and underdevelopment. Let's look first at the contemporary origins of the idea of "underdevelopment" and "underdeveloped nations."

▲ Vast inequalities in income and lifestyle are evident in this photo of slums and nearby higher-priced housing in Mumbai, India. What visible patterns of economic inequality exist in the United States?

© Viviane Moos/Corbis News/Corbis

Following World War II, the concepts of *underdevelopment* and *underdeveloped nations* emerged out of the Marshall Plan (named after U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall), which provided massive sums of money in direct aid and loans to rebuild the European economic base destroyed during World War II. Given the Marshall Plan's success in rebuilding much of Europe, U.S. political leaders decided that the Southern Hemisphere nations that had recently been released from European colonialism could also benefit from a massive financial infusion and rapid economic development. Leaders of the developed nations argued that urgent problems such as poverty, disease, and famine could be reduced through the transfer of finance, technology, and experience from the developed nations to lesser-developed countries. From this viewpoint, economic development is the primary way to solve the poverty problem: Hadn't economic growth brought the developed nations to their own high standard of living?

Ideas regarding *underdevelopment* were popularized by President Harry S Truman in his 1949 inaugural address. According to Truman, the nations in the Southern Hemisphere were "underdeveloped areas" because of their low gross national product, which today is referred to as *gross national income* (GNI)—a term that refers to all the goods and services produced in a country in a given year, plus the net income earned outside the country by individuals or corporations. If nations could increase their GNI, then social and economic inequality among the citizens within the country could also be reduced. Accordingly, Truman believed that it was necessary to assist the people of economically underdeveloped areas to raise their *standard of living,* by which he meant material well-being that can be measured by the quality of goods and services that may be purchased by the per capita national income. Thus, an increase in the standard of living meant that a nation was moving toward economic development, which typically included the improved exploitation of natural resources by industrial development.

- **For Discussion:** Which answers to the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz did most students tend to miss? Ask students to talk out loud about why they answered in the way they did. Find out where their misconceptions came from, and use this information as a starting point for some of your lectures.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Global Perspective:** Focus on specific countries from the "three worlds" approach. Give a brief cultural and economic summary of Japan, Russia, and Ecuador. Emphasize the role that geopolitical and economic stratification have in the history and future of these nations.
- **Applied Sociology:** The World Health Organization is the United Nations' specialized agency for health. It was established on April 7, 1948. WHO's objective, as set out in its constitution, is the attainment

What has happened to the issue of development since the post–World War II era? After several decades of economic development fostered by organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank, it became apparent by the 1970s that improving a country's GNI did not tend to reduce the poverty of the poorest people in that country. In fact, global poverty and inequality were increasing, and the initial optimism of a speedy end to underdevelopment faded.

Why did inequality increase even with greater economic development? Some analysts in the developed nations began to link growing social and economic inequality on a global basis to relatively high rates of population growth taking place in the underdeveloped nations. Organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization stepped up their efforts to provide family planning services to the populations so that they could control their own fertility. More recently, however, population researchers have become aware that issues such as population growth, economic development, and environmental problems must be seen as interdependent concerns. This changing perception culminated in the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (the "Earth Summit"), in 1992; as a result, terms such as *underdevelopment* have largely been dropped in favor of measurements such as sustainable development, and economies are now classified by their levels of income.

Classification of Economies by Income

Today, the World Bank (2009) focuses on three development themes: people, the environment, and the economy. Because the World Bank's primary business is providing loans and policy advice to low- and middle-income member countries, it classifies nations into three major economic categories: *low-income economies* (a GNI per capita of $935 or less in 2007), *middle-income economies* (a GNI per

© Reinhard Krause/Reuters/Corbis

▲ Global inequality is most striking in nations that are sometimes referred to as "Third World" or "underdeveloped." In this Wenzhou, China, shoe factory, workers produce shoes only for export to other countries.

capita between $936 and $11,455 in 2007), and *high-income economies* (a GNI per capita of $11,456 or more in 2007).

Low-Income Economies

About half the world's population lives in the forty-nine low-income economies, where most people engage in agricultural pursuits, reside in nonurban areas, and are impoverished (World Bank, 2005). As shown in ▶ Map 8.1, low-income economies are primarily found in countries in Asia and Africa, where half of the world's population resides.

Among those most affected by poverty in low-income economies are women and children. Mayra Buvinić, who has served as chief of the women in development program unit at the Inter-American Development Bank, describes the plight of one Nigerian woman as an example:

On the outskirts of Ibadan, Nigeria, Ade cultivates a small, sparsely planted plot with a baby on her back and other visibly undernourished children nearby. Her efforts to grow an improved soybean variety, which could have improved her children's

by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. Health is defined in WHO's constitution as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Have students find examples of WHO work in the news.
- **Historical Perspective:** "You have to have a positive strategy to make more partners and fewer terrorists. Harry Truman and George Marshall took a little bit of our money to build a world that had

more friends and better enemies. Foreign assistance is national security—not charity. The Marshall Plan saw it that way and we have to do the same today" (President Bill Clinton). Ask your students to brainstorm ideas for effective applications of foreign aid.
- **Extra Examples:** Pull out the maps to demonstrate different regions of economic development. Show where first-, second-, and third-world countries historically have been geographically

Greenland

Europe

North America

South America

Asia

Equator

Australia

Africa

Low-income ($935 or less in 2007) economies

Lower-middle-income ($936 to $3,705 in 2007) economies

Upper-middle-income ($3,706 to $11,455 in 2007) economies

High-income ($11,456 or more in 2007) economies
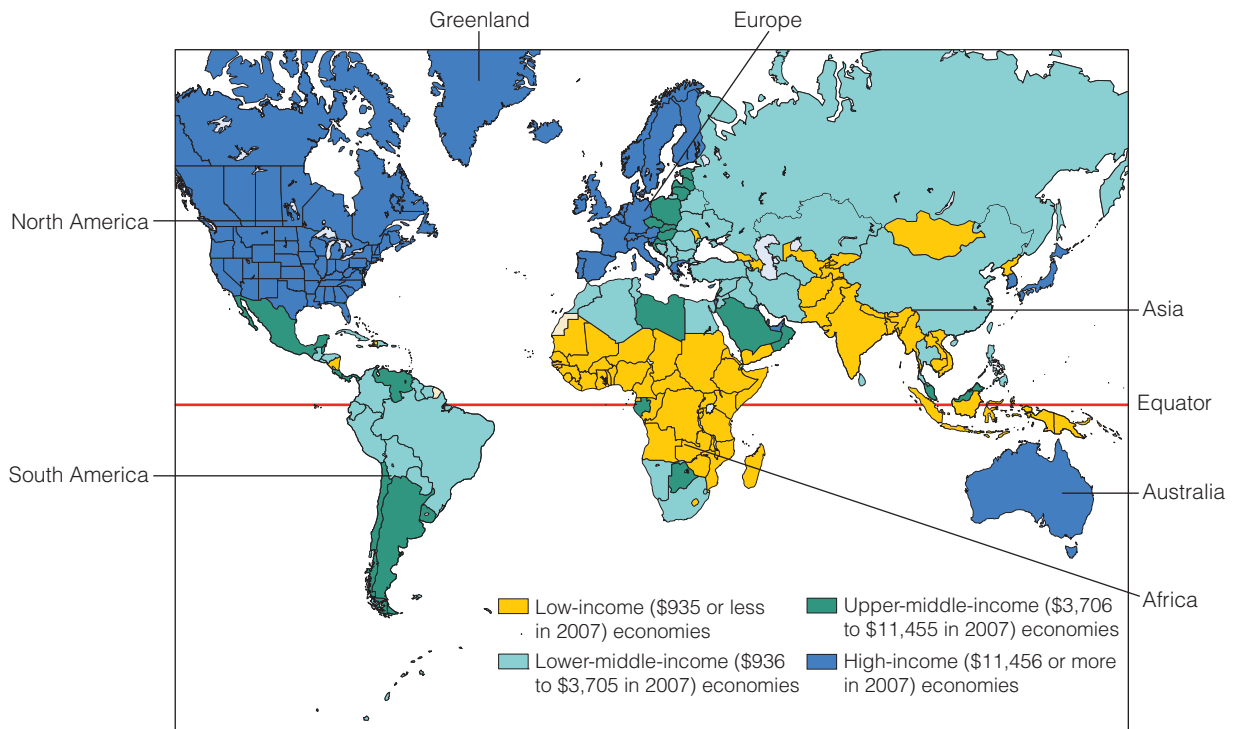
▲ MAP 8.1 HIGH-, MIDDLE-, AND LOW-INCOME ECONOMIES IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

How does the United States compare with other nations with regard to income?

Source: World Bank, 2009.

diet, failed because she lacked the extra time to tend the new crop, did not have a spouse who would help her, and could not afford hired labor. (Buvinić, 1997: 38)

According to Buvinić, Ade's life is typical of many women worldwide who face obstacles to increasing their economic power because they do not have the time to invest in the additional work that could bring in more income. Also, many poor women worldwide do not have access to commercial credit and have been trained only in traditionally female skills that produce low wages. These factors have contributed to the *global feminization of poverty,* whereby women around the world tend to be more impoverished than men. Despite the fact that women have made some gains in terms of well-being, the income gap between men and women continues to grow wider in the low-income, developing nations as well as in the high-income, developed nations such as the United States (Buvinić, 1997).

Middle-Income Economies

About one-third of the world's population resides in the ninety-five nations with middle-income economies (a GNI per capita between $936 and $11,455 in 2007). The World Bank divides middle-income economies into lower-middle-income ($936 to $3,705) and upper-middle-income ($3,706 to $11,455). Countries classified as lower-middle-income include the Latin American nations of Bolivia, Columbia, Guatemala, and El Salvador. However, even though these countries are referred to as "middle-income," more than half of the people residing in countries such as Bolivia, Guatemala, and Honduras live in poverty, defined as below $1.25 per day in purchasing power (World Bank, 2009). In recent years, millions of people have migrated from the world's poorest nations in hopes of finding better economic conditions elsewhere. However, many of these migrants remain impoverished as they primarily move between lower- and middle-income economies (see the Sociology in Global Perspective box).

situated on the globe. Find older maps of the British Empire and of the Cold War communist countries for comparison.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #9 Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-National Content
- **For Discussion:** Have students brainstorm more examples of the feminization of poverty. Discuss the ways that global stratification and gender are linked.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Research:** The World Bank's analytical income categories (low-, middle-, high-income) are based on the bank's operational lending categories (civil works preferences, IDA eligibility, etc.). These operational guidelines were established three decades ago, based on the view that since poorer countries deserve better conditions

sociology in global perspective

Marginal Migration: Moving to a Less-Poor Nation

> We are forced to come back here—not because we like it, but because we are poor. When we cross the border, we are a little better off. We are able to buy shoes and maybe a chicken.
>
>> —Anes Moises explaining why he and many other Haitian migrants face continual hardships so that they can live and work in the Dominican Republic (qtd. in DeParle, 2007: A1)

In the Dominican Republic, Anes Moises works in the banana fields and earns six times as much money as he would in his homeland of Haiti. For Anes and the more than 74 million "south-to-south" migrants—people who have moved from one developing country to another—even marginal gains in money and quality of life are important. As one journalist described the living conditions of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic, "The scrap-wood shanties on a muddy hillside are a poor man's promised land" (DeParle, 2007: A1). Although we hear much more about the 82 million migrants who have moved "south to north"—from a lower-income nation to a country with a high-income economy—the lived experiences of "south-to-south" migrants are also important in understanding global wealth and poverty in the twenty-first century (Ratha and Shaw, 2007).

What are the typical characteristics of people who move from one poor nation to a slightly less poor one? Do their efforts make a difference in their economic status? Recent studies have found that south-to-south migrants are often poorer than individuals who migrate from lower-income to high-income nations. South-to-south migrants are also more likely to travel without proper documentation and be more vulnerable to unscrupulous people and to apprehension by law enforcement officials than are south-to-north migrants (Ratha and Shaw, 2007). Many south-to-south migrants send money back home to extremely poor family members who reside in remote rural areas. Some analysts estimate that the money sent by these migrants has a significant economic impact on the lives of people in the poorest nations of the world. For example, Haitians residing in the Dominican Republic typically send about $135 million a year to relatives back home (DeParle, 2007: A16). Ironically, numerous jobs are available for Haitians in the Dominican Republic because many Dominicans have migrated to the United States (south-to-north migration) in hopes of finding better jobs and higher wages. We can identify similar patterns that exist across many nations as some individuals migrate to high-income economies while others move from a very poor country to a slightly less poor one:

Nicaraguans build Costa Rican buildings. Paraguayans pick Argentine crops. Nepalis dig Indian mines. Indonesians clean Malaysian homes. Farm hands from Burkina Faso tend the fields in Ivory Coast. Some save for the more expensive journeys north, while others find the move from one poor land to another all they will ever afford. With rich countries tightening their borders, migration within the developing world is likely to grow. (DeParle, 2007: A16)

A comparison of the 2007 average per capita income of several nations shows why south-to-south migration will no doubt continue in the future (based on *New York Times*, 2007b: A16):

- Haiti ($480) to the Dominican Republic ($2,850)
- Nicaragua ($1,000) to El Salvador ($2,540)
- Guatemala ($2,640) to Mexico ($7,870)
- Columbia ($2,740) to Panama ($4,890)

reflect & analyze

How do these figures compare with what migrants might gain from moving to the United States or other nations with high-income economies? Does this information provide us with new insights on the nature and extent of global stratification and inequality as they affect people living in the United States? Why or why not?

Other lower-middle-income economies include Russia, Romania, and Kazakhstan. These nations had centrally planned (i.e., socialist) economies until dramatic political and economic changes occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Since then, these nations have been going through a transition to a market economy. According to the World Bank (2005), some nations have been more successful than others in implementing key elements of change and bringing about a higher standard of living for their citizens. Among other factors, high rates of inflation, the growing gap between the rich and the

from the bank, comparative estimates of economic capacity needed to be established.
- **Extra Examples:** List and describe the human development indicators used by the United Nations to understand global poverty. Why are these indicators considered good measures? How can they be misleading?

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #9 Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-National Content
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss whether or not the following description applies to their communities: "The big majority of Americans, who are comparatively well off, have developed an ability to have enclaves of people living in the greatest misery without almost noticing them" (Gunnar Myrdal).

poor, low life-expectancy rates, and homeless children have been visible signs of problems in the transition toward a free-market economy in countries such as Russia.

As compared with lower-middle-income economies, nations having upper-middle-income economies typically have a somewhat higher standard of living and export diverse goods and services, ranging from manufactured goods to raw materials and fuels. Nations with upper-middle-income economies include Argentina, Chile, Hungary, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia. Although these nations are referred to as middle-income economies, many of them have extremely high levels of indebtedness, leaving them with few resources for fighting poverty. According to one analyst, "A major cause of debt accumulation was investment in ill-considered, ill-conceived projects, many involving bloated capital costs and healthy doses of graft" (George, 1993: 88). Additional debts also accrued through military spending, even though a sizable portion of some populations is living in hunger and misery (George, 1993). The World Bank sought to set up funds to reduce the debts of some nations that have debts in excess of 200 to 250 percent of their annual export earnings. However, some high-income nations believed that such an action on the part of the World Bank might set a dangerous precedent, so the debt-reduction process was limited in scope (Lewis, 1996).

As middle-income nations have been required to make payments on their debts, the requisite structural adjustments have necessitated that the countries make spending cuts in areas that formerly helped some of the poor, including subsidized food, education, and health care. These structural adjustments have been required in agreements with lending agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Thus, there is a high rate of poverty in many countries that are classified as middle-income economies.

High-Income Economies

High-income economies are found in sixty-five nations, including the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, Portugal, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Norway, and Germany. Nations recently moving into the high-income category include Equatorial Guinea,

Hungary, Omar, and the Slovak Republic. High-income economies are defined by the World Bank as having a gross national income per capita of $11,456 or more. According to the World Bank, people in high-income economies typically have a higher standard of living than those in low- and middle-income economies. Nations with high-income economies continue to dominate the world economy, despite the fact that shifts in the global marketplace have affected some workers who have found themselves without work due to *capital flight*—the movement of jobs and economic resources from one nation to another—and *deindustrialization*—the closing of plants and factories because of their obsolescence or the fact that workers in other nations are being hired to do the work more cheaply.

Some of the nations that have been in the high-income category do not have as high a rate of annual economic growth as the newly industrializing nations, particularly in East Asia and Latin America, that are still in the process of development. The only significant group of middle- and lower-income economies to close the gap with the high-income, industrialized economies over the past few decades has been the nations of East Asia. China has experienced a 270 percent increase in per capita income over the past twenty years.

Despite economic growth, the East Asian region remains home to approximately 350 million poor people. And from all signs, it appears that nations such as India will continue to have an extremely large population and rapid annual growth rates. (The Concept Quick Review describes economies classified by income.)

Measuring Global Wealth and Poverty

On a global basis, measuring wealth and poverty is a difficult task because of conceptual problems and problems in acquiring comparable data from various nations. Although gross national income continues to be one of the most widely used measures of national income, in recent years the United Nations and the World Bank have begun to use the gross domestic product (GDP). The *gross domestic product* is all the goods and services produced *within* a country's economy during a given year. Unlike the

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- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis
- **Quote, Unquote:** "Technological society leads to increasing numbers of people who cannot adapt to the inhuman rhythm of modern life with its emphasis on specialization. . . . Technological

progress makes whole categories of people useless without making it possible to support them with the wealth produced by the progress" (Jacques Ellul). Have students respond based on their own experiences. What are some solutions to this problem?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

Classification of Economies by Income

	Low-Income Economies	Middle-Income Economies	High-Income Economies
Previous categorization	Third World, underdeveloped	Second World, developing	First World, developed
2007 per capita income (GNI)	$935 or less	$936–$11,455	$11,456 or more
Type of economy	Largely agricultural	Diverse, from agricultural to manufacturing	Information-based and postindustrial

GNI, the GDP does not include any income earned by individuals or corporations if the revenue comes from sources outside of the country. For example, using GDP as a measure of economic growth, a World Bank report concluded that nations such as China, India, and Indonesia were well on their way to becoming "economic powerhouses" in the next twenty-five years. However, some scholars criticize the assumption that economic development always benefits low-income nations and that poor nations *can* and *should* play "catch-up" with the wealthy, industrialized nations.

▲ Where are these Dell Computer service technicians working? Dell's headquarters is located in Round Rock, Texas (near Austin), so you might assume that these employees are working there or somewhere else in the United States. However, as part of the global workforce in high-income nations, the people you see here are employed at the Dell Enterprise Command Center in Limerick, Ireland.

© Dell Inc./Business Wire/Getty Images Publicity/Getty Images

Absolute, Relative, and Subjective Poverty

How is poverty defined on a global basis? Isn't it more a matter of comparison than an absolute standard? According to social scientists, defining poverty involves more than comparisons of personal or household income; it also involves social judgments made by researchers. From this point of view, *absolute poverty*—previously defined as a condition in which people do not have the means to secure the most basic necessities of life—would be measured by comparing personal or household income or expenses with the cost of buying a given quantity of goods and services. The World Bank has defined absolute poverty as living on less than $1.25 a day. Similarly, *relative poverty*—which exists when people may be able to afford basic necessities but are still unable to maintain an average standard of living—would be measured by comparing one person's income with the incomes of others. Finally, *subjective poverty* would be measured by comparing the actual income against the income earner's expectations and perceptions. However, for low-income nations in a state of economic transition, data on income and levels of consumption are typically difficult to obtain and are often ambiguous when they are available. Defining levels of poverty involves several dimensions: (1) how many people are poor,

• **Table Note:** Use the Concept Quick Review to quiz the class on their grasp of other related characteristics not listed in this chart.
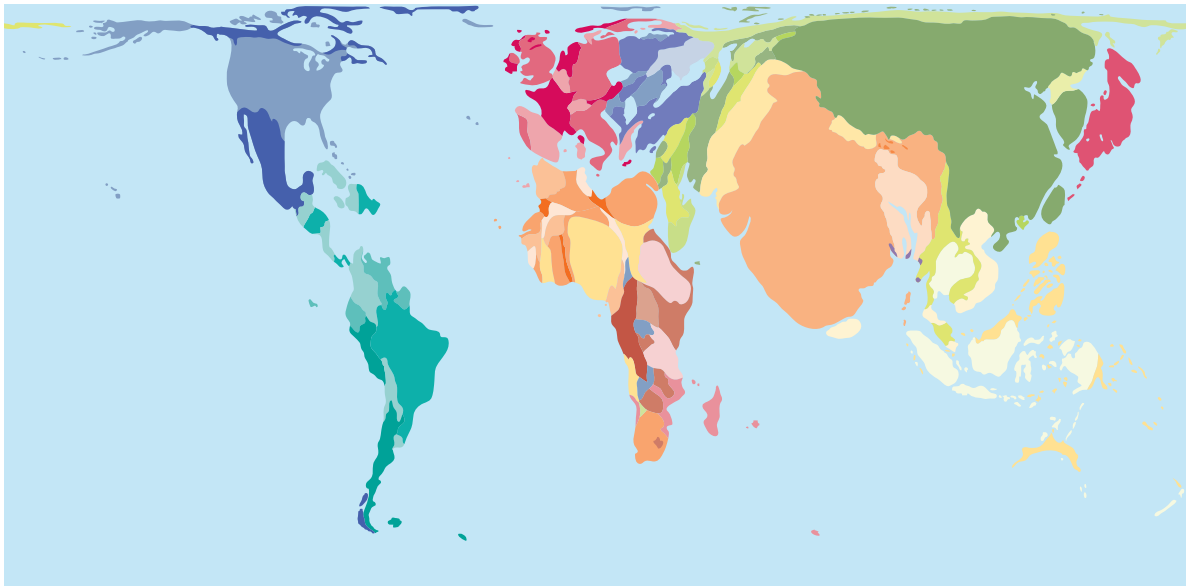
▲ **MAP 8.2** PROPORTION OF WORLD'S POPULATION LIVING IN POVERTY (BY REGION)

Source: Copyright 2006 SASI Group (University of Sheffield) and Mark Newman (University of Virginia). Map courtesy of worldmapper.org.

==(2) how far below the poverty line people's incomes fall, and (3) how long they have been poor (is the poverty temporary or long term?).== ▶ Map 8.2 provides a unique portrayal of human poverty in which the territory size shows the proportion of the world population living in poverty in each region.

The Gini Coefficient and Global Quality-of-Life Issues

==The World Bank uses as its measure of income inequality what is known as the *Gini coefficient,* which ranges from zero (meaning that everyone has the same income) to 100 (one person receives all the income).== Using this measure, the World Bank (2005) has concluded that inequality has increased in nations such as Bulgaria, the Baltic countries, and the Slavic countries of the former Soviet Union to levels similar to those in the less-equal industrial market economies, such as the United States. In fact, inequality in Russia rose sharply in the 1990s: By 1998, the top 20 percent of the population received a much larger percentage of the total income than it had in 1993. Stark contrasts also exist in countries such as India, where abject poverty still exists side by side with lavish opulence in Calcutta. Note the sharp contrast in lifestyle on one Calcutta street:

On one side is the Tollygunge Club, 40 hectares of landscaped serenity with an 18-hole golf course, a driving range, riding stables, tennis courts, and two covered swimming pools. . . . On the other side stands the M.R. Bangur Hospital, a sooty building with a morgue [that sometimes takes] the corpses of paupers who die in Calcutta's streets. (Watson, 1997: F1)

This street is symbolic of the sharp chasm that divides the 15 million people who live in Calcutta. In fact, some analysts believe that the scale of poverty in South and East Asia is most visible in the heavily populated states of India and China. It is estimated that more than 700 million of Asia's people are poor and that 455 million of them live in India alone, where there are more than twice as many poor people as in sub-Saharan Africa. When the World Bank increased its poverty line to $1.25 per day, this further increased the number of people counted as living in poverty in India and other nations.

Global Poverty and Human Development Issues

Income disparities are not the only factor that defines poverty and its effect on people. Although

- **Research:** Have students examine the following statement by Peter Lindert, an economist from the University of California at Davis: "It is well-known that higher taxes and transfers reduce productivity. Well-known—but unsupported by statistics and history" (*Boston Globe,* 9/2008). How do these assumptions affect the approaches to global inequality and development?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

the average income per person in lower-income countries has doubled in the past thirty years and for many years economic growth has been seen as the primary way to achieve development in low-income economies, the United Nations since the 1970s has more actively focused on human development as a crucial factor in fighting poverty. In 1990 the United Nations Development Program introduced the Human Development Index (HDI), establishing three new criteria—in addition to GDP—for measuring the level of development in a country: life expectancy, education, and living standards. According to the United Nations, human development is the process of "expanding choices that people have in life, to lead a life to its full potential and in dignity, through expanding capabilities and through people taking action themselves to improve their lives" (United Nations Development Programme, 2009). ▶ Figure 8.2 compares indicators such as gross domestic product, life expectancy, and adult literacy in regions around the world.

In 2009 the *Human Development Report* introduced a new top category of nations, "Very High Human Development." According to the report, people who live in countries in the highest human development categories can expect to be better educated, to live longer, and to earn more. In a nation with very high human development, for example,
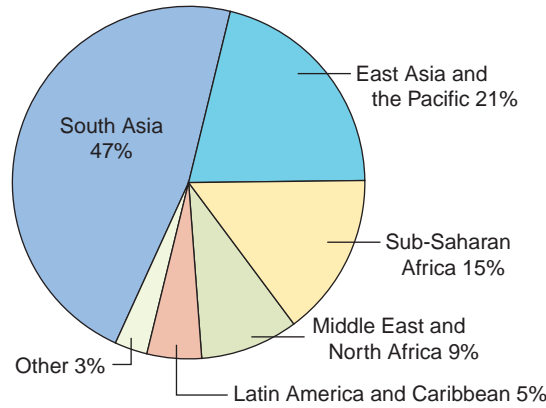
a. **Distribution of the world's illiterate population, age fifteen and older, by region**
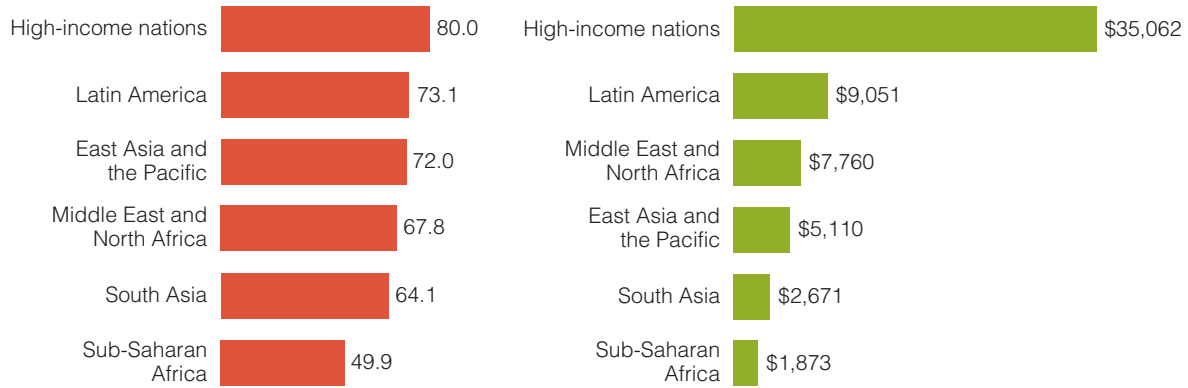
b. **Life expectancy in years for persons born in 2006**

c. **Per capita gross domestic product in U.S. dollars, 2006**

▲ **FIGURE 8.2** INDICATORS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Source: World Bank, 2009.

the per capita income ranges on average to more than $37,000 per year, as compared to less than $1,000 in countries with a low high development index. It will be interesting to see how these figures change in the future with the inclusion of this new category. Up to this date, the change has primarily moved around some nations that formerly were listed in the high or medium human development categories. The top-three countries in the HDI are Norway, Australia, and Iceland. By contrast, Niger, Afghanistan, and Sierra Leone are the bottom-three countries this year. In other words, a child born in Niger has a life expectancy of slightly more than 50 years, which is 30 years less than a child born in the same year in Norway. Likewise, for every dollar (U.S. currency) earned per person in Niger, $85 is earned in Norway (United Nations Development Programme, 2009).

Life Expectancy

As the example above shows, although some advances have been made in middle- and low-income countries regarding life expectancy, major problems still exist. The average life expectancy at birth of people in middle-income countries remains about 12 years less than that of people in high-income countries. Moreover, the life expectancy of people in low-income nations is as much as 30 years less than that of people in high-income nations. A child born in a low-HDI country has a life expectancy of just over 50 years, which is 17 years less than in medium-HDI countries and 30 years less than in the very-high-HDI countries (United Nations Development Programme, 2009). Especially striking are the differences in life expectancies in high-income economies and low-income economies such as sub-Saharan Africa, where estimated life expectancy has dropped significantly. For example, in Zambia the average life expectancy is 41.2 years for women and 41 years for men.

One major cause of shorter life expectancy in low-income nations is the high rate of infant mortality. The infant mortality rate (deaths per thousand live births) is more than eight times higher in low-income countries than in high-income countries (World Bank, 2009). Low-income countries typically have higher rates of illness and disease, and they do not have adequate health care facilities.

Malnutrition is a common problem among children, many of whom are underweight, stunted, and anemic—a nutritional deficiency with serious consequences for child mortality. Consider this journalist's description of a child she saw in Haiti (prior to the deadly 2010 earthquake):

> Like any baby, Wisly Dorvil is easy to love. Unlike others, this 13-month-old is hard to hold.
>
> That's because his 10-pound frame is so fragile that even the most minimal of movements can dislocate his shoulders.
>
> As lifeless as a rag doll, Dorvil is starving. He has large, brown eyes and a feeble smile, but a stomach so tender that he suffers from ongoing bouts of vomiting and diarrhea.
>
> Fortunately, though, Dorvil recently came to the attention of U.S. aid workers. With round-the-clock feeding, he is expected to survive.
>
> Others are not so lucky. (Emling, 1997a: A17)

Among adults and children alike, life expectancies are strongly affected by hunger and malnutrition. It is estimated that people in the United States spend more than $35 billion each year on weight-loss products, whereas the world's poorest people suffer from chronic malnutrition, and many die each year from hunger-related diseases (McNamara, 2006). Some analysts estimate that the number of people worldwide dying each year from malnutrition and other hunger-related diseases is the equivalent of more than 300 jumbo-jet crashes per day with no survivors, and half the passengers children (Kidron and Segal, 1995).

On the plus side of the life expectancy problem, some nations have made positive gains, seeing average life expectancy increase by about a third in the past three decades. Life expectancy is now more than 70 years (average for men and women) in 95 countries (United Nations Development Programme, 2009). Only Iceland has reached a life expectancy for men of 80 years or more; however, 33 countries have reached an expectancy of 80 years or more for women.

Health

Health is defined in the constitution of the World Health Organization as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the

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- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students conduct research and write short papers on the complicated relationship between life expectancy and economic development. Have them apply sociological concepts to elucidate some of these dynamics.
- **For Discussion:** Describe the relationship between infant mortality and economic development. Have students focus on and discuss this relationship in Kenya, using information from this and other texts.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Extra Examples:** Ask students to conduct some narrative research to personalize the following statistics: "Approximately 2.5 million and 2.4 million children are working in developed and transition economies respectively. An estimated 246 million children are engaged in child labor" (UNICEF).

absence of disease or infirmity." Many people in low-income nations are far from having physical, mental, and social well-being. In fact, about 20 million people die each year from diarrhea, malaria, tuberculosis, and other infectious and parasitic illnesses (World Health Organization, 2009). According to the World Health Organization, infectious diseases are far from under control in many nations due to such factors as unsanitary or overcrowded living conditions. Despite the possible eradication of diseases such as poliomyelitis, leprosy, guinea-worm disease, and neonatal tetanus in the near future, at least thirty new diseases—for which there is no treatment or vaccine—have recently emerged.

Some middle-income countries are experiencing rapid growth in degenerative diseases such as cancer and coronary heart disease, and many more deaths are expected from smoking-related diseases. Despite the decrease in tobacco smoking in high-income countries, there has been an increase in per capita consumption of tobacco in low- and middle-income countries, many of which have been targeted for free samples and promotional advertising by U.S. tobacco companies (United Nations Development Programme, 2002).

Education and Literacy

According to the *Human Development Report* (United Nations Development Programme, 2008), education is fundamental to reducing both individual and national poverty. As a result, school enrollment is used as one measure of human development. Although school enrollment has increased at the primary and secondary levels in about two-thirds of the lower-income regions, enrollment is not always a good measure of educational achievement because many students drop out of school during their elementary-school years. Many of the children who do not attend school work long hours, under hazardous conditions, for very low wages.

What is literacy, and why is it important for human development? The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines a literate person as "someone who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life" (United Nations, 1997: 89). Based on this definition, people who can write only with figures, their name,

▲ In an effort to reduce poverty, some nations have developed adult literacy programs so that people can gain an education that will help lift them out of poverty. In regions such as Solomuna, Eritrea, women's literacy is a particularly crucial issue.

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or a memorized phrase are not considered literate. The adult literacy rate in the low-income countries (55.2 percent) is about half that of the high-income countries (99 percent), and for women the rate is even lower. Women in the poorest nations have a literacy rate of 45.9 percent, as compared to 64.5 percent for men. By sharp contrast, women in high-income nations have a 98.7 percent literacy rate while men have a 99.3 percent rate (United Nations Development Programme, 2008). Women constitute about two-thirds of those who are illiterate: There are approximately 75 literate women for every 100 literate men (United Nations, 1997). Literacy is crucial for women because it has been closely linked to decreases in fertility, improved child health, and increased earnings potential.

Persistent Gaps in Human Development

Some middle- and lower-income countries have made progress in certain indicators of human development. The gap between some richer and middle- or lower-income nations has narrowed significantly for life expectancy, adult literacy, and daily calorie supply; however, the overall picture for the world's poorest people remains dismal. The gap between the poorest nations and the middle-income nations has continued to widen. Poverty, food shortages, hunger, and rapidly growing populations are pressing

- **For Discussion:** Elaborate on the relationship among education, health, and literacy in terms of societal development. Have students discuss the following statement: "Education is a companion which no future can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate it and no nepotism can enslave" (Ropo Oguntimehin).
- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to write about the role of education in their own economic futures. Focus on the

opportunities that are possible because they have graduated from high school. What do they think will happen to their life chances when they graduate from college?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

problems for at least 1.8 billion people, most of them women and children living in a state of absolute poverty. Although more women around the globe have paid employment than in the past, more and more women are still finding themselves in poverty because of increases in single-person and single-parent households headed by women and the fact that low-wage work is often the only source of livelihood available to them.

Theories of Global Inequality

Why is the majority of the world's population growing richer while the poorest 20 percent—more than one billion people—are so poor that they are effectively excluded from even a moderate standard of living? Social scientists have developed a variety of theories that view the causes and consequences of global inequality somewhat differently. We will examine the development approach and modernization theory, dependency theory, world systems theory, and the new international division of labor theory.

Development and Modernization Theory

According to some social scientists, global wealth and poverty are linked to the level of industrialization and economic development in a given society. Although the process by which a nation industrializes may vary somewhat, industrialization almost inevitably brings with it a higher standard of living and some degree of social mobility for individual participants in the society. Specifically, the traditional caste system becomes obsolete as industrialization progresses. Family status, race/ethnicity, and gender are said to become less significant in industrialized nations than in agrarian-based societies. As societies industrialize, they also urbanize as workers locate their residences near factories, offices, and other places of work. Consequently, urban values and folkways overshadow the beliefs and practices of the rural areas. Analysts using a development framework typically view industrialization and economic development as essential steps that nations must go through in order to reduce poverty and increase life chances for their citizens.

Earlier in the chapter, we discussed the post–World War II Marshall Plan, under which massive financial aid was provided to the European nations to help rebuild infrastructure lost in the war. Based on the success of this infusion of cash in bringing about modernization, President Truman and many other politicians and leaders in the business community believed that it should be possible to help so-called underdeveloped nations modernize in the same manner.

The most widely known development theory is *modernization theory*—a perspective that links global inequality to different levels of economic development and suggests that low-income economies can move to middle- and high-income economies by achieving self-sustained economic growth. According to modernization theory, the low-income, less-developed nations can improve their standard of living only with a period of intensive economic growth and accompanying changes in people's beliefs, values, and attitudes toward work. As a result of modernization, the values of people in developing countries supposedly become more similar to those of people in high-income nations. The number of hours that people work at their jobs each week is one measure of the extent to which individuals subscribe to the *work ethic,* a core value widely believed to be of great significance in the modernization process.

Perhaps the best-known modernization theory is that of Walt W. Rostow (1971, 1978), who, as an economic advisor to U.S. President John F. Kennedy, was highly instrumental in shaping U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America in the 1960s. To Rostow, one of the largest barriers to development in low-income nations was the traditional cultural values held by people, particularly beliefs that are fatalistic, such as viewing extreme hardship and economic deprivation as inevitable and unavoidable facts of life. In cases of fatalism, people do not see any need to work in order to

> **modernization theory** a perspective that links global inequality to different levels of economic development and suggests that low-income economies can move to middle- and high-income economies by achieving self-sustained economic growth.

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improve their lot in life: If it is predetermined for them, why bother? Based on modernization theory, poverty can be attributed to people's cultural failings, which are further reinforced by governmental policies interfering with the smooth operation of the economy.

Rostow suggested that all countries go through four stages of economic development, with identical content, regardless of when these nations started the process of industrialization. He compared the stages of economic development to an airplane ride. The first stage is the *traditional stage,* in which very little social change takes place, and people do not think much about changing their current circumstances. According to Rostow, societies in this stage are slow to change because the people hold a fatalistic value system, do not subscribe to the work ethic, and save very little money. The second stage is the *take-off stage*—a period of economic growth accompanied by a growing belief in individualism, competition, and achievement. During this stage, people start to look toward the future, to save and invest money, and to discard traditional values. According to Rostow's modernization theory, the development of capitalism is essential for the transformation from a traditional, simple society to a modern, complex one. With the financial help and advice of the high-income countries, low-income countries will eventually be able to "fly" and enter the third stage of economic development. In the third stage, the country moves toward *technological maturity.* At this point, the country will improve its technology, reinvest in new industries, and embrace the beliefs, values, and social institutions of the high-income, developed nations. In the fourth and final stage, the country reaches the phase of *high mass consumption* and a correspondingly high standard of living.

Modernization theory has had both its advocates and its critics. According to proponents of this approach, studies have supported the assertion that economic development occurs more rapidly in a capitalist economy. In fact, the countries that have been most successful in moving from low- to middle-income status typically have been those that are most centrally involved in the global capitalist economy. For example, the nations of East Asia have successfully made the transition from low-income to higher-income economies through factors such as a high rate of savings, an aggressive work ethic among employers and employees, and the fostering of a market economy.

Critics of modernization theory point out that it tends to be Eurocentric in its analysis of low-income countries, which it implicitly labels as backward (see Evans and Stephens, 1988). In particular, modernization theory does not take into account the possibility that all nations do not industrialize in the same manner. In contrast, some analysts have suggested that modernization of low-income nations today will require novel policies, sequences, and ideologies that are not accounted for by Rostow's approach.

Which sociological perspective is most closely associated with the development approach? Modernization theory is based on a

◄ Poverty and war continue to devastate low-income countries such as Afghanistan. Many low-income countries receive aid from industrialized nations through initiatives such as the World Food Program. Modernization theory links global inequality to levels of economic development, but factors such as war and internal conflict also greatly contribute to patterns of global inequality.

• **Historical Perspective:** Walt Whitman Rostow was an economic historian who guided U.S. foreign policy during the Vietnam War. He was one of the few political advisors to serve throughout the 1960s, working with both John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. He always insisted that the United States could have emerged from the conflict victorious (*New York Times,* 2/2003).

==highlight== market-oriented perspective which assumes that "pure" capitalism is good and that the best economic outcomes occur when governments follow the policy of laissez-faire (or hands-off) business, giving capitalists the opportunity to make the "best" economic decisions, unfettered by government restraints or cumbersome rules and regulations ==highlight== (see Chapter 13, "Politics and the Economy in Global Perspective"). In today's global economy, however, many analysts believe that national governments are no longer central corporate decision makers and that transnational corporations determine global economic expansion and contraction. Therefore, corporate decisions to relocate manufacturing processes around the world make the rules and regulations of any one nation irrelevant and national boundaries obsolete (Gereffi, 1994). ==highlight== Just as modernization theory most closely approximates a functionalist approach to explaining inequality, dependency theory, world systems theory, and the new international division of labor theory are perspectives rooted in the conflict approach. ==highlight== All four of these approaches are depicted in ▶ Figure 8.3.

Modernization Theory: Low-income, less-developed countries can move to middle- and high-income economies by achieving self-sustained economic growth.

Dependency Theory: Global poverty can at least partially be attributed to the fact that low-income countries have been exploited by high-income economies; the poor nations are trapped in a cycle of dependency on richer nations.

World Systems Theory: How a country is incorporated into the global capitalist economy (e.g., a core, semiperipheral, or peripheral nation) is the key feature in determining how economic development takes place in that nation.

The New International Division of Labor Theory: Commodity production is split into fragments, each of which can be moved (e.g., by a transnational corporation) to whichever part of the world can provide the best combination of capital and labor.

▲ **FIGURE 8.3 APPROACHES TO STUDYING GLOBAL INEQUALITY**
What causes global inequality? Social scientists have developed a variety of explanations, including the four theories shown here.

- **Figure Note:** Divide your class into smaller groups, and ask them to create their own visual representations for the four approaches to studying global inequality.
- **Extra Examples:** Have students evaluate the following in terms of dependency theory: "In order to go ahead with economic expansion, a dependent country has to play the 'interdependency' game, but in a position similar to the client who approaches a banker . . . even if the dependent country becomes less poor after the first loan, a second one follows. In most cases, when such an economy flourishes, its roots have been planted by those who hold the lending notes" (Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*).

Dependency Theory

Dependency theory states that global poverty can at least partially be attributed to the fact that the low-income countries have been exploited by the high-income countries. Analyzing events as part of a particular historical process—the expansion of global capitalism—dependency theorists see the greed of the rich countries as a source of increasing impoverishment of the poorer nations and their people. Dependency theory disputes the notion of the development approach, and modernization theory specifically, that economic growth is the key to meeting important human needs in societies. In contrast, the poorer nations are trapped in a cycle of structural dependency on the richer nations due to their need for infusions of foreign capital and external markets for their raw materials, making it impossible for the poorer nations to pursue their own economic and human development agendas. For this reason, dependency theorists believe that countries such as Brazil, Nigeria, India, and Kenya cannot reach the sustained economic growth patterns of the more-advanced capitalist economies.

Dependency theory has been most often applied to the newly industrializing countries (NICs) of Latin America, whereas scholars examining the NICs of East Asia found that dependency theory had little or no relevance to economic growth and development in that part of the world. Therefore, dependency theory had to be expanded to encompass transnational economic linkages that affect developing countries, including foreign aid, foreign trade, foreign direct investment, and foreign loans. On the one hand, in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, transnational linkages such as foreign aid, investments by transnational corporations, foreign debt, and export trade have been significant impediments to development within a country. On the other hand, East Asian countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore have historically also had high rates of dependency on foreign aid, foreign trade, and interdependence with transnational corporations but have still experienced high rates of economic growth despite dependency. According to the sociologist Gary Gereffi (1994), differences in outcome are probably associated with differences in the timing and sequencing of a nation's relationship with external entities such as foreign governments and transnational corporations.

Dependency theory makes a positive contribution to our understanding of global poverty by noting that "underdevelopment" is not necessarily the cause of inequality. Rather, it points out that exploitation not only of one country by another but of countries by transnational corporations may limit or retard economic growth and human development in some nations. However, what remains unexplained is how East Asia and India had successful "dependency management" whereas many Latin American countries did not (Gereffi, 1994).

World Systems Theory

World systems theory suggests that what exists under capitalism is a truly global system that is held together by economic ties. From this approach, global inequality does not emerge solely as a result of the exploitation of one country by another. Instead, economic domination involves a complex world

▲ A variety of factors—such as foreign investment and the presence of transnational corporations—have contributed to the economic growth of nations such as Singapore.

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- **For Discussion:** Have students explore how the dynamics of exploitation work in dependency theory's explanation of perpetual poverty in low-income economies.
- **Extra Examples:** Explore the University of Texas Inequality Project website for hundreds of resources, many related to dependency theory (**utip.gov.utexas.edu**).

- **For Discussion:** Ask students to interpret and respond to the following statement: "I do not believe that America and Americans are the cause of all the world's miseries and injustices. I do believe they are the prime beneficiaries" (Immanuel Wallerstein).

system in which the industrialized, high-income nations benefit from other nations and exploit their citizens. This theory is most closely associated with the sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1979, 1984), who believed that a country's mode of incorporation into the capitalist work economy is the key feature in determining how economic development takes place in that nation. According to *world systems theory,* the capitalist world economy is a global system divided into a hierarchy of three major types of nations—core, semiperipheral, and peripheral—in which upward or downward mobility is conditioned by the resources and obstacles that characterize the international system. *Core nations* are dominant capitalist centers characterized by high levels of industrialization and urbanization. Core nations such as the United States, Japan, and Germany possess most of the world's capital and technology. Even more importantly for their position of domination, they exert massive control over world trade and economic agreements across national boundaries. Some cities in core nations are referred to as *global cities* because they serve as international centers for political, economic, and cultural concerns. New York, Tokyo, and London are the largest global cities, and they are often referred to as the "command posts" of the world economy.

Semiperipheral nations are more developed than peripheral nations but less developed than core nations. Nations in this category typically provide labor and raw materials to core nations within the world system. These nations constitute a midpoint between the core and peripheral nations that promotes the stability and legitimacy of the three-tiered world economy. These nations include South Korea and Taiwan in East Asia, Mexico and Brazil in Latin America, India in South Asia, and Nigeria and South Africa in Africa. Only two global cities are located in semiperipheral nations: São Paulo, Brazil, which is the center of the Brazilian economy, and Singapore, which is the economic center of a multicountry region in Southeast Asia. According to Wallerstein, semiperipheral nations exploit peripheral nations, just as the core nations exploit both the semiperipheral and the peripheral nations.

Most low-income countries in Africa, South America, and the Caribbean are *peripheral nations—nations that are dependent on core nations for capital, have little or no industrialization (other than what may be brought in by core nations), and have uneven patterns of urbanization.* According to Wallerstein (1979, 1984), the wealthy in peripheral nations benefit from the labor of poor workers and from their own economic relations with core-nation capitalists, whom they uphold in order to maintain their own wealth and position. At a global level, uneven economic growth results from capital investment by core nations; disparity between the rich and the poor within the major cities in these nations is increased in the process. The U.S./Mexican border is an example of disparity and urban growth: Transnational corporations have built *maquiladora* plants so that goods can be assembled by low-wage workers to keep production costs down. ▶ Figure 8.4 describes this process. In 2008 there were more than 3,000 maquiladora plants in Mexico, employing 1.2 million people, in factories manufacturing apparel; electronic accessories such as computers, televisions, and small appliances; and motor vehicles and parts. The Mexican government has discontinued reporting on *maquiladora* plants as separate from other companies doing business in that country. As a result, it is more difficult for social scientists to study the effects of these plants on workers and on the national economies in which these businesses are located.

dependency theory the belief that global poverty can at least partially be attributed to the fact that the low-income countries have been exploited by the high-income countries.

core nations according to world systems theory, dominant capitalist centers characterized by high levels of industrialization and urbanization.

semiperipheral nations according to world systems theory, nations that are more developed than peripheral nations but less developed than core nations.

peripheral nations according to world systems theory, nations that are dependent on core nations for capital, have little or no industrialization (other than what may be brought in by core nations), and have uneven patterns of urbanization.

- **Research:** "Every day Saudi Arabia receives more than $500 million from oil-consuming nations, including nearly $100 million from the United States" (*Fortune* magazine). How does this fact relate to the claims of world systems theory? Have students respond using the theory's terminology.
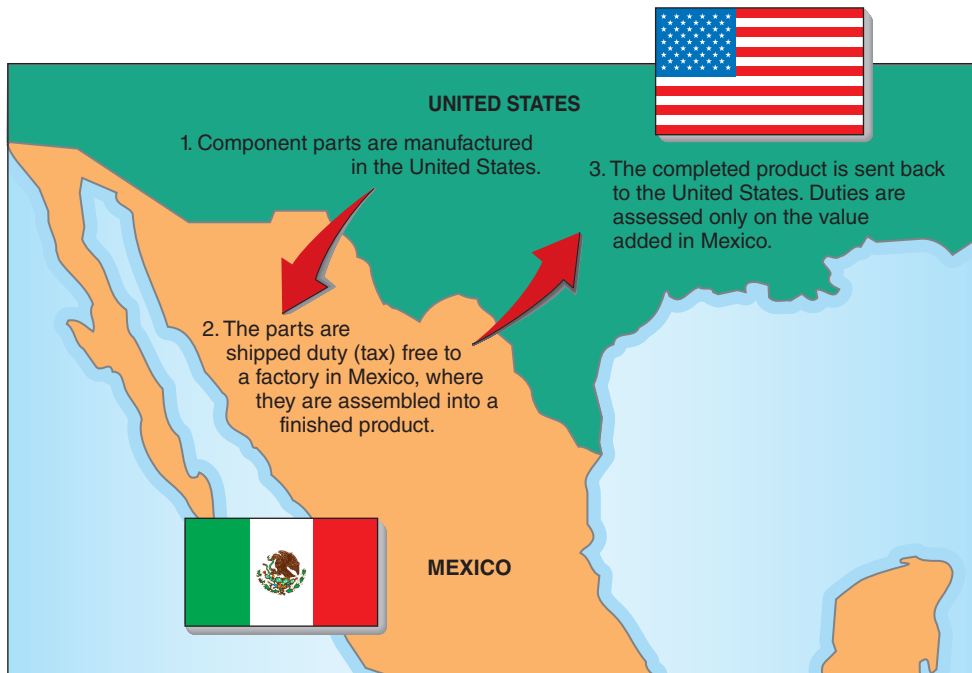
▲ **FIGURE 8.4** MAQUILADORA PLANTS
Here is the process by which transnational corporations establish plants in Mexico so that profits can be increased by using low-wage workers there to assemble products that are then brought into the United States for sale.

Not all social analysts agree with Wallerstein's perspective on the hierarchical position of nations in the global economy. However, most scholars acknowledge that nations throughout the world are influenced by a relatively small number of cities and transnational corporations that have prompted a shift from an international to a more global economy (see Knox and Taylor, 1995; Wilson, 1997). Even Wallerstein (1991) acknowledges that world systems theory is an "incomplete, unfinished critique" of long-term, large-scale social change that influences global inequality.

The New International Division of Labor Theory

Although the term *world trade* has long implied that there is a division of labor between societies, the nature and extent of this division have recently been reassessed based on the changing nature of the world economy. According to the *new international division of labor theory,* commodity production is being split into fragments that can be assigned to whichever part of the world can provide the most profitable combination of capital and labor. Consequently, the new international division of labor has changed the pattern of geographic specialization between countries, whereby high-income countries have now become dependent on low-income countries for labor. The low-income countries provide transnational corporations with a situation in which they can pay lower wages and taxes and face fewer regulations regarding workplace conditions and environmental protection (Waters, 1995). Overall, a global manufacturing system has emerged in which transnational corporations establish labor-intensive, assembly-oriented export production, ranging from textiles and clothing to technologically sophisticated exports such as computers, in middle- and lower-income nations (Gereffi, 1994). At the same time, manufacturing technologies are shifting from the large-scale, mass-production assembly lines of the past toward a more flexible production process involving microelectronic technologies. Even

- **Global Perspective:** "A maquiladora is a labor-intensive assembly operation. In its simplest organizational form, a Mexican maquiladora plant imports inputs from a foreign country—most typically the United States—processes these inputs and ships them back to the country of origin, sometimes for more processing and almost surely for marketing" (William C. Gruben and Sherry L. Kiser, Federal Reserve Bank, Dallas).

- **Research:** Have students do research on these five leading transnational corporations: General Electric, Vodaphone Group, Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and British Petroleum Company (**www.unctad.org**). How do these companies' operations support the new international division of labor theory?
- **Active Learning:** Have students work in small groups to summarize the main points of the new international division

service industries—such as processing insurance claims forms—that were formerly thought to be less mobile have become exportable through electronic transmission and the Internet. The global nature of these activities has been referred to as *global commodity chains,* a complex pattern of international labor and production processes that results in a finished commodity ready for sale in the marketplace.

Some commodity chains are producer-driven, whereas others are buyer-driven. *Producer-driven commodity chains* is the term used to describe industries in which transnational corporations play a central part in controlling the production process. Industries that produce automobiles, computers, and other capital- and technology-intensive products are typically producer-driven. In contrast, *buyer-driven commodity chains* is the term used to refer to industries in which large retailers, brand-name merchandisers, and trading companies set up decentralized production networks in various middle- and low-income countries. This type of chain is most common in labor-intensive, consumer-goods industries such as toys, garments, and footwear (Gereffi, 1994). Athletic footwear companies such as Nike and Reebok are examples of the buyer-driven model. Because these products tend to be labor intensive at the manufacturing stage, the typical factory system is very competitive and globally decentralized. Workers in buyer-driven commodity chains are often exploited by low wages, long hours, and poor working conditions. In fact, most workers cannot afford the products they make. Tini Heyun Alwi, who works on the assembly line of the shoe factory in Indonesia that makes Reebok sneakers, is an example: "I think maybe I could work for a month and still not be able to buy one pair" (qtd. in Goodman, 1996: F1). Because Tini earns only 2,600 Indonesian rupiah ($1.28) per day working a ten-hour shift six days a week, her monthly income would fall short of the retail price of the athletic shoes (Goodman, 1996). Sociologist Gary Gereffi (1994: 225) explains the problem with studying the new global patterns as follows:

> The difficulty may lie in the fact that today we face a situation where (1) the political unit is *national,* (2) industrial production is *regional,* and (3) capital movements are *international.* The rise of Japan and the East Asian [newly industrializing countries]

in the 1960s and 1970s is the flip side of the "deindustrialization" that occurred in the United States and much of Europe. Declining industries in North America have been the growth industries in East Asia.

As other analysts suggest, these changes have been a mixed bag for people residing in these countries. For example, Indonesia has been able to woo foreign business into the country, but workers have experienced poverty despite working full time in factories making such consumer goods as Nike tennis shoes (Gargan, 1996). As employers feel pressure from workers to raise wages, clashes erupt between the workers and managers or owners. Similarly, the governments in these countries fear that rising wages and labor strife will drive away the businesses, sometimes leaving behind workers who have no other hopes for employment and become more impoverished than they previously were. Moreover, in situations where government officials were benefiting from the presence of the companies, they also become losers if the workers rebel against their pay or working conditions.

Although most discussions of the new international division of labor focus on changes occurring in the lives of people residing in industrialized urban areas of developing nations, millions of people continue to live in grinding poverty in rural regions of these countries (see "Sociology Works!").

Global Inequality in the Future

As we have seen, social inequality is vast both within and among the countries of the world. Even in high-income nations where wealth is highly concentrated, many poor people coexist with the affluent. In middle- and low-income countries, there are small pockets of wealth in the midst of poverty and despair.

What are the future prospects for greater equality across and within nations? Not all social scientists agree on the answer to this question. Depending on the theoretical framework they apply in studying global inequality, social analysts may describe either an optimistic or a pessimistic scenario for the future. Moreover, some analysts highlight the human rights issues embedded in global inequality, whereas others focus primarily on an economic framework.

of labor theory. Next, ask each group to discuss the role of transnational corporations in this perspective.
- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students who are interested in delving deeper into the subject write an essay on these questions: What national interests might be served if U.S. foreign policy included more provisions to help reduce poverty in low-income countries? What moral interests might be served?

- **Research:** Ask your students to take a serious look at all four approaches to studying global inequality and then to tackle this question: Which theory about global inequality do you think best explains our world today? Use facts to back up your assertion.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis

sociology works!

Why *Place* Matters in Global Poverty

We're deadly poor. We grow just enough food for ourselves to eat, with no surplus grain. We don't have to pay the grain tax anymore, but our lives aren't much better.
—Zhou Zhiwen, a woman who lives in Yangmiao, China, describing what rural poverty is like in her village (qtd. in French, 2008: YT4)

Zhou Zhiwen lives in an area of China that has largely been untouched by the economic boom in her country. Even with the recent abolition of agricultural taxes for people who are impoverished, local villagers such as Zhou continue to live in abject poverty. As more people have risen out of poverty in China's urban centers in recent decades, poverty in the rural areas, mountainous regions, and deserts remains severe. According to some villagers, the central government is "out of touch with rural realities in places like this," and officials have made little effort to take care of the rural poor (French, 2008). China's poverty is widespread, and the income gap between rural and urban residents has widened over the past three decades (IFAD, 2002). Many people live close to, or below, the minimum standard for poverty: Approximately 350 million people in China live below the international poverty line of $1.25 per day (World Bank, 2007).

For many years, sociologists studying poverty have focused on differences in rural and urban poverty. Throughout the world, they have found that *place* does matter when it comes to finding the deepest pockets of poverty (Rural Policy Research Institute, 2004). Where people live strongly influences how much money they will make, and income inequalities are important indicators of the life chances of entire families. In some developing countries, the rural poor rely primarily on agriculture, fishing, forestry, and sometimes small-scale industries and services for their livelihood (Khan, 2001). When they are unable to derive sufficient economic resources from these endeavors, little else is available for them. Some migrate to urban centers in hopes of finding new opportunities, but many remain behind, living in grinding poverty. When sociologists speak of "place," they are referring to such things as an area's natural environment, which includes its climate, natural resources, and degree of isolation (Rural Policy Research Institute, 2004). Place also involves the economic structure in the area, such as the extent to which adequate amounts of food can be raised to meet people's needs, or whether an individual can earn sufficient money to purchase food.

Can rural poverty be reduced? According to some social policy analysts, broad economic stability, competitive markets, and public investment in *physical* and *social* infrastructure are important prerequisites for a reduction in rural poverty in developing nations (Khan, 2001). From this perspective, a major reduction in rural poverty in China will occur only if people have access to land and credit, education, health care, support services, and food through well-designed public works programs and other transfer mechanisms.

reflect & analyze

Whether changes that reduce poverty will occur in China's future remains to be seen, but the sociological premise that place matters in regard to poverty remains a valid assumption in helping us explain global poverty and inequality. Can you apply this idea to rural and urban areas with which you are familiar in the United States? Why are issues such as this important to each of us even if we do not live in a rural area and have no personal experience with poverty?

In some regions, persistent and growing poverty continues to undermine human development and future possibilities for socioeconomic change. Gross inequality has high financial and quality-of-life costs to people, even among those who are not the poorest of the poor. In the future, continued population growth, urbanization, environmental degradation, and violent conflict threaten even the meager living conditions of those residing in low-income nations. From this approach, the future looks dim not only for people in low-income and middle-income countries but also for those in high-income countries, who will see their quality of life diminish as natural resources are depleted, the environment is polluted, and high rates of immigration and global political unrest threaten the high standard of living that

- **Media Coverage:** The *Los Angeles Times* reports that India is racing to complete a spacecraft designed to orbit the moon in 2007. Its space agency now employs 20,000 people—as many as NASA.
- **Quote, Unquote:** "We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty" (Mother Teresa).

Have students discuss ways in which we might all share in the fight against poverty.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #9 Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-National Content
- **Box Note:** Sociology Works! After reading the "Reflect & Analyze" section, students should conduct some research on different living environments across the country. This is an excellent library assignment.

many people have previously enjoyed. According to some social analysts, transnational corporations and financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will further solidify and control a globalized economy, which will transfer the power to make significant choices to these organizations and away from the people and their governments. Further loss of resources and means of livelihood will affect people and countries around the globe.

As a result of global corporate domination, there could be a leveling out of average income around the world, with wages falling in the high-income countries and wages increasing significantly in low- and middle-income countries. If this pessimistic scenario occurs, there is likely to be greater polarization of the rich and the poor and more potential for ethnic and national conflicts over such issues as worsening environmental degradation and who has the right to natural resources. For example, pulp-and-paper companies in Indonesia, along with palm oil plantation owners, have continued clearing land for crops by burning off vast tracts of jungle, producing high levels of smog and pollution across

seven Southeast Asian nations and creating havoc for millions of people (Mydans, 1997).

On the other hand, a more optimistic scenario is also possible. With modern technology and worldwide economic growth, it might be possible to reduce absolute poverty and to increase people's opportunities. Among the trends cited by the *Human Development Report* (United Nations Development Programme, 2008) that have the potential to bring about more sustainable patterns of development are the socioeconomic progress made in many low- and middle-income countries over the past thirty years as technological, social, and environmental improvements have occurred. For example, technological innovation continues to improve living standards for some people. Fertility rates are declining in some regions (but remain high in others, where there remains grave cause for concern about the availability of adequate natural resources for the future). Finally, health and education may continue to improve in lower-income countries. According to the *Human Development Report* (United Nations Development Programme, 2008), healthy, educated populations are crucial for

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▲ The current trend of using grain-based ethanol to power cars and trucks has proved to be a financial boon to some U.S. farmers but has had another effect as well: The price of grain has increased worldwide, making it even harder for people from developing countries to procure enough food to eat.

you can make a difference

Global Networking to Reduce World Hunger and Poverty

We, the people of the world, will mobilize the forces of transnational civil society behind a widely shared agenda that binds our many social movements in pursuit of just, sustainable, and participatory human societies. In so doing we are forging our own instruments and processes for redefining the nature and meaning of human progress and for transforming those institutions that no longer respond to our needs. We welcome to our cause all people who share our commitment to peaceful and democratic change in the interest of our living planet and the human societies it sustains.
—International NGO Forum, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 12, 1992 (qtd. in Korten, 1996: 333)

If everyone lit just one little candle, what a bright world this would be.
—line from the 1950s theme song for Bishop Fulton J. Sheen's television series *Life Is Worth Living* (Sheen, 1995: 245)

When many of us think about problems such as world poverty, we tend to see ourselves as powerless to bring about change in so vast an issue. However, a recurring message from social activists and religious leaders is that each person can contribute something to the betterment of other people and sometimes the entire world.

An initial way for each of us to be involved is to become more informed about global issues and to learn how we can contribute time and resources to organizations seeking to address social issues such as illiteracy and hunger. We can also find out about meetings and activities of organizations and participate in online discussion forums where we can express our opinions, ask questions, share information, and interact with other people interested in topics such as international relief and development. At first, it may not feel like you are doing much to address global problems; however, information and education are the first steps in promoting greater understanding of social problems and of the world's people, whether they reside in high-, middle-, or low-income countries and regardless of their individual socioeconomic position. Likewise, it is important to help our own nation's children understand that they can make a difference in ending hunger in the United States and other nations.

Would you like to function as a catalyst for change? You can learn how to proceed by gathering information from organizations that seek to reduce problems such as poverty and to provide forums for interacting with other people. Here are a few starting points for your search:

- CARE International is a confederation of 10 national members in North America, Europe, Japan, and Australia. CARE assists the world's poor in their efforts to achieve social and economic well-being. Its work reaches 25 million people in 53 nations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Programs include emergency relief, education, health and population, children's health, reproductive health, water and sanitation, small economic activity development, agriculture, community development, and environment. Contact CARE at 151 Ellis Street, NE, Atlanta, GA 30303-2439. On the Internet: www.care.org

Other organizations fighting world hunger and health problems include the following:

- WhyHunger:
  www.whyhunger.org
- "Kids Can Make a Difference," an innovative program developed by the International Education and Resource Network:
  www.kidscanmakeadifference.org
- World Health Organization:
  www.who.int

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▲ **Willie Colon, a Puerto Rican salsa star and spokesperson for CARE, visited this Bolivian classroom as part of that international relief organization's project to reduce women's poverty.**

- **Media Coverage:** Have students compare the following to the global networking discussed above: "Young Iraqis in Baghdad are surfing the Internet to search for partners to tie the knot as violence and sectarian tensions take their toll on more traditional forms of socializing. Dating has fallen victim to the insecurity that has reduced the capital to a sullen network of rival neighborhoods, leaving little space for men and women to meet other than in cyber chat rooms" (*Sydney Morning Herald,* 8/2008).
- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disk also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.

the future in order to reduce global poverty. The education of women is of primary importance in the future if global inequality is to be reduced. As one analyst stated, "If you educate a boy, you educate a human being. If you educate a girl, you educate generations" (Buvinić, 1997: 49). All aspects of schooling and training are crucial for the future, including agricultural extension services in rural areas to help women farmers in regions such as western Kenya produce more crops to feed their families. As we saw earlier in the chapter, easier access to water can make a crucial difference in people's lives. Mayra Buvinić, of the Inter-American Development Bank, puts global poverty in perspective for people living in high-income countries by pointing out that their problems are our problems. She provides the following example:

> Reina is a former guerilla fighter in El Salvador who is being taught how to bake bread under a post-civil war reconstruction program. But as she says, "the only thing I have is this training and I don't want to be a baker. I have other dreams for my life."
>
> Once upon a time, women like Reina . . . only migrated [to the United States] to follow or find a husband. This is no longer the case. It is likely that Reina, with few opportunities in her *own* country, will sooner or later join the rising number of female migrants who leave families and children behind to seek better paying work in the United States and other industrial countries. Wisely spent foreign aid can give Reina the chance to realize her dreams in her *own* country. (Buvinić, 1997: 38, 52)

From this viewpoint, we can enjoy prosperity only by ensuring that other people have the opportunity to survive and thrive in their own surroundings (see the You Can Make a Difference box). The problems associated with global poverty are therefore of interest to a wide-ranging set of countries and people.

chapter review

● **What is global stratification, and how does it contribute to economic inequality?**

Global stratification refers to the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and prestige on a global basis, which results in people having vastly different lifestyles and life chances both within and among the nations of the world. Today, the income gap between the richest and the poorest 20 percent of the world population continues to widen, and within some nations the poorest one-fifth of the population has an income that is only a slight fraction of the overall average per capita income for that country.

● **How are global poverty and human development related?**

Income disparities are not the only factor that defines poverty and its effect on people. The United Nations' Human Development Index measures the level of development in a country through indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality rate, proportion of underweight children under age five (a measure of nourishment and health), and adult literacy rate for low-income, middle-income, and high-income countries.

● **What is modernization theory?**

Modernization theory is a perspective that links global inequality to different levels of economic development and suggests that low-income economies can move to middle- and high-income economies by achieving self-sustained economic growth.

● **How does dependency theory differ from modernization theory?**

Dependency theory states that global poverty can at least partially be attributed to the fact that the low-income countries have been exploited by the high-income countries. Whereas modernization theory focuses on how societies can reduce inequality through industrialization and economic development, dependency theorists see the greed of the rich countries as a source of increasing impoverishment of the poorer nations and their people.

- **For Discussion:** "This is our moment, this is our time, this is our chance to stand up for what is right. Three thousand Africans, mostly children, die every day of mosquito bites. We can fix that. Nine thousand people dying every day of a preventable, treatable disease like AIDS. We have got the drugs. We can help them" (Bono). Ask students this: What are the social and structural obstacles to solving these problems?

- **CourseMate:** The Sociology CourseMate for this text gives your students access to an interactive ebook, flash cards, video, and other study and learning tools, including quizzes that provide immediate feedback. It's easiest for students to log in at **www.cengagebrain.com.**

● **What is world systems theory, and how does it view the global economy?**

According to world systems theory, the capitalist world economy is a global system divided into a hierarchy of three major types of nations: Core nations are dominant capitalist centers characterized by high levels of industrialization and urbanization, semiperipheral nations are more developed than peripheral nations but less developed than core nations, and peripheral nations are those countries that are dependent on core nations for capital, have little or no industrialization (other than what may be brought in by core nations), and have uneven patterns of urbanization.

● **What is the new international division of labor theory?**

The new international division of labor theory is based on the assumption that commodity production is split into fragments that can be assigned to whichever part of the world can provide the most profitable combination of capital and labor. This division of labor has changed the pattern of geographic specialization between countries, whereby high-income countries have become dependent on low-income countries for labor. The low-income countries provide transnational corporations with a situation in which they can pay lower wages and taxes, and face fewer regulations regarding workplace conditions and environmental protection.

key terms

core nations 263	**global stratification** 245	**peripheral nations** 263
dependency theory 262	**modernization theory** 259	**semiperipheral nations** 263

questions for critical thinking

1. You have decided to study global wealth and poverty. How would you approach your study? What research methods would provide the best data for analysis? What might you find if you compared your research data with popular presentations—such as films and advertising—of everyday life in low- and middle-income countries?

2. How would you compare the lives of poor people living in the low-income nations of the world with those in central cities and rural areas of the United States? In what ways are their lives similar? In what ways are they different?

3. Should U.S. foreign policy include provisions for reducing poverty in other nations of the world? Should U.S. domestic policy include provisions for reducing poverty in the United States? How are these issues similar? How are they different?

4. Using the theories discussed in this chapter, devise a plan to alleviate global poverty. Assume that you have the necessary wealth, political power, and other resources necessary to reduce the problem. Share your plan with others in your class, and create a consolidated plan that represents the best ideas and suggestions presented.

turning to video

Watch the CBS video *Haiti Rebuilding* (running time 2:56), available through **CengageBrain.com**. A month after the 2010 earthquake, more than a million people in the country still needed basic help. This video covers the rebuilding efforts in one community and the difficulties that still lay ahead at the time—and may not yet have been overcome. As you watch the video, think about the reasons a major natural disaster in a less wealthy nation may be so much more devastating than in a wealthier nation. After you watch the video, consider this question: Is international aid in a time of crisis the best a country such as Haiti can hope for from the global community? Why or why not? What other options exist?

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- If you are a returning user, log in at **CengageBrain.com** and go to your **My Home** page.
- If you are a first-time user, the site will walk you through the registration process to redeem your access code.
- Alternatively, you may search by this book's title to locate its complimentary resources.

9 Race and Ethnicity

People could not even register to vote when we came back here in 1963 for the March on Washington. And I was here when Dr. King stood and said, "I have a dream today," a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. And to come back [to Washington for the inauguration of President Barack Obama] 45 years later, it is almost too much. It is almost too much.

—Representative John Lewis, Democrat of Georgia, recalling the struggles that African Americans have had in gaining a greater semblance of equality in the United States (qtd. in *New York Times,* 2009: P6)

The reality is just as it would not have happened without the sacrifices and struggles of the past, it also would not have happened without the idealism and the audacity of the present generation. The reality is that Obama was embraced by young people of all colors, before he was embraced by their parents and their elders.

—Ben Jealous, president of the NAACP, describing the election of Mr. Obama as the nation's first African American president (qtd. in *New York Times*, 2009: P6)

Stephen Johns, known as "Big John," was opening the door for a man he thought was just an elderly visitor to the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington when he was shot dead. . . . Mr. Johns was a security guard. The bullet that killed him was a reminder of the continuing menace of bigotry and violence that pervades this country—and that we insist on underestimating. The authorities

© AP Photo/U.S. Air Force, Master Sgt. Gerold Gamble

▲ **On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama was sworn in as the President of the United States, becoming the first person of color ever to hold that office. However, does his victory indicate that racism and discrimination have disappeared from U.S. society?**

have identified an 88-year-old, hard-core white supremacist . . . as the killer. Our knee-jerk tendency is to comfort ourselves by declaring that this guy is so freakish, so far out of the American mainstream, that he is not representative of much of anything. Sane people are not violently obsessed with blacks and Jews. The murder was a tragic aberration. After all, this is a country that only recently elected an African-American president. So, let's mop up the blood from the museum floor, and try to keep matters in perspective.

 . . . But we should not pretend that things are better than they are. Racism is still a powerful force in the U.S. . . . [A]nd murderous violence is as much of a problem as ever. . . . We need to be vigilant. When I first heard about the murder of Mr. Johns and the violent desecration of the Holocaust Museum, I thought of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and how much we miss his moral leadership. He fought not just for civil rights, but against violence and injustice of all kinds, and he warned us of the debilitating effects of unnecessary warfare. "He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it," said Dr. King. The bullet that silenced him seemed to come out of nowhere, suddenly, aberrationally, like the bullet that destroyed Stephen Johns.

—Bob Herbert, a *New York Times* columnist, discussing a recent murder at the Holocaust Museum and explaining why he believes that the problem of racism is far from over in the United States despite the recent election of this country's first African American president (Herbert, 2009: A17)

Chapter Focus Question

How have racial and ethnic relations changed in the United States over the past fifty years?

What is the best reflection of contemporary racial and ethnic relations in the United States? Have things really changed since the 1950s and 1960s, when racism and overt discrimination were a way of life in many communities in this nation? The 2009 inauguration of Barack Obama as the first African American U.S. president is often referred to as a milestone in history, and newspaper articles frequently highlight the "rising sense of racial optimism" (Saulny, 2009: A1) that exists among people across racial/ethnic and class lines because of Mr. Obama's election. However, violent acts such as the murder at the Holocaust Museum continue to be perpetrated by people who apparently have racially biased motives, and many individuals around the nation indicate that they harbor no illusions that problems associated with race are over in this nation. Some people define recent changes as progress; as expressed by one individual, "I'm not saying that the playing field is even, but having elected a black president has done a lot [to improve race relations]" (qtd. in Saulny, 2009: A26). In this chapter, we examine prejudice, discrimination, sociological perspectives on race and ethnic relations, and commonalities and differences in the experiences of racial and ethnic groups in the United States. In the process, sports is used as an example of the effects of race and ethnicity on people's lives because this area of social life shows us how, for more than a century, people who have been singled out for negative treatment on the basis of their perceived race or ethnicity have sought to overcome prejudice and discrimination through their determination in endeavors that can be judged based on objective standards ("What's the final score?") rather than subjective standards ("Do I like this person based on characteristics such as race or ethnicity?"). Before reading on, test your knowledge about race, ethnicity, and sports by taking the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz.

Race and Ethnicity

What is race? Some people think it refers to skin color (the Caucasian "race"); others use it to refer to a religion (the Jewish "race"), nationality (the British "race"), or the entire human species (the human "race") (Marger, 2009). Popular usages of race have been based on the assumption that a race is a grouping or classification based on *genetic* variations in physical appearance, particularly skin color. However, social scientists and biologists dispute the idea that biological race is a meaningful concept. In fact, the idea of race has little meaning in a biological sense because of the enormous amount of interbreeding that has taken place within the human population. For these reasons, sociologists sometimes place "race" in quotation marks to show that categorizing individuals and population groups on biological characteristics is neither accurate nor based on valid distinctions between the genetic makeup of differently identified "races." Today, sociologists emphasize that race is a *socially constructed reality,* not a biological one. From this approach, the social significance that people accord to race is more significant than any biological differences that might exist among people who are placed in arbitrary categories.

A *race* **is a category of people who have been singled out as inferior or superior, often on the basis of real or alleged physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, eye shape, or other subjectively selected attributes** (Feagin and Feagin, 2008). Categories of people frequently thought of as racial groups include Native Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans.

As compared with race, *ethnicity* defines individuals who are believed to share common characteristics that differentiate them from the other collectivities in a society. An *ethnic group* **is a collection of people distinguished, by others or by themselves, primarily on the basis of cultural or nationality characteristics** (Feagin and Feagin, 2008). Examples of ethnic groups include Jewish Americans, Irish Americans, and Italian Americans. Ethnic groups share five main characteristics: (1) *unique cultural traits,* such as language, clothing, holidays, or religious practices; (2) *a sense of community;* (3) *a feeling of ethnocentrism;* (4) *ascribed membership from birth;* and (5) *territoriality,* or the tendency to occupy a distinct geographic area (such as Little Italy or Little Havana) by choice and/ or for self-protection. Although some people do not identify with any ethnic group, others participate in social interaction with individuals in their ethnic group and feel a sense of common identity based on cultural characteristics such as language,

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- **For Discussion:** Ask students what the following statement suggests about the history of racial conflict in the United States: "Until justice is blind to color, until education is unaware of race, until opportunity is unconcerned with the color of men's skins, emancipation will be a proclamation but not a fact" (President Lyndon B. Johnson).

- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disk provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint® slides, videos, PowerPoint® and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Race, Ethnicity, and Sports?

True	False	
T	F	1. Because sports are competitive and fans, coaches, and players want to win, the color of the players has not been a factor, only their performance.
T	F	2. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, boxing provided social mobility for some Irish, Jewish, and Italian immigrants.
T	F	3. African Americans who competed in boxing matches in the late 1800s often had to agree to lose before they could obtain a match.
T	F	4. Racially linked genetic traits explain many of the differences among athletes.
T	F	5. All racial and ethnic groups have viewed sports as a means to become a part of the mainstream.
T	F	6. Until recently, the positions of quarterback and kicker in the National Football League have been held almost exclusively by white players.
T	F	7. In recent years, players of color have moved into coaching, management, and ownership positions in professional sports.
T	F	8. The odds are good that many outstanding high school and college athletes will make the pros if they do not get injured.

Answers on page 276.

religion, or politics. However, ethnic groups are not only influenced by their own past history but also by patterns of ethnic domination and subordination in societies.

The Social Significance of Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity take on great social significance because how people act in regard to these terms drastically affects other people's lives, including what opportunities they have, how they are treated, and even how long they live. According to the sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994: 158), race "permeates every institution, every relationship, and every individual" in the United States:

> As we . . . compare real estate prices in different neighborhoods, select a radio channel to enjoy while we drive to work, size up a potential client, customer, neighbor, or teacher, stand in line at the unemployment office, or carry out a thousand other normal tasks, we are compelled to think racially, to use the racial categories and meaning systems into which we have been socialized. (Omi and Winant, 1994: 158)

Historically, stratification based on race and ethnicity has pervaded all aspects of political, economic, and social life. Consider sports as an example. Throughout the early history of the game of baseball, many African Americans had outstanding skills as players but were categorically excluded from Major League teams because of their skin color. Even after Jackie Robinson broke the "color line" to become the first African American in the Major Leagues in 1947, his experience was marred by racial slurs, hate letters, death threats against his infant son, and assaults on

> **race** a category of people who have been singled out as inferior or superior, often on the basis of physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape.
>
> **ethnic group** a collection of people distinguished, by others or by themselves, primarily on the basis of cultural or nationality characteristics.

• **Popular Culture:** "I think it's a trap every black artist is faced with—anytime you do a role or write a novel where some black people aren't 100 percent angelic, people want to scream that you're holding the race back. I try not to get into that debate" (Spike Lee). Ask students to consider whether filmmakers have a responsibility to advance positive portrayals of certain groups.

• **Active Learning:** Ask students to work in pairs to check their answers to the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz. Ask the class which questions most got wrong. Discuss these misconceptions with your class, and use them to plan future lectures.

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Race, Ethnicity, and Sports

1. **False.** Discrimination has been pervasive throughout the history of sports in the United States. For example, African American athletes, regardless of their abilities, were excluded from white teams for many years.

2. **True.** Irish Americans were the first to dominate boxing, followed by Jewish Americans and then Italian Americans. Boxing, like other sports, was a source of social mobility for some immigrants.

3. **True.** Promoters, who often set up boxing matches that pitted fighters by race, assumed that white fans were more likely to buy tickets if the white fighters frequently won.

4. **False.** Although some scholars and journalists have used biological or genetic factors to explain the achievements of athletes, sociologists view these explanations as being based on the inherently racist assumption that people have "natural" abilities (or disabilities) because of their race or ethnicity.

5. **False.** Some racial and ethnic groups—including Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans—have not viewed sports as a means of social mobility.

6. **True.** As late as the 1990s, whites accounted for about 90 percent of the quarterbacks and kickers on NFL teams. However, this changed early in the twenty-first century, and today there are some African Americans playing virtually every position on all professional football teams.

7. **False.** Although more African American players are employed by these teams (especially in basketball), their numbers have not increased significantly as owners or in coaching and management positions.

8. **False.** The odds of becoming a professional athlete are very low. The percentage of high school football players who make it to the pros is estimated at about .09 percent; for men's basketball, about .03 percent; and for baseball, about .5 percent. The percentages of college athletes who make it to the pros are a little higher: 5.8 percent for football, 2.9 percent for men's basketball, and 5.6 percent for baseball.

Sources: Based on Coakley, 2004; Messner, Duncan, and Jensen, 1993; Nelson, 1994; and www.coasports.org, 2009.

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his wife (Ashe, 1988; Peterson, 1992/1970). With some professional athletes from diverse racial–ethnic categories having multimillion-dollar contracts and lucrative endorsement deals, it is easy to assume that racism in sports—as well as in the larger society—is a thing of the past. However, this *commercialization* of sports does not mean that racial prejudice and discrimination no longer exist (Coakley, 2004).

Racial Classifications and the Meaning of Race

If we examine racial classifications throughout history, we find that in ancient Greece and Rome a person's race was the group to which she or he belonged, associated with an ancestral place and culture. From the Middle Ages until about the eighteenth century, a person's race was based on family and ancestral ties, in the sense of a *line,* or ties to a national group. During the eighteenth century, physical differences such as the darker skin hues of Africans became associated with race, but racial divisions were typically based on differences in religion and cultural tradition rather than on human biology. With the intense (though misguided) efforts that surrounded the attempt to justify black slavery and white dominance in all areas of life during the second half of the nineteenth century, *races* came to be defined as distinct biological categories of people who were not all members of the same family but who shared inherited physical and cultural traits that were alleged to be different from those traits shared by people in other races. Hierarchies of races were established, placing the "white race" at the top, the "black race" at the bottom, and others in between.

- **Extra Examples:** W. I. Thomas coined the term "definition of the situation"—what people believe to be real is real in its consequences. Regardless of the facts about race and ethnicity that students learn from their text, sociology teaches us that what people believe to be real can be as important as the facts. Help your students to understand the difference between social facts and beliefs and the dynamic relationship between the two.

- **Historical Perspective:** "The existence of any pure race with special endowment is a myth, as is the belief that there are races all of whose members are foredoomed to eternal inferiority" (Franz Boas). Have students further explore and discuss Boas's perspective on race.

However, racial classifications in the United States have changed over the past century. If we look at U.S. Census Bureau classifications, for example, we can see how the meaning of race continues to change. First, race is defined by perceived skin color: white or nonwhite. Whereas one category exists for "whites" (who vary considerably in actual skin color and physical appearance), all of the remaining categories are considered "nonwhite."

Second, racial purity is assumed to exist. Prior to the 2000 census, for example, the true diversity of the U.S. population was not revealed in census data because multiracial individuals were forced to either select a single race as being their "race" or to select the vague category of "other." Census 2000 made it possible—for the first time—for individuals to classify themselves as being of more than one race (see "Census Profiles: Percentage Distribution of Persons Reporting Two or More Races"). In 2007 updates of the 2000 census, more than 1 in 50 people self-identified as "multiracial." The pattern of race reporting for foreign-born residents differed from that of native-born Americans: The foreign born most often listed their nation of origin when they were asked to identify their race or ethnicity (Roberts, 2010a).

Third, categories of official racial classifications may (over time) create a sense of group membership or "consciousness of kind" for people within a somewhat arbitrary classification. When people of European descent were classified as "white," some began to see themselves as different from "nonwhite." Consequently, Jewish, Italian, and Irish immigrants may have felt more a part of the Northern European white mainstream in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Whether Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, and Filipino Americans come to think of themselves collectively as "Asian Americans" because of official classifications remains to be seen.

In the future, increasing numbers of children in the United States will be likely to have a mixed racial or ethnic heritage such as this student describes:

> I am part French, part Cherokee Indian, part Filipino, and part black. Our family taught us to be aware of all these groups, and just to be ourselves. But I have never known what I am. People have asked if I am a Gypsy, or a Portuguese, or a Mexican,

census profiles

Percentage Distribution of Persons Reporting Two or More Races

Of the more than 6.8 million people (2.4 percent of the U.S. population) who reported being of two or more races in Census 2000, slightly over 400,000 of them reported being of three or more races. However, the largest combinations are those shown here:

- "White **and** American Indian and Alaska Native" — 15.9%
- "White **and** Asian" — 12.7%
- "White **and** Black or African American" — 11.5%
- "Black or African American **and** American Indian and Alaska Native" — 2.7%
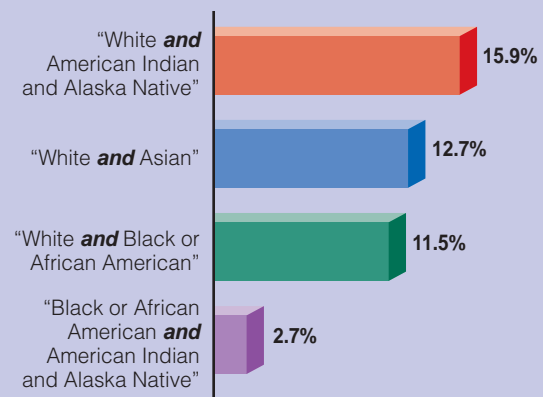
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007.

or lots of other things. It seems to make people curious, uneasy, and sometimes belligerent. Students I don't even know stop me on campus and ask, "What are you anyway?" (qtd. in Davis, 1991: 133)

The way people are classified remains important because such classifications affect their access to employment, housing, social services, federal aid, and many other "publicly or privately valued goods" (Omi and Winant, 1994: 3).

Dominant and Subordinate Groups

The terms *majority group* and *minority group* are widely used, but their meanings are less clear as the composition of the U.S. population continues to change. Accordingly, many sociologists prefer the terms *dominant* and *subordinate* to identify power relationships that are based on perceived racial,

ethnic, or other attributes and identities. To sociologists, a *dominant group* is one that is advantaged and has superior resources and rights in a society (Feagin and Feagin, 2008). In the United States, whites with Northern European ancestry (often referred to as Euro-Americans, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, or WASPs) have been considered to be the dominant group for many years. A *subordinate group* is one whose members, because of physical or cultural characteristics, are disadvantaged and subjected to unequal treatment by the dominant group and who regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination. Historically, African Americans and other persons of color have been considered to be subordinate-group members, particularly when they are from lower-income categories.

It is important to note that, in the sociological sense, the word *group* as used in these two terms is misleading because people who merely share ascribed racial or ethnic characteristics do not constitute a group. However, the terms *dominant group* and *subordinate group* do give us a way to describe relationships of advantage/disadvantage and power/exploitation that exist in contemporary nations.

▼ Miami's Little Havana is an ethnic enclave where people participate in social interaction with other individuals in their ethnic group and feel a sense of shared identity. Ethnic enclaves provide economic and psychological support for recent immigrants as well as for those who were born in the United States.

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Prejudice

Although there are various meanings of the word *prejudice,* sociologists define *prejudice* as a negative attitude based on faulty generalizations about members of specific racial, ethnic, or other groups. The term *prejudice* is from the Latin words *prae* ("before") and *judicium* ("judgment"), which means that people may be biased either for or against members of other groups even before they have had any contact with them. Although prejudice can be either *positive* (bias in favor of a group—often our own) or *negative* (bias against a group—one we deem less worthy than our own), it most often refers to the negative attitudes that people may have about members of other racial or ethnic groups.

Stereotypes

Prejudice is rooted in ethnocentrism and stereotypes. When used in the context of racial and ethnic relations, *ethnocentrism* refers to the tendency to regard one's own culture and group as the standard—and thus superior—whereas all other groups are seen as inferior. Ethnocentrism is maintained and perpetuated by *stereotypes—overgeneralizations about the appearance, behavior, or other characteristics of members of particular categories.* Although stereotypes can be either positive or negative, examples of negative stereotyping abound in sports. Think about the Native American names, images, and mascots used by sports teams such as the Atlanta Braves, Cleveland Indians, and Washington Redskins. Members of Native American groups have been actively working to eliminate the use of stereotypic mascots (with feathers, buckskins, beads, spears, and "warpaint"), "Indian chants," and gestures (such as the "tomahawk chop"), which they claim trivialize and exploit Native American culture. College and university sports teams with Native American names and logos also remain the subject of controversy in the twenty-first century. According to sociologist Jay Coakley (2004), the use of stereotypes and words such as *redskin* symbolizes a lack of understanding of the culture and heritage of native peoples and is offensive to many Native Americans. Although some people see these names and activities as "innocent fun," others view them as a form of racism.

- **Media Coverage:** New York City now has rules and regulations, prompted partly by attacks on Sikh students, to combat bullying in schools based on bias and prejudices. As Sikh Coalition executive director Amardeep Singh said, "We believe today's announcement to be groundbreaking movement in the right direction. The number of Sikh children being harassed in New York schools is an epidemic." He also pointed out that Sikhs took to the streets in June to urge the education department to take immediate steps to end bigotry against Sikh children (NDTV.com, 9/2008).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** Have the class discuss the difference between prejudice and stereotype. How are the two concepts related?

Racism

What is racism? *Racism* **is a set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices that is used to justify the superior treatment of one racial or ethnic group and the inferior treatment of another racial or ethnic group.** The world has seen a long history of racism: It can be traced from the earliest civilizations. At various times throughout U.S. history, various categories of people, including the Irish Americans, Italian Americans, Jewish Americans, African Americans, and Latinos/as, have been the objects of racist ideology.

Racism may be overt or subtle. Overt racism is more blatant and may take the form of public statements about the "inferiority" of members of a racial or ethnic group. In sports, for example, calling a player of color a derogatory name, participating in racist chanting during a sporting event, and writing racist graffiti in a team's locker room are all forms of overt racism. These racist actions are blatant, but subtle forms of racism are often hidden from sight and more difficult to prove. Examples of subtle racism in sports include those descriptions of African American athletes which suggest that they have "natural" abilities and are better suited for team positions requiring speed and agility. By contrast, whites are described as having the intelligence, dependability, and leadership and decision-making skills needed in positions requiring higher levels of responsibility and control.

Racism tends to intensify in times of economic uncertainty and high rates of immigration. Recently, relatively high rates of immigration in nations such as the United States, Canada, England, France, and Germany have been accompanied by an upsurge in racism and racial conflict (see the Sociology in Global Perspective box). Sometimes, intergroup racism and conflicts further exacerbate strained relationships between dominant-group members and subordinate racial and ethnic group members. For example, when animosities have run very high among African American and Salvadoran groups in Long Island, New York, some white Americans have pointed to those hostilities as evidence that both groups are inferior and not deserving of assistance from the U.S. government or from charitable organizations such as the Catholic church (Mahler, 1995).

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▲ Contemporary prejudice and discrimination cannot be understood without taking into account the historical background. School integration in the 1950s was accomplished despite white resistance. Today, integration in education, housing, and many other areas of social life remains a pressing social issue.

dominant group a group that is advantaged and has superior resources and rights in a society.

subordinate group a group whose members, because of physical or cultural characteristics, are disadvantaged and subjected to unequal treatment by the dominant group and who regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.

prejudice a negative attitude based on faulty generalizations about members of selected racial and ethnic groups.

stereotypes overgeneralizations about the appearance, behavior, or other characteristics of members of particular categories.

racism a set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices that is used to justify the superior treatment of one racial or ethnic group and the inferior treatment of another racial or ethnic group.

- **Media Coverage:** "A Mississippi judge sentenced former Ku Klux Klansman Edgar Ray Killen to 60 years in prison for the manslaughter of three civil rights workers in 1964. Killen, an 80-year-old part-time preacher, was convicted on three counts of manslaughter Tuesday, 41 years to the day a Klan mob ambushed and killed the civil rights workers—James Chaney, 21; Andrew Goodman, 20; and Michael Schwerner, 24" (CNN, 6/2005). Have students research and discuss the role of racism in this famous case.

sociology in global perspective

Racism and Antiracism in European Football

I just wanted to make it public. People have got to be aware that certain things in sport are not acceptable. . . . I just think there are certain boundaries that shouldn't be crossed. Race is not a topic to make fun of. From what I gathered, [the offending player on the other team] was just trying to provoke me. There's other means of provoking a player without crossing that threshold.

> —Oguchi Onyewu, a professional soccer player in Europe who traces his origins to South Africa, has been subjected to monkey noises and racial remarks by fans in the past but recently has also experienced such harsh actions by another player (qtd. in Longman, 2009: Y1).

You have players of African origin who are regularly pushed by opponents with words to provoke or unsettle them. Most don't have the professional status to come in the open and say, "I've had enough of that." Oguchi is a big guy, mentally and physically. He's well established. With [a lawsuit demanding "moral compensation"—in other words, an apology], he is saying, "If I don't do it, who is going to do it?"

> —Jean-Louis Dupont, an attorney, is representing Onyewu in court to call attention to racism in sports and to demand an apology from the offending player (qtd. in Longman, 2009: Y8).

For a number of years, the problem of racism has been a real issue for the European football family and for the image of football in general. Although some have declared that the problem has become much less intense, situations such as the one discussed here continue to occur at a surprising rate. According to a spokesperson for UEFA (Union of European Football Association), "Racism is a sad reflection of society in general, but, because of the high-profile nature of football on our continent, we have a particular responsibility to take steps to stamp it out and prevent it occurring in the future" (uefa.com, 2002).

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▲ Sporting events, such as soccer in Europe and football in the United States, are sometimes tainted by the actions of some fans who demonstrate racist behavior by their comments about or actions toward players, officials, or other fans. What can be done to reduce such harmful behavior?

Theories of Prejudice

Are some people more prejudiced than others? To answer this question, some theories focus on how individuals may transfer their internal psychological problem onto an external object or person. Others look at factors such as social learning and personality types.

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▶ According to the frustration–aggression hypothesis, members of white supremacy groups such as the Ku Klux Klan often use members of subordinate racial and ethnic groups as scapegoats for societal problems over which they have no control.

• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

Soccer is Europe's equivalent of football in the United States, and European fans are at least equally as passionate about sports as are fans in the United States. However, racism is an issue in European soccer just as it is an issue in U.S. sports. UEFA, which is European soccer's ruling body, receives numerous reports of racist behavior at soccer matches throughout Europe, and officials have decided that UEFA must work to reduce racism. Accusations of racist behavior against players of other nationalities or ethnic groups have been lodged against sports fans and some team members at various athletic events throughout Europe. At some soccer matches, fans shout racist comments during the game; throw bottles, cans, and other missiles at players; and pass out derogatory literature about other ethnic groups or nationalities outside the stadium.

Acknowledging that racism is a problem that "is created and stimulated outside of [soccer], but is often given expression and public focus through the game," UEFA officials recently issued a call for unity and developed a plan to reduce racist behavior at athletic competitions (sportsnetwork.com, 2003). According to the call for unity issued by UEFA, "Racism is a problem for all of us, which must be faced. We hope that all parts of European football can come together to unite against racism and do all we can to eradicate it from our game both on and off the field" (uefa.com, 2002). Among the things that the plan calls for are these actions on the part of soccer clubs:

- Soccer clubs should issue a statement in printed programs and on the grounds where the competition takes place that the club will not tolerate racism and should set forth specific actions that the club will take against people who engage in racist chanting.

- Regular public address announcements should be made condemning racist chanting at matches.
- To become a season-ticket holder, people should agree not to take part in any racist abuse.
- All racist graffiti should be removed quickly from the grounds.
- Soccer clubs should work with other organizations, including schools, youth clubs, and local businesses, to raise public awareness of the importance of eliminating racial abuse and discrimination. (adapted from uefa.com, 2002)

Will these steps help to reduce racism in European sporting events? Analysts believe that these actions are at least a step in the right direction. If UEFA enforces the rules that it has established, fans and players will be more aware of the negative sanctions that might occur if they do not "clean up their act." UEFA officials and others have acknowledged that a problem does exist and that the problem is not limited to a small handful of fans and players. But, in the final analysis, as UEFA officials stated, "Of course no one organization can solve this problem. Everyone involved, including the clubs, fans, players, police and those responsible for stewarding, has a responsibility here" (uefa.com, 2002).

reflect & analyze

Have you ever been at a sporting event and witnessed truly obnoxious verbal behavior by other spectators? How did you react? Also, remember that some people believe that such behavior is constitutionally protected—a matter of "free speech." Do you agree? Why or why not?

The *frustration–aggression hypothesis* states that people who are frustrated in their efforts to achieve a highly desired goal will respond with a pattern of aggression toward others (Dollard et al., 1939). The object of their aggression becomes the **scapegoat—a person or group that is incapable of offering resistance to the hostility or aggression of others** (Marger, 2009). Scapegoats are often used as substitutes for the actual source of the frustration. For example, members of subordinate racial and ethnic groups are often blamed for societal problems (such as unemployment or an economic recession) over which they have no control.

According to some symbolic interactionists, prejudice results from social learning; in other words, it is learned from observing and imitating significant others, such as parents and peers. Initially, children do not have a frame of reference from which to question the prejudices of their relatives and friends. When they are rewarded with smiles or laughs for telling derogatory jokes or making

scapegoat a person or group that is incapable of offering resistance to the hostility or aggression of others.

negative comments about outgroup members, children's prejudiced attitudes may be reinforced.

Psychologist Theodor W. Adorno and his colleagues (1950) concluded that highly prejudiced individuals tend to have an *authoritarian personality*, **which is characterized by excessive conformity, submissiveness to authority, intolerance, insecurity, a high level of superstition, and rigid, stereotypic thinking** (Adorno et al., 1950). This type of personality is most likely to develop in a family environment in which dominating parents who are anxious about status use physical discipline but show very little love in raising their children (Adorno et al., 1950). Other scholars have linked prejudiced attitudes to traits such as submissiveness to authority, extreme anger toward outgroups, and conservative religious and political beliefs (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988; Weigel and Howes, 1985).

Discrimination

Whereas prejudice is an attitude, *discrimination* **involves actions or practices of dominant-group members (or their representatives) that have a harmful impact on members of a subordinate group.** Prejudiced attitudes do not always lead to discriminatory behavior. As shown in ▶ Figure 9.1, the sociologist Robert Merton (1949) identified four combinations of attitudes and responses. Unprejudiced nondiscriminators are not personally prejudiced and do not discriminate against others. For example, two players on a professional sports team may be best friends although they are of different races. Unprejudiced discriminators may have no personal prejudice but still engage in discriminatory behavior because of peer-group pressure or economic, political, or social interests. For example, in some sports a coach might feel no prejudice toward African American players but believe that white fans will accept only a certain percentage of people of color on the team. Prejudiced nondiscriminators hold personal prejudices but do not discriminate due to peer pressure, legal demands, or a desire for profits. For example, a coach with prejudiced beliefs may hire an African American player to enhance the team's ability to win (Coakley, 2004). Finally, prejudiced discriminators hold personal prejudices and actively discriminate against others. For example, a baseball umpire who is personally prejudiced

against African Americans may intentionally call a play incorrectly based on that prejudice.

Discriminatory actions vary in severity from the use of derogatory labels to violence against individuals and groups. The ultimate form of discrimination occurs when people are considered to be unworthy to live because of their race or ethnicity. *Genocide* **is the deliberate, systematic killing of an entire people or nation.** Examples of genocide include the killing of thousands of Native Americans by white settlers in North America and the extermination of six million European Jews by Nazi Germany. More recently, the term *ethnic cleansing* has been used to define a policy of "cleansing" geographic areas by forcing persons of other races or religions to flee—or die.

Discrimination also varies in how it is carried out. Individuals may act on their own, or they may operate within the context of large-scale organizations and institutions, such as schools, churches, corporations, and governmental agencies. How does individual discrimination differ from institutional discrimination? *Individual discrimination* **consists of one-on-one acts by members of the dominant group that harm members of the subordinate group or their property.** For example,

	Prejudiced attitude?	Discriminatory behavior?
Unprejudiced nondiscriminator	No	No
Unprejudiced discriminator	No	Yes
Prejudiced nondiscriminator	Yes	No
Prejudiced discriminator	Yes	Yes

▲ **FIGURE 9.1 MERTON'S TYPOLOGY OF PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION**
Merton's typology shows that some people may be prejudiced but not discriminate against others. Do you think that it is possible for a person to discriminate against some people without holding a prejudiced attitude toward them? Why or why not?

- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss how individual discrimination and institutional discrimination differ. What makes institutional discrimination more difficult to combat?
- **Media Coverage:** "White and black Americans view Hurricane Katrina's aftermath in starkly different ways, with more blacks viewing race as a factor in problems with the federal response,

according to a CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll. The poll found that six in 10 blacks interviewed said the federal government was slow in rescuing those stranded in New Orleans after Katrina because many of the people in the Louisiana city were black. But only about one in eight white respondents shared that view" (CNN, 9/2005).

a person may decide not to rent an apartment to someone of a different race. By contrast, **_institutional discrimination_ consists of the day-to-day practices of organizations and institutions that have a harmful impact on members of subordinate groups.** For example, a bank might consistently deny loans to people of a certain race. Institutional discrimination is carried out by the individuals who implement the policies and procedures of organizations.

Sociologist Joe R. Feagin has identified four major types of discrimination:

1. _Isolate discrimination_ is harmful action intentionally taken by a dominant-group member against a member of a subordinate group. This type of discrimination occurs without the support of other members of the dominant group in the immediate social or community context. For example, a prejudiced judge may give harsher sentences to all African American defendants but may not be supported by the judicial system in that action.

2. _Small-group discrimination_ is harmful action intentionally taken by a limited number of dominant-group members against members of subordinate groups. This type of discrimination is not supported by existing norms or other dominant-group members in the immediate social or community context. For example, a small group of white students may deface a professor's office with racist epithets without the support of other students or faculty members.

3. _Direct institutionalized discrimination_ is organizationally prescribed or community-prescribed action that intentionally has a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate groups. These actions are routinely carried out by a number of dominant-group members based on the norms of the immediate organization or community (Feagin and Feagin, 2008). Intentional exclusion of people of color from public accommodations is an example of this type of discrimination.

4. _Indirect institutionalized discrimination_ refers to practices that have a harmful effect on subordinate-group members even though the organizationally or community-prescribed norms or regulations guiding these actions were initially established with no intent to harm. For example,

special education classes were originally intended to provide extra educational opportunities for children with various types of disabilities. However, critics claim that these programs have amounted to racial segregation in many school districts.

Various types of racial and ethnic discrimination call for divergent remedies if we are to reduce discriminatory actions and practices in contemporary social life. Since the 1950s and 1960s, many U.S. sociologists have analyzed the complex relationship between prejudice and discrimination. Some have reached the conclusion that prejudice is difficult, if not seemingly impossible, to eradicate because of the deeply held racist beliefs and attitudes that are often passed on from person to person and from one generation to the next. However, the persistence of prejudicial attitudes and beliefs does not mean that racial and ethnic discrimination should be allowed to flourish until such a time as prejudice is effectively eliminated. From this approach, discrimination must be tackled aggressively through demands for change and through policies that specifically target patterns of discrimination (see "Sociology Works!").

Sociological Perspectives on Race and Ethnic Relations

Symbolic interactionist, functionalist, and conflict analysts examine race and ethnic relations in different ways. Functionalists focus on the macrolevel

> **authoritarian personality** a personality type characterized by excessive conformity, submissiveness to authority, intolerance, insecurity, a high level of superstition, and rigid, stereotypic thinking.
>
> **discrimination** actions or practices of dominant-group members (or their representatives) that have a harmful effect on members of a subordinate group.
>
> **genocide** the deliberate, systematic killing of an entire people or nation.
>
> **individual discrimination** behavior consisting of one-on-one acts by members of the dominant group that harm members of the subordinate group or their property.
>
> **institutional discrimination** the day-to-day practices of organizations and institutions that have a harmful impact on members of subordinate groups.

- **Figure Note:** Use Merton's typology to help students develop a deeper understanding of prejudice and discrimination. Put students in small groups, and ask them to create examples for each category. Then ask them to tackle the figure caption question.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #9: Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-National Content

sociology works!

Attacking Discrimination to Reduce Prejudice?

Question: Do you think it is possible to reduce racial and ethnic prejudice in the United States by attacking discrimination at the societal level?

Answer: Well, I think since it's individuals who hate each other and do mean stuff, they should work it out for themselves. We don't need the government telling us what to do or how to behave. Like, my dad runs a company, and he says that the government should "butt out" of our business.
—"Brian," an introductory sociology student, stating why he believes that the government has "no business" trying to reduce discrimination (author's notes)

Brian's comment is typical of how many people feel about court rulings and government initiatives over the past sixty years that have sought to reduce the corrosive effects of racial and ethnic discrimination in American life. Based on the widely held axiom that "prejudice causes discrimination," many people argue that discrimination can be alleviated only through changing the attitudes of individuals. From this perspective, discrimination will go away over time if people are encouraged to shed their negative attitudes about members of other racial or ethnic groups. Discarding negative stereotypes about other groups and bringing to light the truth about popular myths regarding the superiority of one's own race, ethnic group, or nationality are widely seen as the best ways of bringing about positive social change. Diversity training sessions held in schools and at the workplace are a classic example of this approach.

Since the civil rights era in the 1960s, however, sociologists have demonstrated that discrimination can be tackled up front and now—rather than waiting for prejudice to diminish—so that people in subordinate racial/ethnic categories can gain a greater measure of human dignity and a

variety of opportunities that they otherwise would not have. For example, establishing social policies and laws to eliminate specific practices of segregation and discrimination in education, employment, housing, health care, law enforcement, and other areas of public life has served as a significant starting point for social change that has positively affected generations of people of color, women of all racial and ethnic categories, religious minorities, and many others who have lived outside the mainstream of social life. By enacting legislation that prohibits discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, and color, our nation has sought to provide people with greater equality before the law and access to crucial opportunities and social resources. These changes have, over time, reduced the prejudiced attitudes of many people on a wide variety of issues.

Although progress has been made in reducing some aspects of overt prejudice and institutional discrimination, racism clearly is not a thing of the past. However, if previous sociological research tells us anything about the future, it is that we must continue to tackle not only individual prejudices and discriminatory conduct but also the larger, societal patterns of discrimination—embedded in the organizations and institutions of which we are a part—that restrict freedom, opportunities, and quality of life for all people.

reflect & analyze

Using sports as an example, let's think about these questions: How might college sporting events serve to reduce prejudice and discrimination on campus and beyond? How might these same events serve to perpetuate negative stereotypes and popular myths about racial and ethnic "differences"? What do you think? (See the You Can Make a Difference box [page 305] for additional discussion on this topic.)

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intergroup processes that occur between members of dominant and subordinate groups in society. Conflict theorists analyze power and economic differentials between the dominant group and subordinate groups. Symbolic interactionists examine how microlevel contacts between people may produce either greater racial tolerance or increased levels of hostility.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives

What happens when people from different racial and ethnic groups come into contact with one another? In the *contact hypothesis,* symbolic interactionists point out that contact between people from divergent groups should lead to favorable attitudes and behavior when certain factors are present.

- **Media Coverage:** "The NCAA released its second set of 'graduation success rates,' which lagged in men's basketball and football—and particularly for black players in those high-stakes, high-profile sports. Fewer than half the black basketball players who entered Division I schools on scholarship in the four-year period from 1995–98 earned degrees within six years." (*USA Today,* 1/2006).

- **Box Note:** Sociology Works! provides questions for an active class discussion on the perpetuation of racial and other stereotypes regarding athletes on your campus.
- **Research:** "The contact hypothesis suffers from three major defects: (1) practicality—creating a contact situation involves overcoming some serious practical obstacles; (2) anxiety—the

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▲ Following the March 2010 suicide bombings in Moscow's subway, the media reported fears of violence against individuals thought to be from Russia's North Caucasus region, which had been home to the attackers. How do symbolic interactionist perspectives help us to understand such fears?

Members of each group must (1) have equal status, (2) pursue the same goals, (3) cooperate with one another to achieve their goals, and (4) receive positive feedback when they interact with one another in positive, nondiscriminatory ways (Allport, 1958; Coakley, 2004).

What happens when individuals meet someone who does not conform to their existing stereotype? Frequently, they ignore anything that contradicts the stereotype, or they interpret the situation to support their prejudices (Coakley, 2004). For example, a person who does not fit the stereotype may be seen as an exception—"You're not like other [persons of a particular race]."

When a person is seen as conforming to a stereotype, he or she may be treated simply as one of "you people." Former Los Angeles Lakers basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson (1992: 31–32) described how he was categorized along with all other African Americans when he was bused to a predominantly white school:

On the first day of [basketball] practice, my teammates froze me out. Time after time I was wide open, but nobody threw me the ball. At first I thought they just didn't see me. But I woke up after a kid named Danny Parks looked right at me and then took a long jumper. Which he missed.

I was furious, but I didn't say a word. Shortly after that, I grabbed a defensive rebound and took the ball all the way down for a basket. I did it again and a third time, too.

Finally Parks got angry and said, "Hey, pass the [bleeping] ball."

That did it. I slammed down the ball and glared at him. Then I exploded. "I *knew* this would happen!" I said. "That's why I didn't want to come to this [bleeping] school in the first place!"

"Oh, yeah? Well, you people are all the same," he said. "You think you're gonna come in here and do whatever you want? Look, hotshot, your job is to get the rebound. Let us do the shooting."

The interaction between Johnson and Parks demonstrates that when people from different racial and ethnic groups come into contact with one another, they may treat one another as stereotypes, not as individuals. Eventually, Johnson and Parks were

anxiety felt by the participants may cause a contact to be unsuccessful or at least not reach its potential; (3) generalization—the results of a contact, however successful, tend to be limited to the context of the meeting and to the participants" (Yair Amichai-Hamburger and Katelyn Y. A. McKenna). Have students research and discuss these ideas.

able to work out most of their differences. "There's nothing like winning to help people get along," Johnson explained (1992: 32). Although we might hope that nothing like this happens today, there is much evidence that covert discimination occurs in many sports and social settings.

Symbolic interactionist perspectives make us aware of the importance of intergroup contact and the fact that it may either intensify or reduce racial and ethnic stereotyping and prejudice.

Functionalist Perspectives

How do members of subordinate racial and ethnic groups become a part of the dominant group? To answer this question, early functionalists studied immigration and patterns of dominant- and subordinate-group interactions.

Assimilation   *Assimilation* **is a process by which members of subordinate racial and ethnic groups become absorbed into the dominant culture.** To

some analysts, assimilation is functional because it contributes to the stability of society by minimizing group differences that might otherwise result in hostility and violence.

Assimilation occurs at several distinct levels, including the cultural, structural, biological, and psychological stages. *Cultural assimilation,* or *acculturation,* occurs when members of an ethnic group adopt dominant-group traits, such as language, dress, values, religion, and food preferences. Cultural assimilation in this country initially followed an "Anglo conformity" model; members of subordinate ethnic groups were expected to conform to the culture of the dominant white Anglo-Saxon population (Gordon, 1964). However, members of some groups refused to be assimilated and sought to maintain their unique cultural identity.

Structural assimilation, or *integration,* occurs when members of subordinate racial or ethnic groups gain acceptance in everyday social interaction with members of the dominant group. This type of assimilation typically starts in large, impersonal
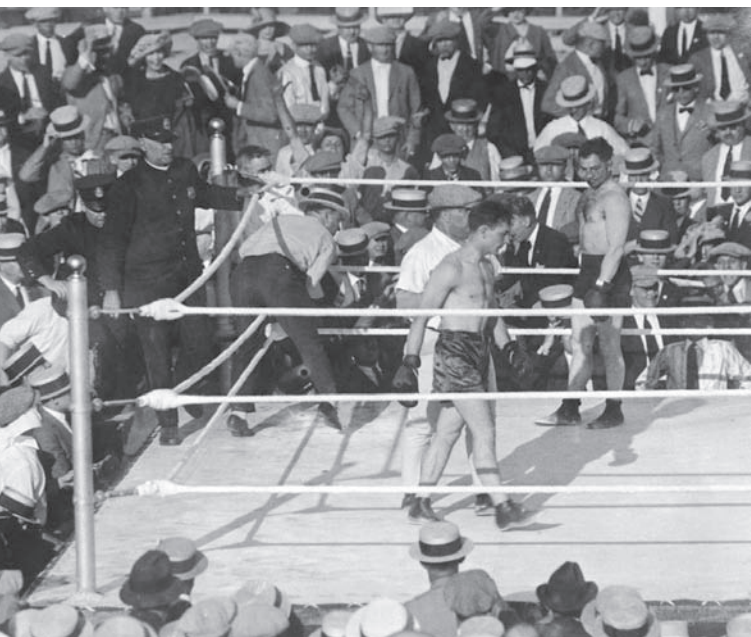
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▲ Are sports a source of upward mobility for recent immigrants and ethnic minorities, as was true for some in previous generations? Early-twentieth-century Jewish American and Italian American boxers, for example, not only produced intragroup ethnic pride but also earned a livelihood through boxing matches. And, as this recent NBA match-up shows, U.S. sports now attracts immigrants from all over the world.

© TIM JOHNSON/Reuters/Landov Media

- **Media Coverage:** "In about 35 years, Census Bureau demographers reported last week, America will look the way it did back in 1492. By 2042, they project, Anglos no longer will make up most of America. . . . But there is no way to keep America whole without steeping the next generations of Americans in the values that have gotten the country this far. You do that through asking something of them, like learning English and understanding American history,

and providing them the means to assimilate America's traditions into their daily lives" (Editorial, *Dallas Morning News,* 8/2008).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Active Learning:** How do your students respond to the census data reported in the *Dallas Morning News* editorial? The same way the writer did? Differently? Why?

settings such as schools and workplaces, and only later (if at all) results in close friendships and intermarriage. *Biological assimilation,* or *amalgamation,* occurs when members of one group marry those of other social or ethnic groups. Biological assimilation has been more complete in some other countries, such as Mexico and Brazil, than in the United States.

Psychological assimilation involves a change in racial or ethnic self-identification on the part of an individual. Rejection by the dominant group may prevent psychological assimilation by members of some subordinate racial and ethnic groups, especially those with visible characteristics such as skin color or facial features that differ from those of the dominant group.

Ethnic Pluralism   Instead of complete assimilation, many groups share elements of the mainstream culture while remaining culturally distinct from both the dominant group and other social and ethnic groups. *Ethnic pluralism is the coexistence of a variety of distinct racial and ethnic groups within one society.*

Equalitarian pluralism, or *accommodation,* is a situation in which ethnic groups coexist in equality with one another. Switzerland has been described as a model of equalitarian pluralism; more than six million people with French, German, and Italian cultural heritages peacefully coexist there. *Inequalitarian pluralism,* or *segregation,* exists when specific ethnic groups are set apart from the dominant group and have unequal access to power and privilege. *Segregation* is the spatial and social separation of categories of people by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and/or religion. Segregation may be enforced by law. *De jure segregation* refers to laws that systematically enforced the physical and social separation of African Americans in all areas of public life. An example of de jure segregation was the Jim Crow laws, which legalized the separation of the races in public accommodations (such as hotels, restaurants, transportation, hospitals, jails, schools, churches, and cemeteries) in the southern United States after the Civil War (Feagin and Feagin, 2008).

Segregation may also be enforced by custom. *De facto segregation*—racial separation and inequality enforced by custom—is more difficult to document than de jure segregation. For example, residential segregation is still prevalent in many U.S. cities; owners, landlords, real estate agents, and apartment managers often use informal mechanisms to maintain their properties for "whites only." Even middle-class people of color find that racial polarization is fundamental to the residential layout of many cities.

Although functionalist explanations provide a description of how some early white ethnic immigrants assimilated into the cultural mainstream, they do not adequately account for the persistent racial segregation and economic inequality experienced by people of color.

Conflict Perspectives

Conflict theorists focus on economic stratification and access to power in their analyses of race and ethnic relations. Some emphasize the caste-like nature of racial stratification, others analyze class-based discrimination, and still others examine internal colonialism and gendered racism.

The Caste Perspective   The caste perspective views racial and ethnic inequality as a permanent feature of U.S. society. According to this approach, the African American experience must be viewed as different from that of other racial or ethnic groups. African Americans were the only group to be subjected to slavery; when slavery was abolished, a caste system was instituted to maintain economic and social inequality between whites and African Americans (Feagin and Feagin, 2008).

The caste system was strengthened by *antimiscegenation laws,* which prohibited sexual intercourse or marriage between persons of different races. Most states had such laws, which were later expanded to include relationships between whites and Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos. These laws were not declared unconstitutional until 1967 (Frankenberg, 1993).

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assimilation a process by which members of subordinate racial and ethnic groups become absorbed into the dominant culture.

ethnic pluralism the coexistence of a variety of distinct racial and ethnic groups within one society.

segregation the spatial and social separation of categories of people by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and/or religion.

- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students write a short essay presenting their response to the following questions: What are the consequences of de jure segregation? Of de facto segregation? Which is most difficult to prove? Why?
- **Global Perspective:** "There are about 200 million Dalits, or members of the Secluded Castes, as they are known officially in India. They remain socially scorned in city and country, and they are over-represented among India's uneducated, malnourished and poor. India's leaders are under growing pressure to alleviate poverty and inequality. Now, all kinds of groups are clamoring for what Dalits have had for 50 years—quotas in university seats, government jobs and elected office—making caste one of the country's most divisive political issues. Moreover, there are growing demands for caste quotas in the private sector" (*Tehran Times*, 9/2008).

Although the caste perspective points out that racial stratification may be permanent because of structural elements such as the law, it has been criticized for not examining the role of class in perpetuating racial inequality.

Class Perspectives

Class perspectives emphasize the role of the capitalist class in racial exploitation. Based on early theories of race relations by the African American scholar W. E. B. Du Bois, the sociologist Oliver C. Cox (1948) suggested that African Americans were enslaved because they were the cheapest and best workers the owners could find for heavy labor in the mines and on plantations. Thus, the profit motive of capitalists, not skin color or racial prejudice, accounts for slavery.

More recently, sociologists have debated the relative importance of class and race in explaining the unequal life chances of African Americans. Sociologist William Julius Wilson (1996) has suggested that race, cultural factors, social psychological variables, and social class must all be taken into account in examining the life chances of "inner-city residents." His analysis focuses on how class-based economic determinants of social inequality, such as deindustrialization and the decline of the central (inner) city, have affected many African Americans, especially in the Northeast. African Americans were among the most severely affected by the loss of factory jobs because work in the manufacturing sector had previously made upward mobility possible. Wilson (1996) is not suggesting that prejudice and discrimination have been eradicated; rather, he is arguing that they may be less important than class in explaining the current status of African Americans.

How do conflict theorists view the relationship among race, class, and sports? Simply stated, sports reflects the interests of the wealthy and powerful. At all levels, sports exploits athletes (even highly paid ones) in order to gain high levels of profit and prestige for coaches, managers, and owners. African American athletes and central-city youths in particular are exploited by the message of rampant consumerism. Many are given the unrealistic expectation that sports can be a ticket out of the ghetto or barrio. If they try hard enough (and wear the right athletic gear), they too can become wealthy and famous.

Internal Colonialism

Why do some racial and ethnic groups continue to experience subjugation

▲ In 2009, controversial radio talk-show host Rush Limbaugh was part of a group that attempted an ultimately unsuccessful bid to buy the NFL's St. Louis Rams. Many professional franchises are seen as investments, owned by people with little previous connection with sports.

© AP Photo/Eric Risberg

- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss what role that class perceptions and class-based discrimination play in dynamics between whites and blacks. Are African Americans who appear to have a high socioeconomic status treated the same as those who appear to be poor? How do the two categories interact?
- **U.S. Census:** Seen many Native Americans or Alaska natives on TV? The poverty rate of people who reported they were American

Indian and Alaska native was 24 percent. The median income of households of American Indian and Alaska native was $33,132 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).
- **Historical Perspective:** "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others. . . . One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two

after many years? According to the sociologist Robert Blauner (1972), groups that have been subjected to internal colonialism remain in subordinate positions longer than groups that voluntarily migrated to the United States. *Internal colonialism* occurs when members of a racial or ethnic group are conquered or colonized and forcibly placed under the economic and political control of the dominant group.

In the United States, indigenous populations (including groups known today as Native Americans and Mexican Americans) were colonized by Euro-Americans and others who invaded their lands and conquered them. In the process, indigenous groups lost property, political rights, aspects of their culture, and often their lives. The capitalist class acquired cheap labor and land through this government-sanctioned racial exploitation (Blauner, 1972). The effects of past internal colonialism are reflected today in the number of Native Americans who live on government reservations and in the poverty of Mexican Americans who lost their land and had no right to vote.

The internal colonialism perspective is rooted in the historical foundations of racial and ethnic inequality in the United States. However, it tends to view all voluntary immigrants as having many more opportunities than do members of colonized groups. Thus, this model does not explain the continued exploitation of some immigrant groups, such as the Chinese, Filipinos, Cubans, Vietnamese, and Haitians, and the greater acceptance of others, primarily those from Northern Europe (Cashmore, 1996).

The Split-Labor-Market Theory Who benefits from the exploitation of people of color? Dual- or split-labor-market theory states that white workers and members of the capitalist class both benefit from the exploitation of people of color. *Split labor market* refers to the division of the economy into two areas of employment, a primary sector or upper tier, composed of higher-paid (usually dominant-group) workers in more secure jobs, and a secondary sector or lower tier, composed of lower-paid (often subordinate-group) workers in jobs with little security and hazardous working conditions (Bonacich, 1972, 1976). According to this perspective, white workers in the upper tier may use racial discrimination against nonwhites to protect their positions. These actions most often occur when upper-tier workers feel threatened by lower-tier workers hired by capitalists to reduce labor costs and maximize corporate profits. In the past, immigrants were a source of cheap labor that employers could use to break strikes and keep wages down. Throughout U.S. history, higher-paid workers have responded with racial hostility and joined movements to curtail immigration and thus do away with the source of cheap labor (Marger, 2009).

Proponents of the split-labor-market theory suggest that white workers benefit from racial and ethnic antagonisms. However, these analysts typically do not examine the interactive effects of race, class, and gender in the workplace.

Perspectives on Race and Gender The term *gendered racism* refers to the interactive effect of racism and sexism on the exploitation of women of color. According to the social psychologist Philomena Essed (1991), women's particular position must be explored within each racial or ethnic group because their experiences will not have been the same as men's in each grouping.

All workers are not equally exploited by capitalists. Gender and race or ethnicity are important in this exploitation. Historically, the high-paying primary labor market has been monopolized by white men. Many people of color and white women hold lower-tier jobs. Below that tier is the underground sector of the economy, characterized by illegal or quasi-legal activities such as drug trafficking, prostitution, and working in sweatshops that do not meet minimum wage and safety standards. Many undocumented workers and some white women

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internal colonialism according to conflict theorists, a practice that occurs when members of a racial or ethnic group are conquered or colonized and forcibly placed under the economic and political control of the dominant group.

split labor market a term used to describe the division of the economy into two areas of employment: a primary sector or upper tier, composed of higher-paid (usually dominant-group) workers in more-secure jobs, and a secondary sector or lower tier, composed of lower-paid (often subordinate-group) workers in jobs with little security and hazardous working conditions.

gendered racism the interactive effect of racism and sexism on the exploitation of women of color.

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warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (W. E. B. Du Bois). Have students relate this statement to Blauner's theory of internal colonialism.
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss this question: Why do groups that have been subjected to internal colonialism remain in subordinate positions longer than some other racial and ethnic groups?

- **Sociological Imagination:** As students come to class, ask them to spend ten minutes writing on this question: According to split-labor-market theory, do white workers benefit from racial discrimination? Explain how this works. What are some workable solutions to this problem?
- **Extra Examples:** Relate the idea of gendered racism to the theory of the split labor market.

and people of color attempt to earn a living in this sector (Amott and Matthaei, 1996). The ***theory of racial formation*** states that actions of the government substantially define racial and ethnic relations in the United States. Government actions range from race-related legislation to imprisonment of members of groups believed to be a threat to society. Sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) suggest that the U.S. government has shaped the politics of race through actions and policies that cause people to be treated differently because of their race. For example, immigration legislation reflects racial biases. The Naturalization Law of 1790 permitted only white immigrants to qualify for naturalization; the Immigration Act of 1924 favored Northern Europeans and excluded Asians and Southern and Eastern Europeans.

The government's definition of racial realities is periodically challenged by social protest movements of various racial and ethnic groups. When this social rearticulation occurs, people's understanding about race may be restructured somewhat. For example, the African American protest movements of the 1950s and 1960s helped redefine the rights of people of color in the United States.

An Alternative Perspective: Critical Race Theory

Emerging out of scholarly law studies on racial and ethnic inequality, *critical race theory* derives its foundation from the U.S. civil rights tradition. Critical race theory has several major premises, including the belief that racism is such an ingrained feature of U.S. society that it appears to be ordinary and natural to many people (Delgado, 1995). As a result, civil rights legislation and affirmative action laws (formal equality) may remedy some of the more overt, blatant forms of racial injustice but have little effect on subtle, business-as-usual forms of racism that people of color experience as they go about their everyday lives.

According to this approach, the best way to document racism and ongoing inequality in society is to listen to the lived experiences of people who have experienced such discrimination. In this way, we can learn what actually happens in regard to racial oppression and the many effects it has on people, including alienation, depression, and certain physical illnesses. Central to this argument is the belief that *interest convergence* is a crucial factor in bringing about social

change. According to the legal scholar Derrick Bell, white elites tolerate or encourage racial advances for people of color *only* if the dominant-group members believe that their own self-interest will be served in so doing (cited in Delgado, 1995). From this approach, civil rights laws have typically benefited white Americans as much (or more) as people of color because these laws have been used as mechanisms to ensure that "racial progress occurs at just the right pace: change that is too rapid would be unsettling to society at large; change that is too slow could prove destabilizing" (Delgado, 1995: xiv). The Concept Quick Review outlines the key aspects of each sociological perspective on race and ethnic relations.

Racial and Ethnic Groups in the United States

How do racial and ethnic groups come into contact with one another? How do they adjust to one another and to the dominant group over time? Sociologists have explored these questions extensively; however, a detailed historical account of the unique experiences of each group is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, we will look briefly at intergroup contacts. In the process, sports will be used as an example of how members of some groups have attempted to gain upward mobility and become integrated into society.

Native Americans

Native Americans are believed to have migrated to North America from Asia thousands of years ago, as shown on the time line in ▶ Figure 9.2. One of the most widely accepted beliefs about this migration is that the first groups of Mongolians made their way across a natural bridge of land called Beringia into present-day Alaska. From there, they moved to what is now Canada and the northern United States, eventually making their way as far south as the tip of South America (Cashmore, 1996).

As schoolchildren are taught, Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus first encountered the native inhabitants in 1492 and referred to them as "Indians." When European settlers (or invaders) arrived on this continent, the native inhabitants' way of life was changed forever. Experts estimate that approximately two million native inhabitants lived in North America at that time (Cashmore, 1996); however,

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- **Research:** Have students analyze and discuss "Whiteness as Giftedness: Racial Formation at an Urban High School." The study analyzes the organizational and representational practices of this voluntary desegregation tool—a partial-site magnet program for "gifted" students—and its impact on students inside and outside the program (*Social Problems,* 51 (2) (May 2004): 161, 181).

- **Research:** "Black people are the magical faces at the bottom of society's well. Even the poorest whites, those who must live their lives only a few levels above, gain their self-esteem by gazing down on us. Surely, they must know that their deliverance depends on letting down their ropes. Only by working together is escape possible. Over time, many reach out, but most simply

[concept quick review 9.1]

Sociological Perspectives on Race and Ethnic Relations

	Focus	Theory/Hypothesis
Symbolic Interactionist	Microlevel contacts between individuals	Contact hypothesis

Functionalist	Macrolevel intergroup processes	1. Assimilation
		  a. cultural
		  b. biological
		  c. structural
		  d. psychological
		2. Ethnic pluralism
		  a. equalitarian pluralism
		  b. inequalitarian pluralism (segregation)

Conflict	Power/economic differentials between dominant and subordinate groups	1. Caste perspective 2. Class perspective 3. Internal colonialism 4. Split labor market 5. Gendered racism 6. Racial formation
Critical Race Theory	Racism as an ingrained feature of society that affects everyone's daily life	Laws may remedy overt discrimination but have little effect on subtle racism. Interest convergence is required for social change.

their numbers had been reduced to fewer than 240,000 by 1900.

Genocide, Forced Migration, and Forced Assimilation

Native Americans have been the victims of genocide and forced migration. Although the United States never had an official policy that set in motion a pattern of deliberate extermination, many Native Americans were either massacred or died from European diseases (such as typhoid, smallpox, and measles) and starvation (Wagner and Stearn, 1945; Cook, 1973). In battle, Native Americans were often no match for the Europeans, who had "modern" weaponry (Amott and Matthaei, 1996). Europeans justified their aggression by stereotyping the Native Americans as "savages" and "heathens" (Takaki, 1993).

After the Revolutionary War, the federal government offered treaties to the Native Americans so that more of their land could be acquired for the growing white population. Scholars note that the government broke treaty after treaty as it engaged in a policy of wholesale removal of indigenous nations in order to clear the land for settlement by Anglo-Saxon "pioneers" (Green, 1977). Entire nations were forced to move in order to accommodate the white settlers. The "Trail of Tears" was one of the most disastrous of the forced migrations. In the coldest part of the winter of 1832, over half of the Cherokee Nation died during or as a result of their forced relocation from the southeastern United States to the Indian Territory in Oklahoma (Thornton, 1984).

Native Americans were subjected to forced assimilation on the reservations after 1871 (Takaki, 1993). Native American children were placed in boarding schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to hasten their assimilation into the dominant culture. About 98 percent of native lands had been expropriated by 1920 (see McDonnell, 1991).

Native Americans Today

Currently, about 2.5 million Native Americans (1.5 percent of the U.S. population) live in the United States, including Aleuts, Inuit (Eskimos), Cherokee, Navajo, Choctaw,

> **theory of racial formation** the idea that actions of the government substantially define racial and ethnic relations in the United States.

▲ FIGURE 9.2 TIME LINE OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES

Chippewa, Sioux, and over 500 other nations of varying sizes and different locales. There is a wide diversity among the people in this category: Each nation has its own culture, history, and unique identity, and more than 250 Native American languages are spoken today. Although Native Americans live in a number of states, they are concentrated in specific regions of the country (see ▶ Map 9.1). About one-third of Native Americans live on one of the 310 federal Indian reservations in this country. Data continue to show that Native Americans are the most disadvantaged racial or ethnic group in the United States in terms of income, employment, housing, nutrition, and health. The life chances of Native Americans who live on reservations are especially limited. They have the highest rates of infant mortality and death by exposure and malnutrition. They also have high rates of suicide, substance abuse, and school violence (Kershaw, 2005).

Historically, Native Americans have had very limited educational opportunities and a very high rate of unemployment. In recent years, however, a network of tribal colleges has been successful in providing some Native Americans with the education they need to move into the ranks of the skilled working class and beyond (Bordewich, 1996). Across the nation, Native Americans own and operate many types of enterprises, such as construction companies, computer graphic design firms, grocery stores, and management consulting businesses. Casino gambling operations and cigarette shops on Native American reservations—resulting from a reinterpretation of federal law in the 1990s—have brought more income to some of the nations, but

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Historical Perspective:** "What connects two thousand years of genocide? Too much power in too few hands" (Simon Wiesenthal). Ask students to research the history of racially motivated mass violence, from ancient times to the Holocaust to Rwanda.

- **Media Coverage:** "Rwanda, a country that suffered 100 days of tribal genocide in 1994 and has also been hit hard by the AIDS epidemic, is believed to have the highest percentage of orphans in the world. Now a survey finds that depression is alarmingly common among teenage and young adult orphans there who head households and care for younger children" (*New York Times,* 9/2008).

	Asian (non-Hispanic)
	Black (non-Hispanic)
	Hispanic
	Native American (non-Hispanic)
	Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)
	White (non-Hispanic)
	Multiethnic

Counties are shown according to which races have a population greater than the national average in that county. Counties in which more than one race has a population greater than the national average are shown as multiethnic.
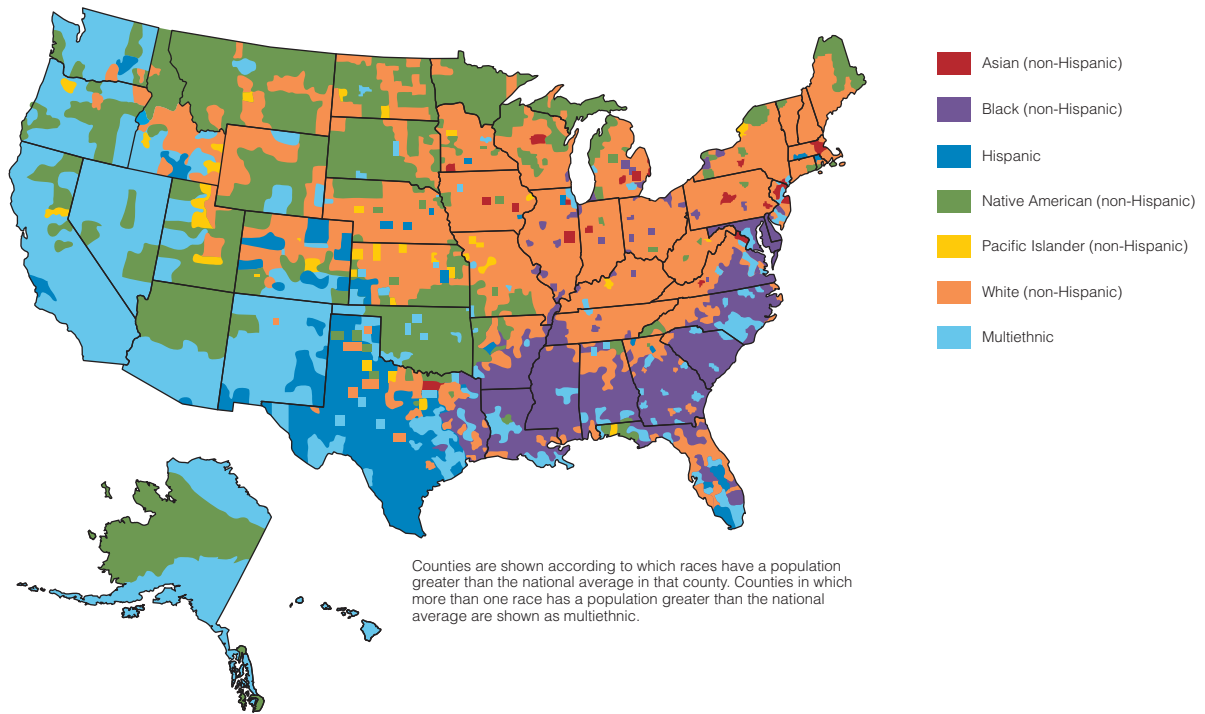
▲ **MAP 9.1 U.S. RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION**
While minority populations do continue to grow, regional differences in racial makeup are still quite pronounced, as this map shows.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007.

© AP Photo/Lawrence Journal-World, Mike Yoder

▲ Native Americans have historically had a low rate of college attendance. However, the development of a network of tribal colleges has provided them a local source of upward mobility.

this change has not been without its critics, many of whom believe that these businesses result in new problems for Native Americans.

Native Americans are currently in a transition from a history marked by prejudice and discrimination to a contemporary life in which they may find new opportunities. Many see the challenge for Native Americans today as erasing negative stereotypes while maintaining their heritage and obtaining recognition for their contributions to this nation's development and growth.

Native Americans and Sports   Early in the twentieth century, Native Americans such as Jim Thorpe gained national visibility as athletes in football, baseball, and track and field. Teams at boarding schools such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania and the Haskell Institute in Kansas were well-known. However, after the first three decades of the twentieth century, Native Americans

• **Sociological Imagination:** Have the class research and write about the American Indian Movement (AIM) to contextualize this statement: "Young people and Indian people need to know that we existed in the 20th Century. We need to know who our heroes are and to know what we have done and accomplished in this century other than what Olympic athletes Jim Thorpe and Billy Mills have done" (Russell Means, Native American actor, musician, and activist).

became much less prominent in sports. Although some Navajo athletes have been very successful in basketball and some Choctaws have excelled in baseball, Native Americans have seldom been able to compete at the college, professional, or Olympic level. Native American scholar Joseph B. Oxendine (2003) attributes the lack of athletic participation to these factors: (1) a reduction in opportunities for developing sports skills, (2) restricted opportunities for participation, and (3) a lessening of Native Americans' interest in competing with and against non-Native Americans.

White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (British Americans)

Whereas Native Americans have been among the most disadvantaged peoples, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) have been the most privileged group in this country. Although many English settlers initially came to North America as indentured servants or as prisoners, they quickly emerged as the dominant group, creating a core culture (including language, laws, and holidays) to which all other groups were expected to adapt. Most of the WASP immigrants arriving from northern Europe were advantaged over later immigrants because they were highly skilled and did not experience high levels of prejudice and discrimination.

Class, Gender, and WASPs   Like members of other racial and ethnic groups, not all WASPs are alike. Social class and gender affect their life chances and opportunities. For example, members of the working class and the poor do not have political and economic power; men in the capitalist class do. WASPs constitute the majority of the upper class and maintain cohesion through listings such as the *Social Register* and interactions with one another in elite settings such as private schools and country clubs (Kendall, 2002). However, WASP women do not always have the same rights as the men of their group. Although WASP women have the privilege of a dominant racial position, they do not have the gender-related privileges of men (Amott and Matthaei, 1996).

WASPs and Sports   Family background, social class, and gender play an important role in the sports participation of WASPs. Contemporary North American football was invented at the Ivy League colleges and was dominated by young, affluent WASPs who had the time and money to attend college and participate in sports activities. Today, whites are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to become professional athletes in all sports except football and basketball. Although current data are not available to document differences among racial and ethnic categories by types of sports, we know that the probability of competing in athletics beyond the high school interscholastic level is extremely low. For example, only .03 percent of high school men's basketball players will become professional athletes, as will only .02 percent of women's basketball players. For football, the percentage of high school players who will become professional athletes is .09 percent; for baseball, .5 percent; for men's ice hockey, .4 percent; and for men's soccer, .08 percent. Even the odds of advancing from high school athletics to NCAA college sports remain low: 2.9 percent for men's basketball, 3.1 percent for women's basketball, 5.8 percent for football, 5.6 percent for baseball, 12.9 percent for men's ice hockey, and 5.7 percent for men's soccer (www.coasports.org, 2009).

Affluent WASP women participated in intercollegiate women's basketball in the late 1800s, and various other sporting events were used as a means to break free of restrictive codes of femininity (Nelson, 1994). Until recently, however, most women have had little chance for any involvement in college and professional sports.

African Americans

The African American (black) experience has been one uniquely marked by slavery, segregation, and persistent discrimination. There is a lack of consensus about whether *African American* or *black* is the most appropriate term to refer to the 39.7 million Americans of African descent who live in the United States today. Those who prefer the term *black* point out that it incorporates many African-descent groups living in this country that do not use *African American* as a racial or ethnic self-description. For example, people who trace their origins to Haiti, Puerto Rico, or Jamaica typically identify themselves as "black" but not as "African American" (Cashmore, 1996).

Although the earliest African Americans probably arrived in North America with the Spanish

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- **Recent Events:** "More accurately, Barack Obama is the first Hawaii-born, Kenyan-American, half-black, half-white man to run for a job that has—with the exception of John Kennedy—been the exclusive property of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants" (John Bogert, DailyBreeze.com). What do students make of Obama's successful campaign, in light of this history?

- **For Discussion:** Have students evaluate the following statement, drawing on their own and others' experiences: "[O]ne of the many advantages whites enjoy in America is a relative freedom from the draining obligation of racial inversion. Whites do not have to spend precious time fashioning an identity out of simply being white. They do not have to self-consciously imbue whiteness with an ideology,

conquerors in the fifteenth century, most historians trace their arrival to about 1619, when the first groups of indentured servants were brought to the colony of Virginia. However, by the 1660s, indentured servanthood had turned into full-fledged slavery because of the enactment of laws that sanctioned the enslavement of African Americans. Although the initial status of persons of African descent in this country may not have been too different from that of the English indentured servants, all of that changed with the passage of laws turning human beings into property and making slavery a status from which neither individuals nor their children could escape (Franklin, 1980).

Between 1619 and the 1860s, about 500,000 Africans were forcibly brought to North America, primarily to work on southern plantations, and these actions were justified by the devaluation and stereotyping of African Americans. Some analysts believe that the central factor associated with the development of slavery in this country was the plantation system, which was heavily dependent on cheap and dependable manual labor. Slavery was primarily beneficial to the wealthy southern plantation owners, but many of the stereotypes used to justify slavery were eventually institutionalized in southern custom and practice (Wilson, 1978). However, some slaves and whites engaged in active resistance against slavery and its barbaric practices, eventually resulting in slavery being outlawed in the northern states by the late 1700s. Slavery continued in the South until 1863, when it was abolished by the Emancipation Proclamation (Takaki, 1993).

Segregation and Lynching

Gaining freedom did not give African Americans equality with whites. African Americans were subjected to many indignities because of race. Through informal practices in the North and *Jim Crow laws* in the South, African Americans experienced segregation in housing, employment, education, and all public accommodations. African Americans who did not stay in their "place" were often the victims of violent attacks and lynch mobs (Franklin, 1980). *Lynching* is a killing carried out by a group of vigilantes seeking revenge for an actual or imagined crime by the victim. Lynchings were used by whites to intimidate African Americans into staying "in their place." It is estimated that as many as 6,000 lynchings occurred between 1892 and 1921 (Feagin and Feagin, 2008). In spite of all odds, many African American women and men resisted oppression and did not give up in their struggle for equality (Amott and Matthaei, 1996).

Discrimination

In the twentieth century, the lives of many African Americans were changed by industrialization and two world wars. When factories were built in the northern United States, many African American families left the rural South in hopes of finding jobs and a better life.

During World Wars I and II, African Americans were a vital source of labor in war production industries; however, racial discrimination continued both on and off the job. In World War II, many African Americans fought for their country in segregated units in the military; after the war, they sought—and were denied—equal opportunities in the country for which they had risked their lives.

African Americans began to demand sweeping societal changes in the 1950s. Initially, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights movement used *civil disobedience*—nonviolent action seeking to change a policy or law by refusing to comply with it—to call attention to racial inequality and to demand greater inclusion of African Americans in all areas of public life. Subsequently, leaders of the Black Power movement, including Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey, advocated black pride and racial awareness among African Americans. Gradually, racial segregation was outlawed by the courts and the federal government. For example, the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 sought to do away with discrimination in education, housing, employment, and health care. Affirmative action programs were instituted in both public-sector and private-sector organizations in an effort to bring about greater opportunities for African Americans and other previously excluded groups. *Affirmative action* refers to policies or procedures that are intended to promote equal opportunity for categories of people deemed to have been previously excluded from equality in education, employment, and other fields on the basis of characteristics such as race or ethnicity. Critics of affirmative action often assert that these policies amount to *reverse discrimination*—a person who is better qualified being denied a position because another person received preferential treatment as a result of affirmative action.

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look to whiteness for some special essence, or divide up into factions and wrestle over what it means to be white" (Shelby Steele).
- **For Discussion:** Ask the class why most WASPs do not think of themselves as having a race or ethnicity. In what ways might this belief change as the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population shifts? Would that be a positive development?

- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students conduct some historical research and then briefly answer the following: What primary methods have African Americans used over the history of the United States to resist oppression and to seek better lives for themselves and their families? What methods have failed?

African Americans Today

African Americans make up about 13.4 percent of the U.S. population. Some are descendants of families that have been in this country for many generations; others are recent immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean. Black Haitians make up the largest group of recent Caribbean immigrants; others come from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Recent African immigrants are primarily from Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Kenya. They have been simultaneously "pushed" out of their countries of origin by severe economic and political turmoil and "pulled" by perceived opportunities for a better life in the United States. Recent immigrants are often victimized by the same racism that has plagued African Americans as a people for centuries.

Since the 1960s, many African Americans have made significant gains in politics, education, employment, and income. Between 1964 and 1999, the number of African Americans elected to political office increased from about 100 to almost 9,000 nationwide (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2003). African Americans won mayoral elections in many major cities that have large African American populations, such as Atlanta, Houston, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Despite these political gains, African Americans still represent less than 3 percent of all elected officials in the United States.

Some African Americans have made impressive occupational gains and joined the ranks of professionals in the upper middle class. Others have achieved great wealth and fame as entertainers, professional athletes, and entrepreneurs. However, even those who make millions of dollars a year and live in affluent neighborhoods are not always exempt from racial prejudice and discrimination. And although some African Americans have made substantial occupational and educational gains, many more have not. The African American unemployment rate remains twice as high as that of whites.

African Americans and Sports

In recent decades, many African Americans have seen sports as a possible source of upward mobility because other means have been unavailable. However, their achievements in sports have often been attributed to "natural ability" and not determination and hard work. Sociologists have rejected such biological explanations for African Americans' success in

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▲ In August 2008, Barack Obama made history by becoming the first African American to receive the presidential nomination of a major political party, and on Election Day he was voted in as the first African American president of the United States.

- **U.S. Census:** There were 2.5 million single-race black college students in the fall of 2008. This was roughly double the corresponding number from 15 years earlier.
- **Recent Events:** "The U.S. Supreme Court's June 2007 decision to strike down integration plans in two public school districts was based on a simple premise: discrimination is discrimination. 'The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race,' Chief Justice John

Roberts declared, 'is to stop discriminating on the basis of race.' In the wake of that ruling, large, ethnically diverse districts are now finding themselves in uncharted waters. Though prohibited from using race-conscious measures to integrate their schools, districts also must ensure academic success for all students—regardless of skin color or neighborhoods in which they live" (*Chicago Daily Herald,* 9/2008).

sports and have focused instead on explanations rooted in the structure of society.

During the slavery era, a few African Americans gained better treatment and, occasionally, freedom by winning boxing matches on which their owners had bet large sums of money (McPherson, Curtis, and Loy, 1989). After emancipation, some African Americans found jobs in horse racing and baseball. For example, fourteen of the fifteen jockeys in the first Kentucky Derby (in 1875) were African Americans. A number of African Americans played on baseball teams; a few played in the Major Leagues until the Jim Crow laws forced them out. Then they formed their own "Negro" baseball and basketball leagues (Peterson, 1992/1970).

Since Jackie Robinson broke baseball's "color line" in 1947, many African American athletes have played collegiate and professional sports. Even now, however, persistent class inequalities between whites and African Americans are reflected in the fact that, until recently, African Americans have primarily excelled in sports (such as basketball or football) that do not require much expensive equipment and specialized facilities in order to develop athletic skills (Coakley, 2004). According to one sports analyst, African Americans typically participate in certain sports and not others because of the *sports opportunity structure*—the availability of facilities, coaching, and competition in the schools and community recreation programs in their area (Phillips, 1993).

Regardless of the sport in which they participate, African American men athletes continue to experience inequalities in assignment of playing positions, rewards and authority structures, and management and ownership opportunities in professional sports (Eitzen and Sage, 1997). In recent years, only 6 of the 32 National Football League head coaches and only 10–12 (about 10 percent) of the 120 Division I-A (now known as "Football Bowl Subdivision") head coaches in college football were African Americans. Although few African American coaches head up teams in the Football Bowl Subdivision, almost 30 percent of the assistant coaches and more than 50 percent of the players are African American (North Carolina State University, 2010). Today, African Americans remain significantly underrepresented in other sports, including hockey, skiing, figure skating, golf, volleyball, softball, swimming, gymnastics, sailing, soccer, bowling, cycling, and tennis (Coakley, 2004).

White Ethnic Americans

The American Dream initially brought many white ethnics to the United States. The term *white ethnic Americans* is applied to a wide diversity of immigrants who trace their origins to Ireland and to Eastern and Southern European countries such as Poland, Italy, Greece, Germany, Yugoslavia, and Russia and other former Soviet republics. Unlike the WASPs, who immigrated primarily from Northern Europe and assumed a dominant cultural position in society, white ethnic Americans arrived late in the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth century to find relatively high levels of prejudice and discrimination directed at them by nativist organizations that hoped to curb the entry of non-WASP European immigrants. Because many of the people in white ethnic American categories were not Protestant, they experienced discrimination because they were Catholic, Jewish, or members of other religious bodies, such as the Eastern Orthodox churches (Farley, 2000).

Discrimination Against White Ethnics

Many white ethnic immigrants entered the United States between 1830 and 1924. Irish Catholics were among the first to arrive, with more than four million Irish fleeing the potato famine and economic crisis in Ireland and seeking jobs in the United States (Feagin and Feagin, 2008). When they arrived, they found that British Americans controlled the major institutions of society. The next arrivals were Italians who had been recruited for low-wage industrial and construction jobs. British Americans viewed Irish and Italian immigrants as "foreigners": The Irish were stereotyped as apelike, filthy, bad-tempered, and heavy drinkers; the Italians were depicted as lawless, knife-wielding thugs looking for a fight, "dagos," and "wops" (short for "without papers") (Feagin and Feagin, 2008).

Both Irish Americans and Italian Americans were subjected to institutionalized discrimination in employment. Employment ads read "Help Wanted—No Irish Need Apply" and listed daily wages at $1.30–$1.50 for "whites" and $1.15–$1.25 for "Italians" (Gambino, 1975: 77). In spite of discrimination, white ethnics worked hard to establish themselves in the United States, often founding mutual self-help organizations and becoming politically active (Mangione and Morreale, 1992).

- **Research:** Have students research promotion opportunities and obstacles for blacks in professional football. "The NFL has kept a steady number of black head coaches, while slightly increasing the ranks of Asian and Latino players, earning a B+ in an annual diversity study. . . . The NFL is the only pro sports organization that refuses to share its league office data with University of Central Florida's Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports, which also conducts annual studies on the NBA, Major League Baseball, WNBA, pro soccer and college athletics" (Associated Press, 8/2008).
- **For Discussion:** Ask the class in what ways participation in interracial sports teams might promote intergroup cohesion. How might it reduce or possibly increase prejudice?
- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to write a brief essay on the topic of race, class, and sports. Have them tackle this

▲ After coming to the United States in the nineteenth century, many white ethnic immigrants faced severe poverty, an issue explored by director Martin Scorsese in his 2002 film *Gangs of New York.*

Between 1880 and 1920, over two million Jewish immigrants arrived in the United States and settled in the Northeast. Jewish Americans differ from other white ethnic groups in that some focus their identity primarily on their religion whereas others define their Jewishness in terms of ethnic group membership (Feagin and Feagin, 2008). In any case, Jews continued to be the victims of *anti-Semitism*—prejudice, hostile attitudes, and discriminatory behavior targeted at Jews. For example, signs in hotels read "No Jews Allowed," and some "help wanted" ads stated "Christians Only" (Levine, 1992: 55). In spite of persistent discrimination, Jewish Americans achieved substantial success in many areas, including business, education, the arts and sciences, law, and medicine.

White Ethnics and Sports Sports provided a pathway to assimilation for many white ethnics. The earliest collegiate football players who were not white Anglo-Saxon Protestants were of Irish, Italian, and Jewish ancestry. Sports participation provided educational opportunities that some white ethnics would not have had otherwise.

Boxing became a way to make a living for white ethnics who did not participate in collegiate sports. Boxing promoters encouraged ethnic rivalries to increase their profits, pitting Italians against Irish or Jews, and whites against African Americans (Levine, 1992; Mangione and Morreale, 1992). Eventually, Italian Americans graduated from boxing into baseball and football. Jewish Americans found that sports lessened the shock of assimilation and gave them an opportunity to refute stereotypes about their physical weaknesses and counter anti-Semitic charges that they were "unfit to become Americans" (Levine, 1992: 272).

Today, assimilation is so complete that little attention is paid to the origins of white ethnic athletes. As former Pittsburgh Steeler running back Franco Harris stated, "I didn't know I was part Italian until I became famous" (qtd. in Mangione and Morreale, 1992: 384).

Asian Americans

The U.S. Census Bureau uses the term *Asian Americans* to designate the many diverse groups with roots in Asia. Chinese and Japanese immigrants were

question: In what ways do major league sports reflect the values of U.S. culture?
- **Active Learning:** Have students research the history of discrimination against various white ethnic groups in your state in past decades. What are the legacies of such discrimination? Are members of some white ethnic groups still subjected to prejudice and discrimination today?

- **Popular Culture:** "The bridge of their *Enterprise,* however, may now have a Klingon on board as the symbol of galactic coexistence, but at least a third of the population of our world and certainly the twenty-fourth century was absent. There were no Asians on their bridge" (George Takei [Mr. Sulu], writing about the TV series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*).

among the earliest Asian Americans. Many Filipinos, Asian Indians, Koreans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Pakistani, and Indonesians have arrived more recently. Today, Asian Americans belong to the fastest-growing ethnic minority group in the United States and constitute about 5 percent of the nation's population. About 13.4 million people in the United States identified themselves as Asian American in 2008.

Chinese Americans

The initial wave of Chinese immigration occurred between 1850 and 1880, when more than 200,000 Chinese men were "pushed" from China by harsh economic conditions and "pulled" to the United States by the promise of gold in California and employment opportunities in the construction of transcontinental railroads. Far fewer Chinese women immigrated; however, many of them were brought to the United States against their will and forced into prostitution, where they were treated like slaves (Takaki, 1993).

Chinese Americans were subjected to extreme prejudice and stereotyped as "coolies," "heathens," and "Chinks." Some Asian immigrants were attacked and even lynched by working-class whites who feared that they were losing their jobs to the immigrants. Passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 brought Chinese immigration to a halt. The Exclusion Act was not repealed until World War II, when Chinese Americans who were contributing to the war effort by working in defense plants pushed for its repeal (Takaki, 1993). After immigration laws were further relaxed in the 1960s, the second and largest wave of Chinese immigration occurred, with immigrants coming primarily from Hong Kong and Taiwan. These recent immigrants have had more education and workplace skills than earlier arrivals, and they brought families and capital with them to pursue the American Dream (Chen, 1992).

Today, many Chinese Americans live in large urban enclaves in California, New York, Hawaii, Illinois, and Texas. As a group, they have enjoyed considerable upward mobility. Some own laundries, restaurants, and other businesses; others have professional careers (Chen, 1992). However, many Chinese Americans, particularly recent immigrants, remain in the lower tier of the working class—providing low-wage labor in garment and knitting factories and Chinese restaurants.

Japanese Americans

Most of the early Japanese immigrants were men who worked on sugar plantations in the Hawaiian Islands in the 1860s. Like Chinese immigrants, the Japanese American workers were viewed as a threat by white workers, and immigration of Japanese men was curbed in 1908. However, Japanese women were permitted to enter the United States for several years thereafter because of the shortage of women on the West Coast. Although some Japanese women married white men, this practice was stopped by laws prohibiting interracial marriage.

With the exception of the enslavement of African Americans, Japanese Americans experienced one of the most vicious forms of discrimination ever sanctioned by U.S. laws. During World War II, when the United States was at war with Japan, nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans were placed in internment camps, where they remained for more than two years despite the total lack of evidence that they posed a security threat to this country (Takaki, 1993). This

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▲ During World War II, nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans—many of whom are still alive today—were interned in camps such as the Manzanar Relocation Center in California, where this statue memorializes their ordeal.

- **Active Learning:** Ask students to take a look at their favorite television programs and find Asian characters. How are these characters presented? Create a chart to record their presence or absence and how they are portrayed.
- **Historical Perspective:** "In 2000, the Census Bureau acknowledged and apologized for its role in sharing aggregate data with the U.S. military to help relocate Japanese Americans from the West Coast to inland camps after Japan's 1941 Pearl Harbor attack" (*Los Angeles Times,* 3/2007). Have students research this episode and the broader history of Japanese American internment.
- **Media Coverage:** "When it comes to the Blackhawk Country Club each fall, the Ladies Professional Golf Association attracts Korean-American fans thrilled to see the league's South Korean women golf stars in action. But that relationship was chilled by an LPGA

action was a direct violation of the citizenship rights of many *Nisei* (second-generation Japanese Americans), who were born in the United States (see Daniels, 1993). Ironically, only Japanese Americans were singled out for such harsh treatment; German Americans avoided this fate even though the United States was also at war with Germany. Four decades later, the U.S. government issued an apology for its actions and eventually paid $20,000 each to some of those who had been placed in internment camps (Daniels, 1993; Takaki, 1993).

Since World War II, many Japanese Americans have been very successful. The median income of Japanese Americans is more than 30 percent above the national average. However, most Japanese Americans (and other Asian Americans) live in states that not only have higher incomes but also higher costs of living than the national average. In addition, many Asian American families have more persons in the paid labor force than do other families (Takaki, 1993).

Korean Americans   The first wave of Korean immigrants were male workers who arrived in Hawaii between 1903 and 1910. The second wave came to the U.S. mainland following the Korean War in 1954 and was made up primarily of the wives of servicemen and Korean children who had lost their parents in the war. The third wave arrived after the Immigration Act of 1965 permitted well-educated professionals to migrate to the United States. Korean Americans have helped one another open small businesses by pooling money through the *kye*—an association that grants members money on a rotating basis to gain access to more capital.

Today, many Korean Americans live in California and New York, where there is a concentration of Korean-owned grocery stores, businesses, and churches. Unlike earlier Korean immigrants, more-recent arrivals have come as settlers and have brought their families with them. However, their experiences with other subordinate racial and ethnic groups have not always been harmonious. Ongoing discord has existed between African Americans and Korean Americans in New York and among African Americans, Latinos, and Korean Americans in California.

Filipino Americans   Today, Filipino Americans constitute the second largest category of Asian Americans, with over a million population in the United States. To understand the status of Filipino Americans, it is important to look at the complex relationship between the Philippine Islands and the United States government. After Spain lost the Spanish-American War, the United States established colonial rule over the islands, a rule that lasted from 1898 to 1946. Despite control by the United States, Filipinos were not granted U.S. citizenship, but male Filipinos were allowed to migrate to Hawaii and the U.S. mainland to work in agriculture and in fish canneries in Seattle and Alaska. Like other Asian Americans, Filipino Americans were accused of taking jobs away from white workers and suppressing wages, and Congress restricted Filipino immigration to fifty people per year between the Great Depression and the aftermath of World War II.

The second wave of Filipino immigrants came following the Immigration Act of 1965, when large numbers of physicians, nurses, technical workers, and other professionals moved to the U.S. mainland. Most Filipinos have not had the start-up capital necessary to open their own businesses, and many have been employed in the low-wage sector of the service economy. However, the average household income of Filipino American families is relatively high because about 75 percent of Filipino American women are employed, and nearly half have a four-year college degree (Espiritu, 1995).

Indochinese Americans   Indochinese Americans include people from Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos, most of whom have come to the United States in the past three decades. Vietnamese refugees who had the resources to flee at the beginning of the Vietnam War were the first to arrive. Next came Cambodians and lowland Laotians, referred to as "boat people" by the media. Many who tried to immigrate did not survive at sea; others were turned back when they reached this country or were kept in refugee camps for long periods of time. When they arrived in the United States, inflation was high, the country was in a recession, and many native-born citizens feared that they would lose their jobs to these new refugees, who were willing to work very hard for low wages.

Today, many Indochinese Americans are foreign born; about half live in the western states, especially

policy imposed this week that has many fans upset. By the end of next year, says the 58-year-old women's golf organization, those international golf stars must speak English well or face suspension" (*Mercury News* [Silicon Valley, California], 8/2008). What do students make of such English-fluency policies?

• **Popular Culture:** "Tiger Woods was asked if it bothered him to be called an African-American. 'It does,' he said. 'Growing up, I came up with this name: I'm a "Cablinasian." As in Caucasian-black-Indian-Asian.' Did Tiger Woods' refusal to be racially pigeonholed signal the beginning of the end for racial identity politics?" (Gary Kamiya, Salon.com). Have students compare this portrayal of Woods with how he has been portrayed during his more recent personal scandals.

California. Even though most Indochinese immigrants spoke no English when they arrived in this country, some of their children have done very well in school and have been stereotyped as "brains."

Asian Americans and Sports   Until recently, Asian Americans received little recognition in sports. However, Yao Ming, Yani Tseng, and Daisuke Matsuzaka have been recognized as top athletes in various sports, as have the past and present winners in women's ice skating and gymnastics, such as Kristi Yamaguchi, Michelle Kwan, and Amy Chow. As one sports analyst stated, "[These athletes] are of Asian descent, but more importantly they are Asian Americans whose actions reflect upon the United States. . . . As role models, particularly for the Asian-American community, they exemplify success, integrity, discipline and a dedicated work ethic" (Shum, 1997).

Latinos/as (Hispanic Americans)

The terms *Latino* (for males), *Latina* (for females), and *Hispanic* are used interchangeably to refer to people who trace their origins to Spanish-speaking Latin America and the Iberian peninsula. However, as racial–ethnic scholars have pointed out, the label *Hispanic* was first used by the U.S. government to designate people of Latin American and Spanish descent living in the United States, and it has not been fully accepted as a source of identity by the more than 47 million Latinos/as who live in the United States today (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Instead, many of the people who trace their roots to Spanish-speaking countries think of themselves as Mexican Americans, Chicanos/as, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, Costa Ricans, Argentines, Hondurans, Dominicans, or members of other categories. Many also think of themselves as having a combination of Spanish, African, and Native American ancestry.

Mexican Americans or Chicanos/as   Mexican Americans—including both native- and foreign-born people of Mexican origin—are the largest segment (approximately two-thirds) of the Latino/a population in the United States. Most Mexican Americans live in the southwestern region of the
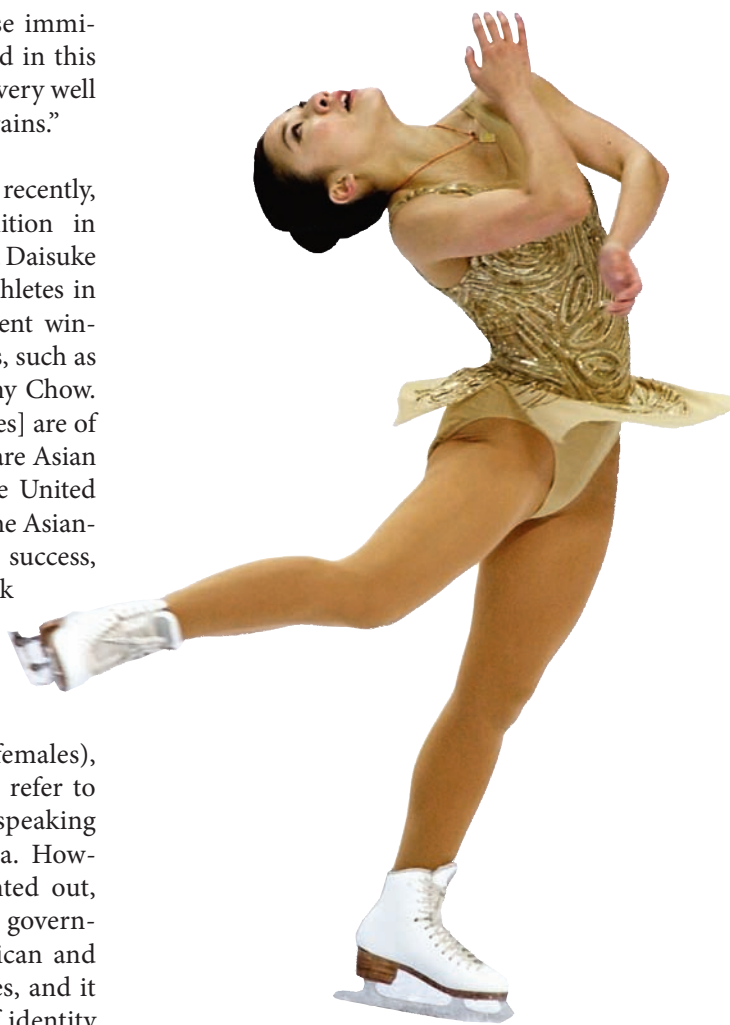
© AP Photo/Don Ryan

▲ Increasing numbers of Asian Americans are distinguishing themselves in college and professional athletics. Champion figure skater Michelle Kwan is one of the best-known recent Asian American sports heroes.

United States, although more have moved throughout the United States in recent years.

Immigration from Mexico is the primary vehicle by which the Mexican American population grew in this country. Initially, Mexican-origin workers came to work in agriculture, where they were viewed as a readily available cheap and seasonal labor force. Many initially entered the United States as undocumented workers ("illegal aliens"); however, they were more vulnerable to deportation than other illegal immigrants because of their visibility and the proximity of their country of origin. For more than a century, there has been a "revolving door"

- **Historical Perspective:** Have students compare the following statements and discuss each president's primary concerns: "There can be no fifty-fifty Americanism in this country. There is room here for only 100 percent Americanism, only for those who are Americans and nothing else" (Theodore Roosevelt, U.S. President from 1901 to 1908). "We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams" (Jimmy Carter, U.S. President from 1977 to 1980).
- **Recent Events:** Outline for students the current debate on immigration, including the passage of Arizona's controversial new law. Outline the human rights concerns, the business needs for cheap labor, the fears about an unsecured border, and our historic dependence upon Mexico and Latin America for cheap labor.

between the United States and Mexico that has been open when workers were needed and closed during periods of economic recession and high rates of U.S. unemployment.

Mexican Americans have long been seen as a source of cheap labor, while—ironically—at the same time, they have been stereotyped as lazy and unwilling to work. As has been true of other groups, when white workers viewed Mexican Americans as a threat to their jobs, they demanded that the "illegal aliens" be sent back to Mexico. Consequently, U.S. citizens who happen to be Mexican American have been asked for proof of their citizenship, especially when anti-immigration sentiments are running high. Many Mexican American families have lived in the United States for five or six generations—they have fought in wars, made educational and political gains, and consider themselves to be solid U.S. citizens. Thus, it is a great source of frustration for them to be viewed as illegal immigrants or to be asked "How long have you been in this country?"

Puerto Ricans   When Puerto Rico became a territory of the United States in 1917, Puerto Ricans acquired U.S. citizenship and the right to move freely to and from the mainland. In the 1950s, many migrated to the mainland when the Puerto Rican sugar industry collapsed, settling primarily in New York and New Jersey. Although living conditions have improved substantially for some Puerto Ricans, life has been difficult for the many living in poverty in Spanish Harlem and other barrios. Nevertheless, in recent years Puerto Ricans have made dramatic advances in education, the arts, and politics. Increasing numbers have become lawyers, physicians, and college professors (see Rodriguez, 1989).

Cuban Americans   Cuban Americans live primarily in the Southeast, especially Florida. As a group, they have fared somewhat better than other Latinos/as because many Cuban immigrants were affluent professionals and businesspeople who fled Cuba after Fidel Castro's 1959 Marxist revolution. This early wave of Cuban immigrants has median incomes well above those of other Latinos/as; however, this group is still below the national average. The second wave of Cuban Americans, arriving in the 1970s, has fared worse. Many had been released from prisons and mental hospitals in Cuba, and their arrival fueled an upsurge

in prejudice against all Cuban Americans. The more recent arrivals have developed their own ethnic and economic enclaves in Miami's Little Havana, and many of the earlier immigrants have become mainstream professionals and entrepreneurs.

Latinos/as and Sports   For most of the twentieth century, Latinos have played Major League Baseball. Originally, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Venezuelans were selected for their light skin as well as for their skill as players (Hoose, 1989). Today, Latinos represent more than 20 percent of all major leaguers. If not for a 1974 U.S. Labor Department quota limiting how many foreign-born players can play professional baseball, this number might be even larger (Hoose, 1989).

Recently, Latinos in sports have gained more recognition as books and websites have been created

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▲ Albert Pujols of the St. Louis Cardinals is one of the most visible Latino athletes. Latino and Latina sports figures have gained prominence in a wide variety of sports, including boxing, baseball, golf, and tennis.

- **Research:** "The income gap between the U.S. and Mexico is the widest of any two contiguous countries in the world" (*Newsweek*).
- **Media Coverage:** "Construction begins on the $57 million San Diego border fence. At a cost of about $16 million a mile, the fence will be far more expensive than fences the U.S. government is building elsewhere along the nation's 1,952-mile border with Mexico. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said the average

cost along the entire border is $2 million to $3 million a mile" (Associated Press, 8/2008). Have students debate the pros and cons of constructing such a fence.
- **Active Learning:** Take your class online to the Immigration and Naturalization Service web page for an in-class exploration. Have different groups work through the steps towards naturalization and citizenship for different immigration scenarios (**uscis.gov**).

to describe their accomplishments. For example, the website Latino Legends in Sports was created in 1999 to inform people about the contributions of Latino and Latina athletes (see **www.latinosportslegends.com**).

Education is a crucial issue for Latinos/as. Because of past discrimination and unequal educational opportunities, many Latinos/as currently have low levels of educational attainment. Many are unable to attend college or participate in collegiate sports, which is essential for being drafted in professional sports other than baseball. Consequently, the overall number of Latinas/os in college and professional sports is low compared to the rest of the U.S. population who are in this age bracket.

Middle Eastern Americans

Since 1970, many immigrants have arrived in the United States from countries located in the "Middle East," which is the geographic region from Afghanistan to Libya and including Arabia, Cyprus, and Asiatic Turkey. Placing people in the "Middle Eastern" American category is somewhat like placing wide diversities of people in the categories of Asian American or Latino/a; some U.S. residents trace their origins to countries such as Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, UAE (United Arab Emirates), and Yemen. Middle Eastern Americans speak a variety of languages and have diverse religious backgrounds: Some are Muslim, some are Coptic Christian, and others are Melkite Catholic. Although some are from working-class families, Lebanese Americans, Syrian Americans, Iranian Americans, and Kuwaiti Americans primarily come from middle- and upper income family backgrounds. For example, numerous Iranian Americans are scientists, professionals, and entrepreneurs.

In cities across the United States, Muslims have established social, economic, and ethnic enclaves. On the Internet, they have created websites that provide information about Islamic centers, schools, and lists of businesses and services run by those who adhere to Islam, one of the fastest-growing religions in this country. In cities such as Seattle, incorporation into the economic mainstream has been relatively easy for Palestinian immigrants who left their homeland in the 1980s. Some have found well-paid employment with corporations such as Microsoft

because they bring educational skills and talents to the information-based economy, including the ability to translate software into Arabic for Middle Eastern markets (Ramirez, 1999). In the United States, Islamic schools and centers often bring together people from a diversity of countries such as Egypt and Pakistan. Many Muslim leaders and parents focus on how to raise children to be good Muslims and good U.S. citizens. However, recent immigrants continue to be torn between establishing roots in the United States and the continuing divisions and strife that exist in their homelands. Some Middle Eastern Americans experience prejudice and discrimination based on their speech patterns, appearance (such as the *hijabs,* or "head-to-toe covering" that leaves only the face exposed, which many girls and women wear), or the assumption that "all Middle Easterners" are somehow associated with terrorism.

Following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States by terrorists whose origins were traced to the Middle East, hate crimes and other forms of discrimination against people who were assumed to be Arabs, Arab Americans, or Muslims escalated in this country. With the passage of the U.S. Patriot Act—a law giving the federal government greater authority to engage in searches and surveillance with less judicial review than previously—in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, many Arab Americans have expressed concern that this new law could be used to target people who appear to be of Middle Eastern origins.

Middle Eastern Americans and Sports Although more Islamic schools are beginning to focus on sports, particularly for teenage boys, there has been less emphasis on competitive athletics among many Middle Eastern Americans. Based on popular sporting events in their countries of origin, some Middle Eastern Americans play golf or soccer. As well, some Iranian Americans follow the soccer careers of professional players from Iran who now play for German, Austrian, Belgian, and Greek clubs. Keeping up with global sporting events is easy with all-sports television cable channels and websites that provide up-to-the-minute information about players and competitions. Over time, there will probably be greater participation by Middle Eastern American males in competitions such as soccer and golf; however, girls and women in Muslim families are typically not allowed to engage in athletic activities. Although little research has been

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- **Recent Events:** Have students research and report back on controversial law enforcement and ICE actions that have focused on Middle Easterners. Have them analyze the arguments of those who support and those who condemn such actions.
- **Extra Examples:** Have students research the ethnic makeup of America's Iraqi immigrant community and compare it to this

breakdown of Iraq's ethnic populations: 60 percent Shiite, 20 percent Sunni, 17 percent Kurd, 3 percent other.
- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disk also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.

▲ Muslims in the United States who wear traditional attire may face prejudice and/or discrimination as they go about their daily lives.

ethnic dominance. In Europe, for example, ethnic violence has persisted in Yugoslavia, Spain, Britain (between the Protestant majority and the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland), Romania, Russia, Moldova, and Georgia. Ethnic violence continues in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Hundreds of thousands have died from warfare, disease, and refugee migration.

Ethnic wars have a high price even for survivors, whose life chances can become bleaker even after the violence subsides. In ethnic conflict between Abkhazians and Georgians in the former Soviet Union, for example, as many as two thousand people have been killed and more than eighty thousand displaced. Ethnic hatred also devastated the province of Kosovo, which is located in Serbia, and brought about the deaths of thousands of ethnic Albanians (Bennahum, 1999).

In the twenty-first century, the struggle between the Israeli government and various Palestinian factions over the future and borders of Palestine continues to make headlines. Discord in this region has heightened tensions among people not only in Israel and Palestine but also in the United States and around the world as deadly clashes continue and political leaders are apparently unable to reach a lasting solution to the decades-long strife.

done on this issue in the United States, one study of Islamic countries in the Middle East found that female athletes face strong cultural opposition to their sports participation (Dupre and Gains, 1997).

Global Racial and Ethnic Inequality in the Future

Throughout the world, many racial and ethnic groups seek *self-determination*—the right to choose their own way of life. As many nations are currently structured, however, self-determination is impossible.

Worldwide Racial and Ethnic Struggles

The cost of self-determination is the loss of life and property in ethnic warfare. In recent years, the Cold War has given way to dozens of smaller wars over

Growing Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the United States

Racial and ethnic diversity is increasing in the United States. African Americans, Latinos/as, Asian Americans, and Native Americans constitute one-fourth of the U.S. population, whereas whites are a shrinking percentage of the population. Today, white Americans make up 70 percent of the population, in contrast to 80 percent in 1980. It is predicted that by 2056, the roots of the average U.S. resident will be in Africa, Asia, Hispanic countries, the Pacific islands, and the Middle East—not white Europe.

What effect will these changes have on racial and ethnic relations? Several possibilities exist. On the one hand, conflicts may become more overt and confrontational as people continue to use *sincere fictions*—personal beliefs that reflect larger societal mythologies, such as "I am not a racist" or "I have

you can make a difference

Working for Racial Harmony

Suppose that you are talking with several friends about a series of racist incidents at your college. Having studied the sociological imagination, you decide to launch an organization similar to No Time to Hate, which was started at Emory University several years ago to reduce racism on campus. In analyzing racism, your group identifies factors contributing to the problem: (1) divisiveness between different cultural and ethnic communities, (2) persistent lack of trust, (3) the fact that many people never really communicate with one another, (4) the need to bring different voices into the curriculum and college life generally, and (5) the need to learn respect for people from different backgrounds (Loeb, 1994). Your group also develops a set of questions to be answered regarding racism on campus:

- *Encouraging inclusion and acceptance.* Do members of our group reflect the college's racial and ethnic diversity? How much do I know about other people's history and culture? How can I become more tolerant—or accepting—of people who are different from me?
- *Raising consciousness.* What is racism? What causes it? Can people participate in racist language and behavior without realizing what they are doing? What is our college or university doing to reduce racism?
- *Becoming more self-aware.* How much do I know about my own family roots and ethnic background? How do

the families and communities in which we grow up affect our perceptions of racial and ethnic relations?

- *Using available resources.* What resources are available for learning more about working to reduce racism? Here are some agencies to contact:

  - ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union), 125 Broad Street, 18th floor, New York, NY 10004. Online: **www.aclu.org**
  - ADL (Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith), 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017. Online: **www.adl.org**
  - NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), 4805 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215. Online: **www.naacp.org**
  - National Council of La Raza, 1126 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036. Online: **www.nclr.org**

What additional items would you add to the list of problem areas on your campus? How might your group's objective be reached? Over time, many colleges and universities have been changed as a result of involvement by students like you!

never discriminated against anyone"—even when these are inaccurate perceptions (Feagin and Vera, 1995). Interethnic tensions may increase as competition for education, jobs, and other resources continues to grow.

On the other hand, there is reason for cautious optimism. Throughout U.S. history, members of diverse racial and ethnic groups have struggled to gain the freedom and rights that were previously withheld from them. Today, minority grassroots organizations are pressing for affordable housing, job training, and educational opportunities. As discussed in the You Can Make a Difference box, movements composed of both whites and people of color continue to oppose racism in everyday life, to seek to heal divisions among racial groups, and to teach children about racial tolerance. Many groups hope

not only to affect their own microcosm but also to contribute to worldwide efforts to end racism.

To eliminate racial discrimination, it will be necessary to equalize opportunities in schools and workplaces. As Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994: 158) have emphasized,

Today more than ever, opposing racism requires that we notice race, not ignore it, that we afford it the recognition it deserves and the subtlety it embodies. By noticing race we can begin to challenge racism, with its ever-more-absurd reduction of human experience to an essence attributed to all without regard for historical or social context. . . . By noticing race we can develop the political insight and mobilization necessary to make the U.S. a more racially just and egalitarian society.

- **Active Learning:** Your students can use the You Can Make a Difference box to start a public information project to help people in their circle of influence become more knowledgeable about the ethnic, immigrant, and racial composition of their communities.

- **CourseMate:** The Sociology CourseMate for this text gives your students access to an interactive ebook, flash cards, video, and other study and learning tools, including quizzes that provide immediate feedback. It's easiest for students to log in at **www.cengagebrain.com**.

chapter review

● How do race and ethnicity differ?

A race is a category of people who have been singled out as inferior or superior, often on the basis of physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, or eye shape. An ethnic group is a collection of people distinguished primarily by cultural or national characteristics, including unique cultural traits, a sense of community, a feeling of ethnocentrism, ascribed membership, and territoriality.

● What are dominant groups and subordinate groups?

A dominant group is an advantaged group that has superior resources and rights in society. A subordinate group is a disadvantaged group whose members are subjected to unequal treatment by the dominant group. Use of the terms *dominant* and *subordinate* reflects the importance of power in relationships.

● How is prejudice related to discrimination?

Prejudice is a negative attitude often based on stereotypes, which are overgeneralizations about the appearance, behavior, or other characteristics of all members of a group. Discrimination involves actions or practices of dominant-group members that have a harmful effect on members of a subordinate group.

● What are the major psychological explanations of prejudice?

According to the frustration–aggression hypothesis of prejudice, people frustrated in their efforts to achieve a highly desired goal may respond with aggression toward others, who then become scapegoats. Another theory of prejudice focuses on the authoritarian personality, marked by excessive conformity, submissiveness to authority, intolerance, insecurity, superstition, and rigid thinking.

● How do individual discrimination and institutional discrimination differ?

Individual discrimination involves actions by individual members of the dominant group that harm members of subordinate groups or their property. Institutional discrimination involves day-to-day practices of organizations and institutions that have a harmful effect on members of subordinate groups.

● How do sociologists view racial and ethnic group relations?

Symbolic interactionists suggest that increased contact between people from divergent groups should lead to favorable attitudes and behavior when members of each group (1) have equal status, (2) pursue the same goals, (3) cooperate with one another to achieve goals, and (4) receive positive feedback when they interact with one another. Functionalists stress that members of subordinate groups become a part of the mainstream through assimilation, the process by which members of subordinate groups become absorbed into the dominant culture. Conflict theorists focus on economic stratification and access to power in race and ethnic relations. The caste perspective views inequality as a permanent feature of society, whereas class perspectives focus on the link between capitalism and racial exploitation. According to racial formation theory, the actions of the U.S. government substantially define racial and ethnic relations.

● How have the experiences of various racial–ethnic groups differed in the United States?

Native Americans suffered greatly from the actions of European settlers, who seized their lands and made them victims of forced migration and genocide. Today, they lead lives characterized by poverty and lack of opportunity. White Anglo-Saxon Protestants are the most privileged group in the United States, although social class and gender affect their life chances. White ethnic Americans, whose ancestors migrated from southern and eastern European countries, have gradually made their way into the mainstream of U.S. society. Following the abolishment of slavery in 1863, African Americans were still subjected to segregation, discrimination, and lynchings. Despite civil rights legislation and economic and political gains by many African Americans, racial prejudice and discrimination continue to exist. Asian American immigrants as a group have enjoyed considerable upward mobility in U.S. society in recent decades, but many Asian Americans still struggle to survive by working at low-paying jobs and living in urban ethnic enclaves.

Although some Latinos/as have made substantial political, economic, and professional gains in U.S. society, as a group they are nevertheless subjected to anti-immigration sentiments. Middle Eastern immigrants to the United States speak a variety of languages and have diverse religious backgrounds. Because they generally come from middle-class backgrounds, they have made inroads into mainstream U.S. society.

key terms

assimilation 286

authoritarian personality 282

discrimination 282

dominant group 278

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racism 279

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theory of racial
   formation 290

questions for critical thinking

1. Do you consider yourself defined more strongly by your race or by your ethnicity? How so?
2. Given that subordinate groups have some common experiences, why is there such deep conflict between some of these groups?
3. What would need to happen in the United States, both individually and institutionally, for a positive form of ethnic pluralism to flourish in the twenty-first century?

turning to video

Watch the CBS video *Multiracial Americans* (running time 2:02), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video focuses on the fact that the number of multiracial/inter-ethnic Americans is up 33% since the year 2000. As you watch the video, think about the people you know and see from day to day, and think about your own racial/ethnic identity. After you've watched the video, consider this question: What does this shift to mixed identities mean to a country that has historically described its citizens in single-race terms? Explain.

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- If you are a first-time user, the site will walk you through the registration process to redeem your access code.
- Alternatively, you may search by this book's title to locate its complimentary resources.

As I sat in the theater at the Aladdin Hotel on the Strip [in Las Vegas, Nevada], I was enclosed by a sea of crowns. Little girls and teenagers attended the [Miss America] Pageant in droves, many wearing the crowns and sashes that represented their biggest pageant victories.

Sitting in the middle of the cheering section for Miss Kansas, surrounded by cardboard daisies on wooden sticks with Miss Kansas's face in the center and shouts of "You go girl!" I felt as if I were at a political convention or a religious revival. Also marooned in the Miss Kansas section, without any daisies, were a little girl, her mother (who had twice competed in the Miss Nevada state pageant), and her grandmother, who sat in front of me. The twelve-year-old watched the Pageant with wide eyes the whole night. She wore no crown or sash, but she looked smart in a black velvet dress.

After the talent segment, the girl turned to me and asked, "When I'm in the Miss America Pageant, I want to play the piano and the saxophone for my talent. I can switch back and forth. Do you think that would work?"

"Well, it would certainly be different," I replied.

"Good, then that would help me win."

"So, you really want to be Miss America someday?"

The girl nodded her head, her face solemn. Before replying, I paused. "Well, you can do

▲ Jennifer Berry, Miss Oklahoma, accepts her crown as the 2006 Miss America at the Aladdin Casino in Las Vegas. What is your opinion of pageants such as this one?

© Tim Shaffer/Reuters/Landov

that. But, you know, there are so many other things to do besides being a beauty queen."

The little girl did not hear me. She was rapturously watching as Miss Oklahoma was crowned Miss America 2006. All the other girls in the audience, those with crowns and those without, stood together, mouthing the words to the famous theme song as the new Miss America was serenaded by the voice of the great Pageant emcee, Bert Perks, who died in 1992: *"There she is, Miss America, there she is, your ideal. . . ."*

—Hilary Levey (2007: 72), a graduate student in sociology at Princeton University, describes her thoughts upon attending a Miss America Pageant. Although Ms. Levey never competed in a beauty pageant, her mother was named Miss America (from Michigan) in 1970.

Chapter Focus Question

How do expectations about female and male appearance, and especially weight, reflect gender inequality?

Many little girls are similar to the one who Hilary Levey encountered at the Miss America Pageant: They have their hearts set on being chosen as the winner of a beauty and/or talent competition such as Miss America or Miss USA. Tens of thousands of beauty pageants—ranging from local beach bikini pageants to international scholarship competitions—are held annually. Two competitions—the Miss America Scholarship program and the Miss USA pageant—involve more than 7,500 local and regional pageants across the country each year (Banet-Weiser, 1999).

Of course, all pageants are not identical. For example, organizers of the Miss America pageant claim that their competition focuses on both talent and beauty and that it exists "to provide personal and professional opportunities for young women and to promote their voices in culture, politics and the community" (Miss America, 2008). By contrast, Miss USA, which is part of the Miss Universe system and partly owned by Donald Trump, originated as a "bathing beauty" competition that was sponsored by a swimwear company. Today, Miss USA and its younger counterpart, Miss Teen USA, continue to look for female models who look outstanding in swimsuits and evening gowns, and who can promote products ranging from suntan lotion to flashy diamonds (Angelotti, 2006). Regardless of somewhat different stated goals, these talent and beauty competitions are really about physical beauty and appearance.

For this reason, competitions such as Miss America, Miss USA, Miss Universe, and Miss Teen

In this chapter

- Sex: The Biological Dimension
- Gender: The Cultural Dimension
- Gender Stratification in Historical and Contemporary Perspective
- Gender and Socialization
- Contemporary Gender Inequality
- Perspectives on Gender Stratification
- Gender Issues in the Future

USA have been the subject of both praise and criticism for the ways in which they portray girls and young women. Some individuals believe that beauty pageants are good for women because they encourage individual achievement and promote self-confidence. Pageant winners are often praised for being positive role models for young women, particularly if the title holder remains scandal-free during the year of her reign. However, some critics of beauty pageants claim that these events promote an unrealistic beauty ideal that is not attainable for most people and that is not necessarily desirable in the real world (see Banet-Weiser, 1999). Other critics believe that pageants are degrading to women because the contestants are ranked "like prize horses" and given a sash to put around their neck (Corsbie-Massay, 2005: 1). Some feminist analysts argue that beauty pageants objectify women (Watson and Martin, 2004).

What is objectification? *Objectification* is the process whereby some people treat other individuals as if they were objects or things, not human beings. For example, we objectify women—or men—when we judge them strictly on the basis of their physical appearance rather than on their individual qualities, attributes, or actions (Schur, 1983). Although men may be objectified in some societies, the objectification of girls and women is widespread and particularly common in the United States and many other nations (see ■ Table 10.1). In regard to beauty pageants, organizers seek to deflect this criticism by providing contestants with an opportunity to talk about themselves and their interests or to answer questions that supposedly will show that they are intelligent and knowledgeable about current events. At the end of each pageant, however, the winner's physical attractiveness is most often highlighted rather than the true substance of her life (Angelotti, 2006). Although some people think of the Miss America Pageant and similar competitions as a vestige of the past, many women and men in the twenty-first century are strongly influenced by the images that these competitions project regarding beauty, body image, race/ethnicity, identity, and consumerism (Watson and Martin, 2004).

Some differences between men and women are biological in nature; however, many differences between the sexes are socially constructed. Studying sociology makes us aware of differences that relate to gender (a social concept) as well as differences that are based on a person's biological makeup, or sex. In this chapter, we examine the issue of gender: what it

table 10.1

The Objectification of Women

General Aspects of Objectification	Objectification Based on Cultural Preoccupation with "Looks"
Women are responded to primarily as "females," whereas their personal qualities and accomplishments are of secondary importance.	Women are often seen as the objects of sexual attraction, not full human beings—for example, when they are stared at.
Women are seen as "all alike."	Women are seen by some as depersonalized body parts—for example, "a piece of ass."
Women are seen as being subordinate and passive, so things can easily be "done to a woman"—for example, discrimination, harassment, and violence.	Depersonalized female sexuality is used for cultural and economic purposes—such as in the media, advertising, the fashion and cosmetics industries, and pornography.
Women are seen as easily ignored or trivialized.	Women are seen as being "decorative" and status-conferring objects to be bought (sometimes collected) and displayed by men and sometimes by other women.
	Women are evaluated according to prevailing, narrow "beauty" standards and often feel pressure to conform to appearance norms.

Source: Schur, 1983.

- **For Discussion:** Use this statement to begin an introductory discussion about gender: "Different though the sexes are, they inter-mix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is very opposite of what it is above" (Virginia Woolf).

- **Table Note:** Bring to class visual examples of this phenomenon. Use advertisements, consumer products, and film roles.
- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disk provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint® slides, videos, PowerPoint® and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Body Image and Gender?

True	False	
T	F	1. Most people have an accurate perception of their physical appearance.
T	F	2. Recent studies show that up to 95 percent of men express dissatisfaction with some aspect of their bodies.
T	F	3. Many young girls and women believe that being even slightly "overweight" makes them less "feminine."
T	F	4. Physical attractiveness is a more central part of self-concept for women than for men.
T	F	5. Contestants in beauty pageants such as Miss America have remained about the same in body size throughout the history of these competitions.
T	F	6. Thinness has always been the "ideal" body image for women.
T	F	7. Women bodybuilders have gained full acceptance in society.
T	F	8. The media play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions about the ideal female body.

Answers on page 312.

is and how it affects us. Before reading on, test your knowledge about body image and gender by taking the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz.

Sex: The Biological Dimension

Whereas the word *gender* is often used to refer to the distinctive qualities of men and women (masculinity and femininity) that are culturally created, *sex* refers to the biological and anatomical differences between females and males. At the core of these differences is the chromosomal information transmitted at the moment a child is conceived. The mother contributes an X chromosome and the father either an X (which produces a female embryo) or a Y (which produces a male embryo). At birth, male and female infants are distinguished by *primary sex characteristics:* the genitalia used in the reproductive process. At puberty, an increased production of hormones results in the development of *secondary sex characteristics:* the physical traits (other than reproductive organs) that identify an individual's sex. For women, these include larger breasts, wider hips, and narrower shoulders; a layer of fatty tissue throughout the body; and menstruation. For men, they include development of enlarged genitals, a deeper voice, greater height, a more muscular build, and more body and facial hair.

Hermaphrodites/Transsexuals

Sex is not always clear-cut. Occasionally, a hormone imbalance before birth produces a *hermaphrodite—a person in whom sexual differentiation is ambiguous or incomplete.* A hermaphrodite (sometimes called an *intersexed person*) tends to have some combination of male and female genitalia. In one case, for example, a chromosomally normal (XY) male was born with a penis just one centimeter long and a urinary opening similar to that of a female. Some people may be genetically of one sex but have a gender identity of the other. That is true for a *transsexual,* a person in whom the sex-related

sex the biological and anatomical differences between females and males.

primary sex characteristics the genitalia used in the reproductive process.

secondary sex characteristics the physical traits (other than reproductive organs) that identify an individual's sex.

hermaphrodite a person in whom sexual differentiation is ambiguous or incomplete.

transsexual a person who believes that he or she was born with the body of the wrong sex.

- **IRM Internet Activities:** The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty
- **Media Coverage:** "A number of local transsexuals met on Wednesday with several MPs, handing the parliamentarians a petition asking them to support cross-dressers because they suffer from an illness, reported Al Watan. The letter complained that recently-introduced legislation did not take transsexuals' psychological and physical circumstances into consideration" (*Kuwait Times,* 8/2008). Have students research the status of transsexuals in other cultures.

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Body Image and Gender

1. **False.** Many people do not have a very accurate perception of their bodies. For example, many girls and women think of themselves as "fat" when they are not. Some boys and men believe that they need a well-developed chest and arm muscles, broad shoulders, and a narrow waist.
2. **True.** In recent studies, up to 95 percent of men believed they needed to improve some aspect of their bodies.
3. **True.** More than half of all adult women in the United States are currently dieting, and over three-fourths of normal-weight women think they are "too fat." Recently, very young girls have developed similar concerns.
4. **True.** Women have been socialized to believe that being physically attractive is very important. Studies have found that weight and body shape are the central determinants of women's perception of their physical attractiveness.
5. **False.** During the 1980s and 1990s, contestants in Miss America and other national beauty pageants decreased in body size, becoming much thinner and less curvaceous. Today, more emphasis is placed on being physically fit, but winning contestants typically have much lower body weight than the average woman of their height and age.
6. **False.** The "ideal" body image for women has changed a number of times. A positive view of body fat has prevailed for most of human history; however, in the twentieth century in the United States, this view gave way to "fat aversion."
7. **False.** Although bodybuilding among women has gained some degree of acceptance, women bodybuilders are still expected to be very "feminine" and not to overdevelop themselves.
8. **True.** Women in the United States are bombarded by advertising, television programs, and films containing images of women that typically represent an ideal which most real women cannot attain.

Sources: Based on Fallon, Katzman, and Wooley, 1994; Kilbourne, 1999; Seid, 1994; and Turner, 1997.

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structures of the brain that define gender identity are opposite from the physical sex organs of the person's body. Consequently, transsexuals often feel that they are the opposite sex from that of their sex organs. Some transsexuals are aware of this conflict between gender identity and physical sex as early as the preschool years. Some transsexuals take hormone treatments or have a sex-change operation to alter their genitalia in order to achieve a body congruent with their sense of sexual identity. Many transsexuals who receive hormone treatments or undergo surgical procedures go on to lead lives that they view as being compatible with their true sexual identity.

Western societies acknowledge the existence of only two sexes; some other societies recognize three—men, women, and *berdaches* (or *hijras* or *xaniths*): biological males who behave, dress, work, and are treated in most respects as women. The closest approximation of a third sex in Western societies is a *transvestite,* **a male who lives as a woman or a female who lives as a man but does not alter the genitalia.** Although transvestites are not treated as a third sex, they often "pass" for members of that sex because their appearance and mannerisms fall within the range of what is expected from members of the other sex.

Transsexuality may occur in conjunction with homosexuality, but this is frequently not the case. Some researchers believe that both transsexuality and homosexuality have a common prenatal cause such as a critically timed hormonal release due to stress in the mother or the presence of certain hormone-mimicking chemicals during critical steps of fetal development. Researchers continue to examine this issue and debate the origins of transsexuality and homosexuality.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation **refers to an individual's preference for emotional–sexual relationships with members of the opposite sex (heterosexuality), the**

- **Research:** Have students read and conduct background research on Jeffrey Eugenides's Pulitzer-prizewinning novel, *Middlesex,* which features an intersexed protagonist.
- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students write for ten minutes at the beginning of class. Use these questions as a prompt: According to prevailing gender stereotypes, what are the most important characteristics associated with men? With women? Are these stereotypes changing?
- **Extra Examples:** Use student answers to the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz to guide your lectures as you begin this chapter. Which questions were more commonly missed? What was the breakdown by gender?

© AP Photo/Jeff Chiu

▲ In May 2010, Chastity Bono legally became Chaz Bono—and officially male. The only daughter of Sonny and Cher, Chastity had long known that she was a lesbian. But after a 2009 sex-change operation, the new Chaz is a heterosexual male.

same sex (homosexuality), or both (bisexuality) (Lips, 2001). Some scholars believe that sexual orientation is rooted in biological factors that are present at birth; others believe that sexuality has both biological and social components and is not preordained at birth.

In referring to homosexuality, many people prefer to use the acronym GLBT. What does this term mean? In recent years, organizations representing gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered persons have adopted this acronym. (Some groups use the acronym "LGBT," which places lesbian before gay; however, the most widely used term appears to be "GLBT.") The term *gay* refers to males who prefer same-sex relationships; *lesbian* refers to females who prefer same-sex relationships. *Bisexual* is the term used to describe a person's physical or romantic attraction to both males and females. *Transgender* is a term applied to persons whose appearance, behavior, and/or gender identity (self-identification as man, woman, neither, or both) does not match that individual's assigned sex (biological attributes and identification by others as "male" or "female"). *Transgenderism* is sometimes used to refer to those who cross-dress, to transsexuals, and to others outside mainstream categories.

What criteria have social scientists used to study sexual orientation? In a definitive study of sexuality conducted in the mid-1990s, researchers at the University of Chicago established three criteria for identifying people as homosexual or bisexual: (1) *sexual attraction* to persons of one's own gender, (2) *sexual involvement* with one or more persons of one's own gender, and (3) *self-identification* as a gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Michael et al., 1994). According to these criteria, then, having engaged in a homosexual act does not necessarily classify a person as homosexual. In fact, many respondents in the University of Chicago study indicated that although they had at least one homosexual encounter when they were younger, they were no longer involved in homosexual conduct and never identified themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Studies have examined how sexual orientation is linked to identity. Sociologist Kristin G. Esterberg (1997) interviewed lesbian and bisexual women to determine how they "perform" lesbian or bisexual identity through daily activities such as choice of clothing and hairstyles, as well as how they use body language and talk. According to Esterberg (1997), some of the women viewed themselves as being "lesbian from birth" whereas others had experienced shifts in their identities, depending on social surroundings, age, and political conditions at specific periods in their lives. Another study looked at gay and bisexual men. Human development scholar Ritch C. Savin-Williams (2004) found that

> **transvestite** a male who lives as a woman or a female who lives as a man but does not alter the genitalia.
>
> **sexual orientation** a person's preference for emotional–sexual relationships with members of the opposite sex (heterosexuality), the same sex (homosexuality), or both (bisexuality).

- **Recent Events:** Have students watch and analyze the recent documentary film *Ask Not,* which explores the history and effects of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy on gay and lesbian soldiers and service members. Ask students to connect it to the current debates about the policy in Washington.
- **For Discussion:** "I'd rather be black than gay because when you're black you don't have to tell your mother" (Charles Pierce, 1980).

Have students discuss the similarities and differences between homophobic and racist forms of discrimination and abuse.
- **Media Coverage:** "Citigroup Inc. already included the words sexual orientation in its non-discrimination policy. The company has a gay employee resource group. It offers diversity training that includes sexual orientation, and it provides health insurance coverage to employees' same-sex partners" (*Washington Post,* 3/2004). Have

gay/bisexual youths often believe from an early age that they are different from other boys:

> The pattern that most characterized the youths' awareness, interpretation, and affective responses to childhood attractions consisted of an overwhelming desire to be in the company of men. They wanted to touch, smell, see, and hear masculinity. This awareness originated from earliest childhood memories; in this sense, they "always felt gay."

However, most of the boys and young men realized that these feelings were not typical of other males and were uncomfortable when others attempted to make them conform to the established cultural definitions of masculinity, such as showing a great interest in team sports, competition, and aggressive pursuits.

Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation

The United States has numerous forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation. In most states, gay and lesbian couples cannot enter into legally recognized marital relationships because the states have passed constitutional amendments that limit marriage to a union between a man and a woman or because legislators have passed statutes with similar language. As well, lesbian and gay couples continue to fight for parental rights in a number of states because partners who want to adopt a child or are raising children together (typically from a previous heterosexual marriage) learn that only one partner is legally recognized as the child's parent or guardian.

Sexual orientation is sometimes a concern when gay individuals seek medical treatment because of the long-term stigma that associates homosexuality with HIV/AIDS. Some health care providers refuse to treat individuals whom they believe might be at high risk for HIV/AIDS, and others do not address the social and psychological needs of patients who are HIV-positive.

Occupational discrimination remains a pressing problem for people in the GLBT community. Despite laws in many states prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation, openly gay and lesbian people often experience bias in hiring, retention, and promotion in public-sector and private-sector employment. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a federal agency, has documented the fact that heterosexuals frequently harass homosexuals in the workplace. The agency has also handled many cases of same-sex sexual harassment.

One of the most widely publicized forms of discrimination against gays and lesbians has been in the military, where debate continues about the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy implemented in 1993 during the Clinton administration. Under this policy, commanders are not allowed to ask about a serviceperson's sexual orientation, and gay men and lesbians are allowed to serve in the military as long as they do not reveal their sexual orientation. Various studies showed that this policy led to differential treatment of many gay men and lesbians in the military, as well as causing extensive recruitment problems for various branches of the military service. In 2010 the Pentagon approved new rules to ease enforcement of the 1993 congressional ban, but prior to that time as many as 13,000 people may have been discharged under this law. Gay rights organizations have advocated the repeal, or at least easing, of this law, contending that the rules unfairly kept gay troops from seeking medical care or reporting domestic abuse for fear of being exposed and expelled from their military branch. Outright repeal of the ban seems unlikely because of lack of support in Congress.

Various organizations of gays, lesbians, and transgendered persons have been unified in their desire to reduce discrimination and other forms of **homophobia—extreme prejudice and sometimes discriminatory actions directed at gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and others who are perceived as not being heterosexual.** Homophobia involves an aversion to GLBT people or their lifestyle or culture, and it sometimes includes behavior or an act, such as a hate crime, based on this aversion. Some analysts use the term *heterosexism* to describe an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any nonheterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community. This term is used as a parallel to other forms of prejudice and discrimination, including racism, sexism, ageism, and anti-Semitism. Clearly, from this perspective, issues pertaining to homosexuality and heterosexism are not just biological issues but also social constructions that involve societal customs and institutions. Let's turn to the cultural dimension of gender to see how socially

students investigate your school's hiring and benefit policies as they relate to sexual orientation.

▲ In April 2010, Constance McMillen, a high school student in Aberdeen, Mississippi, wanted to attend the senior prom with another young woman as her date. The county school board refused. After a court blocked the school board's decision, McMillen and friend attended the prom to find only five other students there. The "real" prom was apparently held in a secret location.

constructed differences between females and males are crucial in determining how we identify ourselves as girls or boys, women or men.

Gender: The Cultural Dimension

Gender refers to the culturally and socially constructed differences between females and males found in the meanings, beliefs, and practices associated with "femininity" and "masculinity." Although biological differences between women and men are very important, in reality most "sex differences" are socially constructed "gender differences." According to sociologists, social and cultural processes, not biological "givens," are most important in defining what females and males are, what they should do, and what sorts of relations do or should exist between them. Sociologist Judith Lorber (1994: 6) summarizes the importance of gender:

Gender is a human invention, like language, kinship, religion, and technology; like them, gender organizes human social life in culturally patterned ways. Gender organizes social relations in everyday life as well as in the major social structures, such as social class and the hierarchies of bureaucratic organizations.

Virtually everything social in our lives is *gendered*: People continually distinguish between males and females and evaluate them differently. Gender is an integral part of the daily experiences of both women and men (Kimmel and Messner, 2004).

A microlevel analysis of gender focuses on how individuals learn gender roles and acquire a gender identity. *Gender role* refers to the attitudes, behavior, and activities that are socially defined as appropriate for each sex and are learned through the socialization process (Lips, 2001). For example, in U.S. society, males are traditionally expected to demonstrate aggressiveness and toughness whereas females are expected to be passive and nurturing. *Gender identity* is a person's perception of the self as female or male. Typically established between eighteen months and three years of age, gender identity is a powerful aspect of our self-concept.

homophobia extreme prejudice and sometimes discriminatory actions directed at gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and others who are perceived as not being heterosexual.

gender the culturally and socially constructed differences between females and males found in the meanings, beliefs, and practices associated with "femininity" and "masculinity."

gender role the attitudes, behavior, and activities that are socially defined as appropriate for each sex and are learned through the socialization process.

gender identity a person's perception of the self as female or male.

- **For Discussion:** Have students list and analyze the differences between sex and gender. Help them understand why this distinction is important.
- **Sociological Imagination:** How do males and females *do gender* these days? Have students examine the following quoted statement. Does it ring true to them? "A woman simply is, but a man must become. Masculinity is risky and elusive. It is achieved by a revolt from woman, and it is confirmed only by other men. Manhood coerced into sensitivity is no manhood at all" (Camille Paglia).
- **Media Coverage:** "Last February, after 49 years in power, long-time Cuban leader Fidel Castro stepped aside and handed the presidency to his brother, Raul. A little over a month later, Mariela Castro, the president's daughter and leader of the government-backed Center

Although this identity is an individual perception, it is developed through interaction with others. As a result, most people form a gender identity that matches their biological sex: Most biological females think of themselves as female, and most biological males think of themselves as male. Body consciousness is a part of gender identity. ***Body consciousness* is how a person perceives and feels about his or her body;** it also includes an awareness of social conditions in society that contribute to this self-knowledge (Thompson, 1994). Consider, for example, these comments by Steve Michalik, a former Mr. Universe:

> I was small and weak, and my brother Anthony was big and graceful, and my old man made no bones about loving him and hating me. . . . The minute I walked in from school, it was, "You worthless little s--t, what are you doing home so early?" His favorite way to torture me was to tell me he was going to put me in a home. We'd be driving along in Brooklyn somewhere, and we'd pass a building with iron bars on the windows, and he'd stop the car and say to me, "Get out. This is the home we're putting you in." I'd be standing there sobbing on the curb—I was maybe eight or nine at the time. (qtd. in Klein, 1993: 273)

▼ In what ways do these two figures contradict traditional gender expectations? Do you see this trend as a healthy one?

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As we grow up, we become aware, as Michalik did, that the physical shape of our bodies subjects us to the approval or disapproval of others. Being small and weak may be considered positive attributes for women, but they are considered negative characteristics for "true men."

A macrolevel analysis of gender examines structural features, external to the individual, that perpetuate gender inequality. These structures have been referred to as *gendered institutions,* meaning that gender is one of the major ways by which social life is organized in all sectors of society. Gender is embedded in the images, ideas, and language of a society and is used as a means to divide up work, allocate resources, and distribute power. For example, every society uses gender to assign certain tasks—ranging from child rearing to warfare—to females and to males, and differentially rewards those who perform these duties.

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for Sexual Diversity (CENESEX), took a progressive step when she called on the government to rewrite the 70s-era Family Code and pave the way for civil unions" (Queerty.com).
- **Research:** "In the past three decades, the number of females wrestling with an eating disorder in the United States has doubled to at least 5 million, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The non-profit National Eating Disorders

Association estimates an even higher number—as many as 10 million women and 1 million men" (CNN, 3/2006).
- **Media Coverage:** "In Madison Avenue's mind's eye, women are still preternaturally obsessed with the cleanliness of their kitchen floors, while men ruminate constantly about which shaving products will render them more attractive to the opposite sex. The European Parliament has set out to change this. Last week,

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▲ Not all anorexics are women, and not all bodybuilders are men. However, Susan Bordo argues that these two issues are manifestations of the same desire: to avoid having soft, flabby flesh.

These institutions are reinforced by a *gender belief system,* which includes all the ideas regarding masculine and feminine attributes that are held to be valid in a society. This belief system is legitimated by religion, science, law, and other societal values (Lorber, 2005). For example, gendered belief systems may change over time as gender roles change. Many fathers take care of young children today, and there is a much greater acceptance of this change in roles. However, popular stereotypes about men and women, as well as cultural norms about gender-appropriate appearance and behavior, serve to reinforce gendered institutions in society.

The Social Significance of Gender

Gender is a social construction with important consequences in everyday life. Just as stereotypes regarding race/ethnicity have built-in notions of superiority and inferiority, gender stereotypes hold that men and women are inherently different in attributes, behavior, and aspirations. Stereotypes define men as strong, rational, dominant, independent, and less concerned with their appearance. Women are stereotyped as weak, emotional, nurturing, dependent, and anxious about their appearance.

The social significance of gender stereotypes is illustrated by eating problems. The three most common eating problems are anorexia, bulimia, and obesity. With *anorexia,* a person has lost at least 25 percent of body weight due to a compulsive fear of becoming fat (Lott, 1994). With *bulimia,* a person binges by consuming large quantities of food and

body consciousness a term that describes how a person perceives and feels about his or her body.

the legislature voted 504 to 110 to scold advertisers for 'sexual stereotyping,' adopting a nonbinding report that seeks to prod the industry to change the way it depicts men and women" (*New York Times,* 9/2008).

- **For Discussion:** Have students rephrase and analyze the following quoted statement. What are the implications of Dworkin's conclusion? "Sexism is the foundation on which all tyranny is built. Every social form of hierarchy and abuse is modeled on male-over-female domination" (Andrea Dworkin).

then purges the food by induced vomiting, excessive exercise, laxatives, or fasting. With *obesity,* individuals are 20 percent or more above their desirable weight, as established by the medical profession. For a 5-foot-4-inch woman, that is about twenty-five pounds; for a 5-foot-10-inch man, it is about thirty pounds (Burros, 1994: 1).

Sociologist Becky W. Thompson argues that, based on stereotypes, the primary victims of eating problems are presumed to be white, middle-class, heterosexual women. However, such problems also exist among women of color, working-class women, lesbians, and some men. According to Thompson, explanations regarding the relationship between gender and eating problems must take into account a complex array of social factors, including gender socialization and women's responses to problems such as racism and emotional, physical, and sexual abuse (Thompson, 1994; see also Wooley, 1994).

Bodybuilding is another gendered experience. *Bodybuilding* is the process of deliberately cultivating an increase in the mass and strength of the skeletal muscles by means of lifting and pushing weights. In the past, bodybuilding was predominantly a male activity; musculature connoted power, domination, and virility. Today, however, an increasing number of women engage in this activity. As gendered experiences, eating problems and bodybuilding have more in common than we might think. Women's studies scholar Susan Bordo (2004) has noted that the anorexic body and the muscled body are not opposites, but instead are both united against the common enemy of soft, flabby flesh. In other words, the *body* may be objectified both through compulsive dieting and compulsive bodybuilding.

Sexism

Sexism is the subordination of one sex, usually female, based on the assumed superiority of the other sex. Sexism directed at women has three components: (1) negative attitudes toward women; (2) stereotypical beliefs that reinforce, complement, or justify the prejudice; and (3) discrimination— acts that exclude, distance, or keep women separate (Lott, 1994).

Can men be victims of sexism? Although women are more often the target of sexist remarks and practices, men can be victims of sexist assumptions. Examples of sexism directed against men are the assumption that men should not be employed in certain female-dominated occupations, such as nurse or elementary school teacher, and the belief that it is somehow more harmful for families when female soldiers are killed in battle than male soldiers.

Like racism, sexism is used to justify discriminatory treatment. Obvious manifestations of sexism are found in the undervaluing of women's work and in hiring and promotion practices that effectively exclude women from an organization or confine them to the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. Even today, some women who enter nontraditional occupations (such as firefighting and welding) or professions (such as dentistry, architecture, or investment banking) encounter hurdles that men do not face (see "Sociology Works!").

Sexism is interwoven with *patriarchy*—a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political, and economic structures are controlled by men. By contrast, *matriarchy* is a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political, and economic structures are controlled by women; however, few (if any) societies have been organized in this manner. Patriarchy is reflected in the way that men may think of their position as men as a given whereas women may deliberate on what their position in society should be (see the Sociology in Global Perspective box for an example). As the sociologist Virginia Cyrus (1993: 6) explains, "Under patriarchy, men are seen as 'natural' heads of households, Presidential candidates, corporate executives, college presidents, etc. Women, on the other hand, are men's subordinates, playing such supportive roles as housewife, mother, nurse, and secretary." Gender inequality and a division of labor based on male dominance are nearly universal, as we will see in the following discussion on the origins of gender-based stratification.

Gender Stratification in Historical and Contemporary Perspective

How do tasks in a society come to be defined as "men's work" or "women's work"? Three factors are important in determining the gendered division of labor in a society: (1) the type of subsistence

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- **Global Perspective:** Have students conduct research on the status of women in Muslim societies today, and compare it to the following: "Islam gives women a number of rights, some of which were not enjoyed by Western women until the 19th century. For example, until 1882, the property of women in England was given to their husbands when they married, but Muslim women always retained their own assets. Muslim women could specify conditions in their marriage contracts, such as the right to divorce should their husband take another wife. Also, Muslim women in many countries keep their own last name after marriage" (*PBS Global Connections*).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy

sociology works!

Institutional Discrimination: Women in a Locker-Room Culture

News Item: Morgan Stanley, a bank holding company, to pay $46 million in a case charging systemic sex discrimination.

Responses: "I'm so happy that there's a settlement that's good for everybody," said lead plaintiff Allison Schieffelin, a former bond trader who was awarded a settlement of $12 million. (qtd. in Shell, 2007)

"It sends a message to employers everywhere that allegations of discrimination need to be taken seriously," said Elizabeth Grossman, an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission lawyer. (qtd. in Shell, 2007)

For decades, sociologists have called attention to the fact that both individual discrimination and institutional discrimination—based on sex, race/ethnicity, and other devalued characteristics and attributes of subordinate-group members—are widespread (Benokraitis and Feagin, 1994). Previous sex-discrimination lawsuits typically involved details about the crude behavior of male employees toward women, or pornography in the workplace, or male bosses' demands that women employees accompany them to strip clubs and other objectionable locations as part of their work-related duties (Anderson, 2007). However, the Morgan Stanley case involved none of these issues and instead focused on women's opportunities for training, gaining new clients, promotion, and pay equity—all factors related to institutional discrimination, previously defined (in Chapter 9) as the day-to-day-practices of organizations and institutions that have a harmful impact on members of subordinate groups.

In the case of Morgan Stanley, female employees were passed over for new clients, paid less than male employees, and often passed over for promotion. Although Morgan Stanley denied all charges, the firm agreed to pay at least $46 million to settle this class-action suit filed by eight current and former female brokers. A primary issue in the case involved the way in which accounts were distributed in the firm's retail branches. According to the lawsuit, a "locker-room culture" prevailed in which accounts were often given to golf buddies based on a "power ranking" system that dictated how the accounts of retiring and departing brokers were to be distributed and how new accounts were to be assigned. A new system put in place after the lawsuit will automate the distribution of accounts, brokers will receive written information about the distribution of accounts, and data will be more readily available to individuals who believe they are being discriminated against (Anderson, 2007).

Sociological theorizing and research have increased public awareness that the day-to-day practices of organizations and institutions may have a negative and differential effect on individuals who have historically been excluded from workplace settings such as prestigious Wall Street firms, which traditionally have been dominated by white males. Although many gains have been made through legislation and litigation to reduce institutional discrimination, recent cases such as the Morgan Stanley sex-bias lawsuit demonstrate that much remains to be done before women truly have equal opportunities in the workplace.

reflect & analyze

Why is it important for all employees to feel that they are being treated fairly at work? Are some employment settings more resistant to change than others? What do you think?

base, (2) the supply of and demand for labor, and (3) the extent to which women's child-rearing activities are compatible with certain types of work. *Subsistence* refers to the means by which a society gains the basic necessities of life, including food, shelter, and clothing. The three factors vary according to a society's *technoeconomic base*—the level of technology and the organization of the economy in a given society. Five such bases have been identified: hunting and gathering societies,

sexism the subordination of one sex, usually female, based on the assumed superiority of the other sex.

patriarchy a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political, and economic structures are controlled by men.

matriarchy a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political, and economic structures are controlled by women.

- **For Discussion:** Have students speculate about the ways in which a matriarchal society differs from contemporary patriarchal societies.

- **Box Note:** Direct students to discuss the "Reflect & Analyze" questions, using examples from their own experiences in the workplace or those of their parents, siblings, or other family members.

sociology in global perspective

The Rise of Islamic Feminism in the Middle East?

I would like for all of the young Muslim girls to be able to relate to Iman, whether they wear the hijab [head scarf] or not. Boys will also enjoy Iman's adventures because she is one tough, smart girl! Iman gets her super powers from having very strong faith in Allah, or God. She solves many of the problems by explaining certain parts of the Koran that relate to the story.

> —Rima Khoreibi, an author from Dubai (United Arab Emirates), explaining that she has written a book about an Islamic superhero who is female because she would like to dispel a widely held belief that sexism in her culture is deeply rooted in Islam (see theadventuresofiman.com, 2007; Kristof, 2006)

Although Rima Khoreibi and many others who have written fictional and nonfictional accounts of girls and women living in the Middle East typically do not deny that sexism exists in their region or that sexism is deeply interwoven with patriarchy around the world, they dispute the perception that Islam is inherently misogynistic (possessing hatred or strong prejudice toward women). As defined in this chapter, *patriarchy* is a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political, and economic structures are controlled by men. The influence of religion on patriarchy is a topic of great interest to contemporary scholars, particularly those applying a feminist approach to their explanations of why social inequalities persist between women and men and how these inequalities are greater in some regions of the world than in others.

According to some gender-studies specialists, a newer form of feminist thinking is emerging among Muslim women. Often referred to as "feminist Islam" or "Islamic feminism," this approach is based on the belief that greater gender equality may be possible in the Muslim world if the teachings of Islam, as set forth in the Koran (or Qur'an)—the Islamic holy book—are followed more closely. Islamic feminism is based on the principle that Muslim women should retain their allegiance to Islam as an essential part of their self-determination and identity but that they should also work to change patriarchal control over the basic Islamic world view (Wadud, 2002). According to the journalist Nicholas D. Kristof (2006), both Islam and evangelical Christianity have been on the rise in recent years because both religions provide "a firm moral code, spiritual reassurance and orderliness to people vexed by chaos and immorality around them, and . . . dignity to the poor."

Islamic feminists believe that the rise of Islam might contribute to greater, rather than less, equality for women. From horticultural and pastoral societies, agrarian societies, industrial societies, and postindustrial societies, as shown in ■ Table 10.2.

Hunting and Gathering Societies

The earliest known division of labor between women and men is in hunting and gathering societies. While the men hunt for wild game, women gather roots and berries. A relatively equitable relationship exists because neither sex has the ability to provide all the food necessary for survival. When wild game is nearby, both men and women may hunt. When it is far away, hunting becomes incompatible with child rearing (which women tend to do because they breast-feed their young), and women are placed at a disadvantage in terms of contributing to the food supply (Lorber, 1994). In most hunting and gathering societies, women are full economic partners with men; relations between them tend to be cooperative and relatively egalitarian (Chafetz, 1984; Bonvillain, 2001). Little social stratification of any kind is found because people do not acquire a food surplus.

Horticultural and Pastoral Societies

In horticultural societies, which first developed ten to twelve thousand years ago, a steady source of food becomes available. People are able to grow their own food because of hand tools, such as the digging stick and the hoe. Women make an important contribution to food production because hoe cultivation is compatible with child care. A fairly high degree of gender equality exists because neither sex controls the food supply.

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this perspective, stories about characters such as Iman may help girls and young women realize that they can maintain their deep religious convictions and their head scarf (*hijab*) while, at the same time, working for greater equality for women and more opportunities for themselves. In *The Adventures of Iman,* the female hero always wears a pink scarf around her neck, and she uses the scarf to cover her hair when she is praying to Allah. Iman quotes the Qur' an when she is explaining to others that Muslims are expected to be tolerant, kind, and righteous. For Iman, religion is a form of empowerment, not an extension of patriarchy.

Islamic feminism is quite different from what most people think of as Western feminism (particularly in regard to issues such as the wearing of the *hijab* or the fact that in Saudi Arabia, a woman may own a motor vehicle but may not legally drive it). However, change is clearly under way in many regions of the Middle East and other areas of the world as rapid economic development and urbanization quickly change the lives of many people.

▲ **The home page of *The Adventures of Iman.***

Courtesy of Rima Khorebi

reflect & analyze

Why is women's inequality a complex issue to study across nations? What part does culture play in defining the roles of women and men in various societies? How do religious beliefs influence what we perceive as "appropriate" or "inappropriate" behaviors for men, women, and children? What do you think?

table 10.2

Technoeconomic Bases of Society

	Hunting and Gathering	Horticultural and Pastoral	Agrarian	Industrial	Postindustrial
Change from Prior Society	—	Use of hand tools, such as digging stick and hoe	Use of animal-drawn plows and equipment	Invention of steam engine	Invention of computer and development of "high-tech" society
Economic Characteristics	Hunting game, gathering roots and berries	Planting crops, domestication of animals for food	Labor-intensive farming	Mechanized production of goods	Information and service economy
Control of Surplus	None	Men begin to control societies	Men who own land or herds	Men who own means of production	Corporate shareholders and high-tech entrepreneurs
Women's Status	Relative equality	Decreasing in move to pastoralism	Low	Low	Varies by class, race, and age

Source: Adapted from Lorber, 1994: 140.

• **Table Note:** Have your students research and write short essays exploring how the status of women is linked to the economic base of society. They should support their arguments with specific historical and economic data.

When inadequate moisture in an area makes planting crops impossible, *pastoralism*—the domestication of large animals to provide food—develops. Herding is primarily done by men, and women contribute relatively little to subsistence production in such societies. In some herding societies, women have relatively low status; their primary value is their ability to produce male offspring so that the family lineage can be preserved and enough males will exist to protect the group against attack (Nielsen, 1990).

In contemporary horticultural societies, women do most of the farming while men hunt game, clear land, work with arts and crafts, make tools, participate in religious and ceremonial activities, and engage in war. A combination of horticultural and pastoral activities is found in some contemporary societies in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and South America. These societies are characterized by more gender inequality than in hunting and gathering societies but less than in agrarian societies (Bonvillain, 2001).

Agrarian Societies

In agrarian societies, which first developed about eight to ten thousand years ago, gender inequality and male dominance become institutionalized. The most extreme form of gender inequality developed about five thousand years ago in societies in the fertile crescent around the Mediterranean Sea (Lorber, 1994). Agrarian societies rely on agriculture—farming done by animal-drawn or mechanically powered plows and equipment. Because agrarian tasks require more labor and greater physical strength than horticultural ones, men become more involved in food production. It has been suggested that women are excluded from these tasks because they are viewed as too weak for the work and because child-care responsibilities are considered incompatible with the full-time labor that the tasks require (Nielsen, 1990).

Why does gender inequality increase in agrarian societies? Scholars cannot agree on an answer; some suggest that it results from private ownership of property. When people no longer have to move continually in search of food, they can acquire a surplus. Men gain control over the disposition of the surplus and the kinship system, and this control serves men's interests (Lorber, 1994). The importance of producing "legitimate" heirs to inherit the surplus increases significantly, and women's lives become more secluded and restricted as men attempt to ensure the legitimacy of their children. Premarital virginity and marital fidelity are required; indiscretions are punished (Nielsen, 1990). However, some scholars argue that male dominance existed before the private ownership of property (Firestone, 1970; Lerner, 1986).

Male dominance is very strong in agrarian societies. Women are secluded, subordinated, and mutilated as a means of regulating their sexuality and protecting paternity. Most of the world's population currently lives in agrarian societies in various stages of industrialization.

Industrial Societies

An *industrial society* is one in which factory or mechanized production has replaced agriculture as the major form of economic activity. As societies industrialize, the status of women tends to decline further. Industrialization in the United States created a gap between the nonpaid work performed by middle- and upper-class women at home and the paid work that was increasingly performed by men and unmarried girls (Amott and Matthaei, 1996). Husbands were responsible for being "breadwinners"; wives were seen as "homemakers."

This gendered division of labor increased the economic and political subordination of women. It also became a source of discrimination against women of color based on both their race and the fact that many of them had to work in order to survive. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, many African American women were employed as domestic servants in affluent white households (Lorber, 1994).

As people moved from a rural, agricultural lifestyle to an urban existence, body consciousness increased. People who worked in offices often became sedentary and exhibited physical deterioration from their lack of activity. As gymnasiums were built to fight this lack of physical fitness, images of masculinity shifted from the "burly farmer" or "robust workman" to the middle-class man who exercised and lifted weights (Klein, 1993). As industrialization progressed and food became more plentiful, the social symbolism of women's body weight and size also changed, and middle-class women became more preoccupied with body fitness (Bordo, 2004; Seid, 1994). Today, women's bodies (even in bodybuilding programs) are supposed to be "inviting, available, and

- **For Discussion:** Have the class discuss how food supply and gender inequality are related in agrarian societies.
- **Media Coverage:** "Sex demands have been made on the wives of migrant workers in the Swaffham and Lynn area [Great Britain], it has been claimed. Police say they have had complaints that the women have been pestered for sex by unscrupulous landlords while their husbands have been out at work" (BBC, 9/2006).

Have students research this story and connect it to the broader issue of gendered divisions of labor.
- **Historical Perspective:** Have students research the gender norms and stereotypes that arose from the following developments: "As the mid-Victorian boom got underway cheap female and immigrant labor was often used to undercut male workers. Thus most women in Victorian society, in the two thirds of the

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▲ In contemporary societies, women do a wide variety of work and are responsible for many diverse tasks. The women shown here are employed in the agricultural and the postindustrial sectors of the U.S. economy. How might issues of gender inequality differ for these two women? What issues might be the same for both of them?

welcoming," whereas men's bodies should be "self-contained, active, and invasive" (MacSween, 1993: 156).

Postindustrial Societies

Chapter 4 defines *postindustrial societies* as ones in which technology supports a service- and information-based economy. In such societies, the division of labor in paid employment is increasingly based on whether people provide or apply information or are employed in service jobs such as fast-food-restaurant counter help or health care workers. For both women and men in the labor force, formal education is increasingly crucial for economic and social success. However, although some women have moved into entrepreneurial, managerial, and professional occupations, many others have remained in the low-paying service sector, which affords few opportunities for upward advancement.

How do new technologies influence gender relations in the workplace? Although some analysts presumed that technological developments would reduce the boundaries between women's and men's work, researchers have found that the gender stereotyping associated with specific jobs has remained remarkably stable even when the nature of work and the skills required to perform it have been radically transformed. Today, men and women continue to be segregated into different occupations, and this segregation is particularly visible within individual workplaces (as discussed later in the chapter).

How does the division of labor change in families in postindustrial societies? For a variety of reasons, more households are headed by women with no adult male present (see "Census Profiles: Single Mothers with Children Under 18"). One-fourth (25 percent) of all U.S. children live with their mother only (as contrasted with just

population below the upper and middle classes, worked for wages" (*BBC History*).

- **Recent Events:** Direct students to data showing that for the first time in U.S. history, women are close to representing a majority

of the workforce. Have them research the disparate impact of the recent recession on men and women (the so-called "mancession"), and the reasons for this dynamic.

census profiles

Single Mothers with Children Under 18
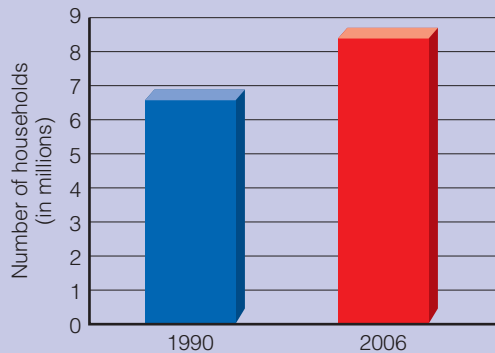
As shown above, the number of U.S. families headed by single mothers increased from almost 6,600,000 in 1990 to about 8,400,000 in 2006. (For census purposes, a single mother is identified as a woman who is widowed, divorced, separated, or never married and who has children under 18 living at home.) In contrast, only 2,095,000 single male householders had children under age 18 living at home. Of the total number of 36,468,000 family households with children under 18 reported in 2006, 25,982,000 of these households were composed of married couples and their children. In your opinion, what are the implications of these figures for families in the future?

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

a heavy burden on women, despite living in an information- and service-oriented economy.

How people accept new technologies and the effect that these technologies have on gender stratification are related to how people are socialized into gender roles. However, gender-based stratification remains rooted in the larger social structures of society, which individuals have little ability to control.

Gender and Socialization

We learn gender-appropriate behavior through the socialization process. Our parents, teachers, friends, and the media all serve as gendered institutions that communicate to us our earliest, and often most lasting, beliefs about the social meanings of being male or female and thinking and behaving in masculine or feminine ways. Some gender roles have changed dramatically in recent years; others have remained largely unchanged over time.

Some parents prefer boys to girls because of stereotypical ideas about the relative importance of males and females to the future of the family and society. Research suggests that social expectations play a major role in this preference. We are socialized to believe that it is important to have a son, especially for a first or only child. For many years, it was assumed that only a male child could support his parents in their later years and carry on the family name.

Across cultures, boys are preferred to girls, especially when the number of children that parents can have is limited by law or economic conditions. For example, in China, which strictly regulates the allowable number of children to one per family, a disproportionate number of female fetuses are aborted, resulting in a shortage of women. However, in the aftermath of the catastrophic earthquakes of early 2008, the government is revising this policy to some degree (see Jacobs, 2008).

Parents and Gender Socialization

From birth, parents act toward children on the basis of the child's sex. Baby boys are perceived to be less fragile than girls and tend to be treated more roughly by their parents. Girl babies are thought to be "cute, sweet, and cuddly" and receive more gentle treatment. Parents strongly influence the gender-role development of children by passing on—both

4 percent who reside with their father only); among African American children, 55 percent live with their mother only (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). This means that women in these households truly have a double burden, both from family responsibilities and from the necessity of holding gainful employment in the labor force.

In postindustrial societies such as the United States, approximately 60 percent of adult women are in the labor force, meaning that finding time to care for children, help aging parents, and meet the demands of the workplace will continue to place

- **Research:** "Male students were found to exhibit significantly more aggressiveness (interruptive behavior) than female students in both male and female professors' classes, although significantly more male aggressiveness occurred in female professors' classes than in male professor's classes" (Virginia R. Brooks, *Sex Roles,* 8[7] [1982]). Have students discuss some reasons why this might be the case.

- **For Discussion:** Ask students what is wrong with socializing women into roles related to the care of home and family. What kinds of social conflicts and social benefits has this pattern created?
- **Extra Examples:** Offer your students examples of the ways that gender socialization can have a coercive power over women. Ask students to consider how this could still be possible in the lives of the women in your class.

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◀ Are children's toys a reflection of their own preferences and choices? How do toys reflect gender socialization by parents and other adults?

overtly and covertly—their own beliefs about gender. When girl babies cry, parents respond to them more quickly, and parents are more prone to talk and sing to girl babies (Wharton, 2004).

Children's toys reflect their parents' gender expectations (Thorne, 1993). Gender-appropriate toys for boys include computer games, trucks and other vehicles, sports equipment, and war toys such as guns and soldiers. Girls' toys include "Barbie" dolls, play makeup, and homemaking items. Parents' choices of toys for their children are not likely to change in the near future. A group of college students in one study were shown slides of toys and asked to decide which ones they would buy for girls and boys. Most said they would buy guns, soldiers, Jeeps, carpenter tools, and red bicycles for boys; girls would get baby dolls, dishes, sewing kits, jewelry boxes, and pink bicycles (Fisher-Thompson, 1990).

When children are old enough to help with household chores, they are often assigned different tasks. Maintenance chores (such as mowing the lawn) are assigned to boys, whereas domestic chores (such as shopping, cooking, and clearing the table) are assigned to girls. Chores may also become linked with future occupational choices and personal

characteristics. Girls who are responsible for domestic chores such as caring for younger brothers and sisters may learn nurturing behaviors that later translate into employment as a nurse or schoolteacher. Boys may learn about computers and other types of technology that lead to different career options.

In the past, most studies of gender socialization focused on white, middle-class families and paid little attention to ethnic differences (Raffaelli and Ontai, 2004). According to earlier studies, children from middle- and upper-income families are less likely to be assigned gender-linked chores than children from lower-income backgrounds. In addition, gender-linked chore assignments occur less frequently in African American families, where both sons and daughters tend to be socialized toward independence, employment, and child care (Bardwell, Cochran, and Walker, 1986; Hale-Benson, 1986). Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1991) suggests that African American mothers are less likely to socialize their daughters into roles as subordinates; instead, they are likely to teach them a critical posture that allows them to cope with contradictions.

In contrast, a recent study of gender socialization in U.S. Latino/a families suggests that adolescent

• **For Discussion:** Ask students why is it so important to know the sex of a baby. Why is it such an embarrassing error to mistake the sex of a new baby in conversations with new parents? Direct students to news stories about a Swedish couple who have refused to identify their 2-year-old's gender (**thelocal.se**).

• **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to write an autobiographical essay that addresses these questions: How do parents encourage gender-appropriate behavior? Describe the ways that your family accomplished gender socialization. How do you think family gendersocialization patterns are changing?

females of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Central or South American descent receive different gender socialization by their parents than do their male siblings (Raffaelli and Ontai, 2004). Latinas are given more stringent curfews and are allowed less interaction with members of the opposite sex than are the adolescent males in their families. Rules for dating, school activities, and part-time jobs are more stringent for the girls because many parents want to protect their daughters and keep them closer to home.

Across classes and racial/ethnic categories, mothers typically play a stronger role in gender socialization of daughters, whereas fathers do more to socialize sons than daughters (McHale, Crouter, and Tucker, 1999). However, many parents are aware of the effect that gender socialization has on their children and make a conscientious effort to provide gender-neutral experiences for them.

▲ Parents, peers, and the larger society all influence our perceptions about gender-appropriate behavior.

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Peers and Gender Socialization

Peers help children learn prevailing gender-role stereotypes, as well as gender-appropriate and gender-inappropriate behavior (Hibbard and Buhrmester, 1998). During the preschool years, same-sex peers have a powerful effect on how children see their gender roles (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1987); children are more socially acceptable to their peers when they conform to implicit societal norms governing the "appropriate" ways that girls and boys should act in social situations and what prohibitions exist in such cases (Martin, 1989).

Male peer groups place more pressure on boys to do "masculine" things than female peer groups place on girls to do "feminine" things. For example, girls wear jeans and other "boy" clothes, play soccer and softball, and engage in other activities traditionally associated with males. By contrast, if a boy wears a dress, plays hopscotch with girls, and engages in other activities associated with being female, he will be ridiculed by his peers. This distinction between the relative value of boys' and girls' behaviors strengthens the cultural message that masculine activities and behavior are more important and more acceptable (Wood, 1999).

During adolescence, peers are often stronger and more effective agents of gender socialization than adults (Hibbard and Buhrmester, 1998). Peers are thought to be especially important in boys' development of gender identity. Male bonding that occurs during adolescence is believed to reinforce masculine identity (Gaylin, 1992) and to encourage gender-stereotypical attitudes and behavior (Huston, 1985; Martin, 1989). For example, male peers have a tendency to ridicule and bully others about their appearance, size, and weight. Aleta Walker painfully recalls walking down the halls at school when boys would flatten themselves against the lockers and cry, "Wide load!" At lunchtime,

• **Active Learning:** Have students create lists of important gender lessons they learned from peer interactions during childhood. Share lists with other students. Add more after interaction. Use this as a basis for a writing assignment or a short-answer question on a quiz.

• **Popular Culture:** "The princess is the last frontier of acceptable girliness. It points to how crazy our times have become that I, as a

feminist, am promoting princess culture because, hey, at least you don't have a 12-year-old wearing a thong" (Rachel Simmons, author of *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls* and staffer for Empower Project, on Hollywood's recent spate of princess movies [*Los Angeles Times,* 8/2004]).

• **Recent Events:** On October 25, 2006, the United States Department of Education published new regulations governing

the boys made a production of watching her eat lunch and frequently made sounds like grunts or moos (Kolata, 1993). Because peer acceptance is so important for both males and females during their first two decades, such actions can have very harmful consequences for the victims.

As young adults, men and women still receive many gender-related messages from peers. Among college students, for example, peer groups are organized largely around gender relations and play an important role in career choices and the establishment of long-term, intimate relationships. In a study of women college students at two universities (one primarily white, the other predominantly African American), anthropologists Dorothy C. Holland and Margaret A. Eisenhart (1990) found that the peer system propelled women into a world of romance in which their attractiveness to men counted most. Although peers initially did not influence the women's choices of majors and careers, they did influence whether the women continued to pursue their original goals, changed their course of action, or were "derailed."

Teachers, Schools, and Gender Socialization

From kindergarten through college, schools operate as a gendered institution. Teachers provide important messages about gender through both the formal content of classroom assignments and informal interactions with students. Sometimes, gender-related messages from teachers and other students reinforce gender roles that have been taught at home; however, teachers may also contradict parental socialization. During the early years of a child's schooling, teachers' influence is very powerful; many children spend more hours per day with their teachers than they do with their own parents.

According to some researchers, the quantity and quality of teacher–student interactions often vary

▲ Teachers often use competition between boys and girls because they hope to make a learning activity more interesting. Here, a middle-school girl leads other girls against boys in a Spanish translation contest. What are the advantages and disadvantages of gender-based competition in classroom settings?

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between the education of girls and that of boys (Wellhousen and Yin, 1997). One of the messages that teachers may communicate to students is that boys are more important than girls. Research spanning the past thirty years shows that unintentional gender bias occurs in virtually all educational settings. *Gender bias* **consists of showing favoritism toward one gender over the other.** Researchers consistently find that teachers devote more time, effort, and attention to boys than to girls (Sadker and Sadker, 1994). Males receive more praise for their contributions and are called on more frequently in class, even when they do not volunteer.

Teacher–student interactions influence not only students' learning but also their self-esteem (Sadker and Sadker, 1985, 1986, 1994). A comprehensive study of gender bias in schools suggested that girls' self-esteem is undermined in school through such experiences as (1) a relative lack of attention from teachers; (2) sexual harassment by male peers; (3) the stereotyping and invisibility of females in textbooks, especially in science and math texts; and (4) test bias based on assumptions about the relative

> **gender bias** behavior that shows favoritism toward one gender over the other.

single-sex education in public schools. These new regulations were required by a provision in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), a provision intended by its authors to legalize single-sex education in public schools (National Association for Single Sex Public Education). Ask students what they see as the advantages and disadvantages of single-sex education.

- **Research:** When it comes to honesty, intelligence, and a handful of other character traits they value highly in leaders, the public rates women superior to men, according to a nationwide Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends survey. Nevertheless, a mere 6 percent of respondents in this survey of 2,250 adults say that, overall, women make better political leaders than men.

importance of quantitative and visual–spatial ability, as compared with verbal ability, that restricts some girls' chances of being admitted to the most prestigious colleges and being awarded scholarships.

Teachers also influence how students treat one another during school hours. Many teachers use sex segregation as a way to organize students, resulting in unnecessary competition between females and males. In addition, teachers may take a "boys will be boys" attitude when girls complain of sexual harassment. Even though sexual harassment is prohibited by law, and teachers and administrators are obligated to investigate such incidents, the complaints may be dealt with superficially. If that happens, the school setting can become a hostile environment rather than a site for learning.

Sports and Gender Socialization

Children spend more than half of their nonschool time in play and games, but the type of games played differs with the child's sex. Studies indicate that boys are socialized to participate in highly competitive, rule-oriented games with a larger number of participants than games played by girls. Girls have been socialized to play exclusively with others of their own age, in groups of two or three, in activities such as hopscotch and jump rope that involve a minimum of competitiveness. Other research shows that boys express much more favorable attitudes toward physical exertion and exercise than girls do. Some analysts believe this difference in attitude is linked to ideas about what is gender-appropriate behavior for boys and girls (Brustad, 1996). For males, competitive sport becomes a means of "constructing a masculine identity, a legitimated outlet for violence and aggression, and an avenue for upward mobility" (Lorber, 1994: 43). Recently, more girls have started to play soccer and softball and to participate in sports formerly regarded as exclusively "male" activities. Girls who go against the grain and participate in masculine play as children are more likely to participate in sports as young women and adults (Greendorfer, 1993; Giuliano, Popp, and Knight, 2000).

Many women athletes believe that they have to manage the contradictory statuses of being both "women" and "athletes." One study found that women college basketball players dealt with this contradiction by dividing their lives into segments.

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▲ In recent years, women have expanded their involvement in professional sports through organizations such as the WNBA; however, most sports remain rigidly divided into female events and male events. Do you think that media coverage of women's and men's college and professional sporting events differs?

On the basketball court, the women "did athlete": They pushed, shoved, fouled, ran hard, sweated, and cursed. Off the court, they "did woman": After the game, they showered, dressed, applied makeup, and styled their hair, even if they were only getting in a van for a long ride home (Watson, 1987).

Most sports are rigidly divided into female and male events. Assumptions about male and female physiology and athletic capabilities influence the types of sports in which members of each sex are encouraged to participate. For example, women who engage in activities that are assumed to be "masculine" (such as bodybuilding) may either ignore their critics or attempt to redefine the activity or its result as "feminine" or womanly (Klein, 1993).

Mass Media and Gender Socialization

The media, including newspapers, magazines, television, and movies, are powerful sources of gender stereotyping. Although some critics argue that the media simply reflect existing gender roles in society, others point out that the media have a unique ability to shape ideas. Think of the impact that television might have on children if they spend one-third of their waking time watching it, as has been estimated.

- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss why is it more acceptable for girls to engage in "boys'" activities than for boys to participate in "girls'" activities. What do they make of the following statement? "The image of women is changing now. You don't have to be pretty for people to come and see you play. At the same time, if you're a good athlete, it doesn't mean you're not a woman" (Martina Navratilova).

- **For Discussion:** Have students compare and contrast the following two statements: "Plastic surgery and breast implants are fine for people who want that, if it makes them feel better about who they are. But, it makes these people, actors especially, fantasy figures for a fantasy world. Acting is about being real, being honest" (Kate Winslet). "Everyone should have enough money to get plastic surgery" (Beverly Johnson, pioneer African American supermodel).

From children's cartoons to adult shows, television programs are sex-typed, and many are male oriented. More male than female roles are shown, and male characters act strikingly different from female ones. Typically, males are more aggressive, constructive, and direct, and are rewarded for their actions. By contrast, females are depicted as acting deferential toward other people or as manipulating them through helplessness or seductiveness to get their way.

In prime-time television, a number of significant changes in the past three decades have reduced gender stereotyping; however, men still outnumber women as leading characters, and they are often "in charge" in any setting where both men's and women's roles are portrayed. In the popular ABC series *Grey's Anatomy,* for example, the number of women's and men's roles is evenly balanced, but the male characters typically are the top surgeons at the hospital, whereas the female characters are residents, interns, or nurses. In shows with predominantly female characters, such as ABC's *Desperate Housewives,* the women are typically very attractive, thin, and ultimately either hysterical or compliant when dealing with male characters (Stanley, 2004).

Advertising—whether on television and billboards or in magazines and newspapers—can be very persuasive. The intended message is clear to many people: If they embrace traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, their personal and social success is assured; if they purchase the right products and services, they can enhance their appearance and gain power over other people. In commercials, men's roles typically are portrayed differently from women's roles: Men are more likely to be shown working or playing outside the house rather than inside, whereas women are more likely to be doing domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, or taking care of the children. As such, television commercials may act as agents of socialization, showing children and others what women's and men's designated activities are (Kaufman, 1999).

A study by the sociologist Anthony J. Cortese (2004) found that women— regardless of what they were doing in a particular ad—were frequently shown in advertising as being young, beautiful, and seductive. Although such depictions may sell products, they may also have the effect of influencing how we perceive ourselves and others with regard to issues of power and subordination.

Adult Gender Socialization

Gender socialization continues as women and men complete their training or education and join the workforce. Men and women are taught the "appropriate" type of conduct for persons of their sex in a particular job or occupation—both by their employers and by coworkers. However, men's socialization usually does not include a measure of whether their work can be successfully combined with having a family; it is often assumed that men can and will do both. Even today, the reason given for women not entering some careers and professions is that this kind of work is not suitable for women because of their physical capabilities or assumed child-care responsibilities.

Different gender socialization may occur as people reach their forties and enter "middle age." A double standard of aging exists that affects women more than men. Often, men are considered to be at the height of their success as their hair turns gray and their face gains a few wrinkles. By contrast, not only do other people in society make middle-aged women feel as if they are "over the hill," but multi-million-dollar advertising campaigns continually

▲ Cosmetic surgery can be dangerous. Dr. Donda West, mother of the rapper Kanye West, died in 2007 after an elective procedure.

- **Research:** "By a lopsided margin, respondents say that women (85%), not men (5%), are the more emotional sex, and by a two-to-one margin they say women (52%) rather than men (26%) are more manipulative. On the other side of the ledger, some 70% of respondents say men are the more arrogant sex. And 46% of respondents say men are the more stubborn gender, compared with 32% who say that about women" (Pew Research Center).

- **Extra Examples:** Surf **http://genderads.com** for tons of visual images that you can use in class to help make the point about gender socialization in the media.
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss the gendered double standard of aging. How does it affect men and women and their relationships?

call attention to women's every weakness, every pound gained, and every bit of flabby flesh, wrinkle, or gray hair. Increasingly, both women and men have turned to "miracle" products, and sometimes to cosmetic surgery, to reduce the visible signs of aging.

A knowledge of how we develop a gender-related self-concept and learn to feel, think, and act in feminine or masculine ways is important for an understanding of ourselves. Examining gender socialization makes us aware of the impact of our parents, siblings, teachers, friends, and the media on our perspectives about gender. However, the gender socialization perspective has been criticized on several accounts. Childhood gender-role socialization may not affect people as much as some analysts have suggested. For example, the types of jobs that people take as adults may have less to do with how they were socialized in childhood than with how they are treated in the workplace. From this perspective, women and men will act in ways that bring them the most rewards and produce the fewest punishments (Reskin and Padavic, 2002). Also, gender socialization theories can be used to blame women for their own subordination by not taking into account structural barriers that perpetuate gender inequality. We will now examine a few of those structural forces.

Contemporary Gender Inequality

According to feminist scholars, women experience gender inequality as a result of past and present economic, political, and educational discrimination. Women's position in the U.S. workforce reflects the years of subordination that they have experienced in society.

Gendered Division of Paid Work

Where people are located in the occupational structure of the labor market has a major impact on their earnings. The workplace is another example of a gendered institution. In industrialized countries, most jobs are segregated by gender and by race/ethnicity. Sociologist Judith Lorber (1994: 194) gives this example:

> In a workplace in New York City—for instance, a handbag factory—a walk through the various departments might reveal that the owners and managers are white men; their secretaries and bookkeepers

are white and Asian women; the order takers and data processors are African American women; the factory hands are [Latinos] cutting pieces and [Latinas] sewing them together; African American men are packing and loading the finished product; and non-English-speaking Eastern European women are cleaning up after everyone. The workplace as a whole seems integrated by race, ethnic group, and gender, but the individual jobs are markedly segregated according to social characteristics.

Lorber notes that in most workplaces, employees are either gender segregated or all of the same gender. *Gender-segregated work* refers to the concentration of women and men in different occupations, jobs, and places of work (Reskin and Padavic, 2002). In 2008, for example, 96 percent of all secretaries in the United States were women; 86.5 percent of all engineers were men (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). To eliminate gender-segregated jobs in the United States, more than half of all men or all women workers would have to change occupations. Moreover, women are severely underrepresented at the top of U.S. corporations. Less than 14 percent of the executive jobs at Fortune 500 companies are held by women, and only 15 women are the CEO of such a company. Today, women also hold slightly more than 15 percent of all seats on the boards of Fortune 500 companies, and this percentage has remained about the same since 2003.

Although the degree of gender segregation in the professional labor market (including physicians, dentists, lawyers, accountants, and managers) has declined since the 1970s, racial–ethnic segregation has remained deeply embedded in the social structure. As the sociologist Elizabeth Higginbotham (1994) points out, for many years African American professional women found themselves limited to employment in certain sectors of the labor market. Although some change has occurred in recent years, women of color are more likely than their white counterparts to be concentrated in public-sector employment (as public schoolteachers, welfare workers, librarians, public defenders, and faculty members at public colleges, for example) rather than in the private sector (for example, in large corporations, major law firms, and private educational institutions). Across all categories of occupations, white women and all people of color are not evenly represented, as shown in ■ Table 10.3.

- **Extra Examples:** Address the types of work today that are more associated with men and with women. Talk about areas, such as the military and medical professions, where sex-segregated work patterns persist to various degrees.
- **Research:** Working mothers on average spent 12 hours a week on child care in 2003, an hour more than stay-at-home mothers did in 1975 (*New York Times,* 3/2006). Have students

research the comparable figures for men. Have they shifted since 1975?
- **Recent Events:** "Based on calculations, Senator Obama's 28 male staffers on average earned $54,397. His 30 female employees split $1,354,580 among themselves, or $45,152, on average. Why this disparity? One reason may be the under-representation of women in Obama's highest-compensated ranks" (Deroy Murdock,

▲ What stereotypes are associated with men in female-oriented positions? With women in male-oriented occupations? Do you think such stereotypes will change in the near future?

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*Labor market segmentation—*the division of jobs into categories with distinct working conditions—results in women having separate and unequal jobs (Amott and Matthaei, 1996; Lorber, 2005). The pay gap between men and women is the best-documented consequence of gender-segregated work (Reskin and Padavic, 2002). Most women work in lower-paying, less-prestigious jobs, with little opportunity for advancement. Because many employers assume that men are the breadwinners, men are expected to make

table 10.3

Percentage of Workforce Represented by Women, African Americans, and Hispanics in Selected Occupations

The U.S. Census Bureau accumulates data that show what percentage of the total workforce is made up of women, African Americans, and Hispanics. As used in this table, *women* refers to females in all racial–ethnic categories, whereas *African American* and *Hispanic* refer to both women and men. Based on this table, in which occupations are white men most likely to be employed? In which occupations are they least likely to be employed?

	Women	African Americans	Hispanics
All occupations	46.7	11.0	14.0
Managerial, professional, and related occupations	50.8	8.3	7.1
Management occupations	37.4	6.4	7.3
Professional and related occupations	56.7	9.0	6.7
Sales and office occupations	63.2	11.5	12.3
Sales occupations	49.5	9.7	11.7
Office and administrative support	74.8	13.0	12.8
Service occupations (all)	57.2	15.9	20.2
Food preparation and serving	56.0	12.1	21.0
Cleaning and building service workers	40.2	15.0	33.4
Health service support occupations	88.8	25.8	13.6
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	4.2	6.9	25.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

Scripps Howard News Service). Have students research whether this pattern has persisted in Obama's administration. Does it reflect sexism or something about the labor pool for political operatives?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **For Discussion:** Ask the class why comparable worth is important to *all* workers. How is it possible to determine the comparable worth of different kinds of jobs?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

more money than women in order to support their families. For many years, women have been viewed as supplemental wage earners in a male-headed household, regardless of the women's marital status. Consequently, women have not been seen as legitimate workers but mainly as wives and mothers (Lorber, 2005). Such thinking has especially harmful consequences for the many women who are the only breadwinner in their family due to divorce, widowhood, unmarried status, or other reasons.

Gender-segregated work affects both men and women. Men are often kept out of certain types of jobs. Those who enter female-dominated occupations often have to justify themselves and prove that they are "real men." They have to fight stereotypes (gay, "wimpy," and passive) about why they are interested in such work (Williams, 2004). Even if these assumptions do not push men out of female-dominated occupations, they affect how the men manage their gender identity at work. For example, men in occupations such as nursing tend to emphasize their masculinity, attempt to distance themselves from female colleagues, and try to move quickly into management and supervisory positions (Williams, 2004).

Occupational gender segregation contributes to stratification in society. Job segregation is structural; it does not occur simply because individual workers have different abilities, motivations, and material needs. As a result of gender and racial segregation, employers are able to pay many men of color and all women less money, promote them less often, and provide fewer benefits.

Pay Equity (Comparable Worth)

Occupational segregation contributes to a **pay gap—the disparity between women's and men's earnings.** It is calculated by dividing women's earnings by men's to yield a percentage, also known as the earnings ratio (Reskin and Padavic, 2002). As ▶ Figure 10.1 shows, women at all levels of educational attainment receive less pay than men with the same levels of education. Overall, women earned about 77.9 percent of men's earnings in 2008. Across different categories of employment, data continue to demonstrate the disparity between women's and men's wages for full-time employment. Moreover, the pay gap is even greater for women of color. Although white women in 2008 earned about

80 percent as much as white men, African American women earned 89 percent of what African American men earned, and Latinas earned almost 90 percent of what Latinos earned (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). In each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, women's median earnings were less than men's median earnings (see ▶ Map 10.1).

Pay equity or **comparable worth is the belief that wages ought to reflect the worth of a job, not the gender or race of the worker.** How can the comparable worth of different kinds of jobs be determined? One way is to compare the actual work of women's and men's jobs and see if there is a disparity in the salaries paid for each. To do this, analysts break a job into components—such as the education, training, and skills required, the extent of responsibility for others' work, and the working conditions—and then allocate points for each (Lorber, 2005). For pay equity to exist, men and women in occupations that receive the same number of points should be paid the same. However, pay equity exists for very few jobs.

Paid Work and Family Work

As previously discussed, the first big change in the relationship between family and work occurred with the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism. The cult of domesticity kept many middle- and upper-class women out of the workforce during this period. Primarily, working-class and poor women were the ones who had to deal with the work/family conflict. Today, however, the issue spans the entire economic spectrum (Reskin and Padavic, 2002). The typical married woman in the United States combines paid work in the labor force and family work as a homemaker. Although this change has occurred at the societal level, individual women bear the brunt of the problem.

Even with dramatic changes in women's workforce participation, the sexual division of labor in the family remains essentially unchanged. Most married women now share responsibility for the breadwinner

> **pay gap** a term used to describe the disparity between women's and men's earnings.
>
> **comparable worth** (or **pay equity**) the belief that wages ought to reflect the worth of a job, not the gender or race of the worker.

- **For Discussion:** Have students explore how gender-related appearance norms may be linked to hiring, wages, and retention of workers.
- **Research:** After students have discussed the last question, have them explore federal policies regulating hiring practices. Go to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission website (**eeoc.gov**) to find relevant information for your class.

- **Research:** "If we continue the way we are going, market forces will not solve the pay gap until 2050. That means my youngest daughter's youngest daughter can expect equal pay" (Karen Nussbaum). Have students further explore the data behind the pay gap, including such issues as maternity leave and gendered divisions of child-care labor.

By Age
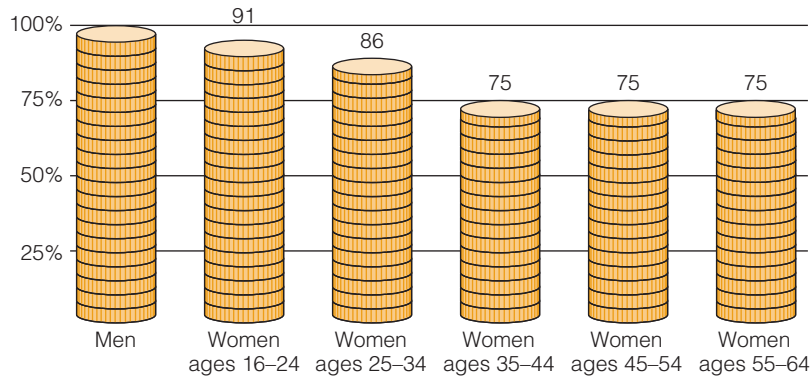
By Racial–Ethnic Group
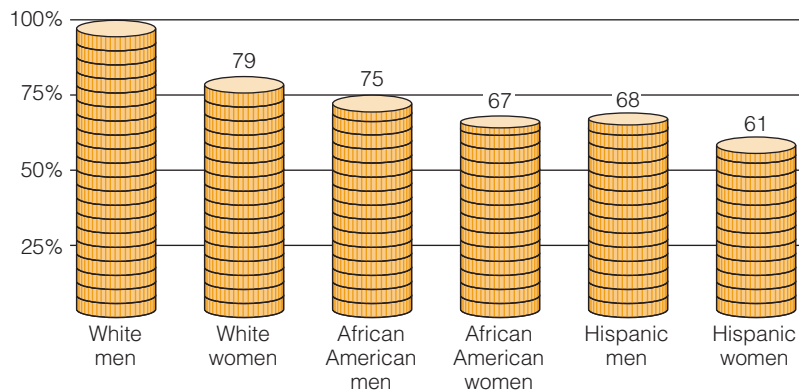
By Occupation
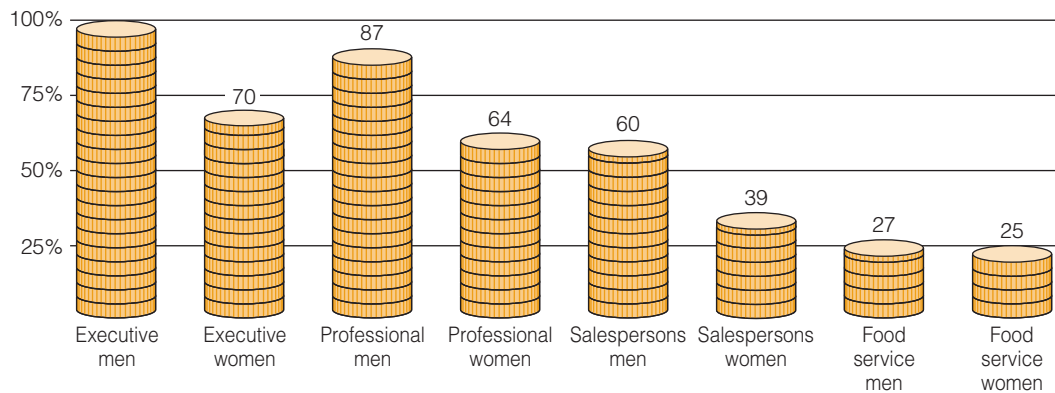
▲ **FIGURE 10.1** **THE WAGE GAP**

By Age: Although men's average wages vary depending upon age, women's average wages are always lower than those of men in the same age group, and the older women get, the greater the gap. Women ages 16–24 earn 91 cents for every dollar earned by men in the same age group, but the wage gap is greatest for women age 35 and over because they earn 75 cents for every dollar earned by men between the ages of 35 and 64.

By Racial–Ethnic Group: Across racial–ethnic groupings, men's earnings remain higher than the earnings of women in the same category.

By Occupation: Regardless of occupation, women on average receive lower wages.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009.

- **For Discussion:** "Any woman who has a career and a family automatically develops something in the way of two personalities, like two sides of a dollar bill, each different in design. . . . Her problem is to keep one from draining the life from the other" (Ivy Baker Priest). Have students discuss the double burdens of paid work and family work for many women, drawing on their own families' experiences, if appropriate.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** Have the class define the "second shift" in their own words. In what specific kinds of ways are women socialized to accept this unequal standard of responsibility?
- **U.S. Census:** "In addition to lower fertility rates, the Census 2000 survey showed fewer women with infants in the labor force. In 2002, 55% of women with infants under 1 year old were in

▲ **MAP 10.1** WOMEN'S EARNINGS AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEN'S EARNINGS BY STATE AND PUERTO RICO: 2008

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008; and Puerto Rico Community Survey, 2008.

role, yet many men do not accept their share of domestic responsibilities (Reskin and Padavic, 2002). Consequently, many women have a "double day" or "second shift" because of their dual responsibilities for paid and unpaid work (Hochschild, 1989, 2003). Working women have less time to spend on housework; if husbands do not participate in routine domestic chores, some chores simply do not get done or get done less often. Although the income that many women earn is essential to the economic survival of their families, they still must spend part of their earnings on family maintenance, such as day-care centers, fast-food restaurants, and laundries, in an attempt to keep up with their obligations.

Especially in families with young children, domestic responsibilities consume a great deal of time and energy. Although some kinds of housework can be put off, the needs of children often cannot be ignored or delayed. When children are ill or school events cannot be scheduled around work, parents (especially mothers) may experience stressful role conflicts ("Shall I be a good employee or a good mother?"). Many working women care not only for themselves, their husbands, and their children but also for elderly parents or in-laws. Some analysts refer to these women as "the sandwich generation"—caught between the needs of their young children and of their elderly relatives. Many women try to solve their time crunch by forgoing leisure time and sleep. When Arlie Hochschild interviewed working mothers, she found that they talked about sleep "the way a hungry person talks about food" (1989: 9). Perhaps this is one reason that, in later research, Hochschild (1997) learned that some married women with children found more fulfillment at work and that they worked longer hours because they liked work better than facing the pressures of home.

Perspectives on Gender Stratification

Sociological perspectives on gender stratification vary in their approach to examining gender roles and power relationships in society. Some focus on the roles of women and men in the domestic

sphere; others note the inequalities arising from a gendered division of labor in the workplace. Still others attempt to integrate both the public and private spheres into their analyses. The Concept Quick Review outlines the key aspects of each sociological perspective on gender socialization.

Functionalist and Neoclassical Economic Perspectives

As seen earlier, functionalist theory views men and women as having distinct roles that are important for the survival of the family and society. The most basic division of labor is biological: Men are physically stronger, and women are the only ones able to bear and nurse children. Gendered belief systems foster assumptions about appropriate behavior for men and women and may have an impact on the types of work that women and men perform.

The Importance of Traditional Gender Roles   According to functional analysts such as Talcott Parsons (1955), women's roles as nurturers and caregivers are even more pronounced in contemporary industrialized societies. While the husband performs the *instrumental* tasks of providing economic support and making decisions, the wife assumes the *expressive* tasks of providing affection and emotional support for the family. This division of family labor ensures that important societal tasks will be fulfilled; it also provides stability for family members.

This view has been adopted by a number of politically conservative analysts who assert that relationships between men and women are damaged when changes in gender roles occur, and family life suffers as a consequence. From this perspective, the traditional division of labor between men and women is the natural order of the universe.

The Human Capital Model   Functionalist explanations of occupational gender segregation are similar to neoclassical economic perspectives, such as the human capital model (Horan, 1978; Kemp, 1994). According to this model, individuals vary widely in the amount of human capital they bring to the labor market. *Human capital* is acquired by education and job training; it is the source of a person's productivity and can be measured in terms of the return on the investment (wages) and the cost (schooling or training) (Stevenson, 1988; Kemp, 1994).

From this perspective, what individuals earn is the result of their own choices (the kinds of training, education, and experience they accumulate, for example) and of the labor-market need (demand) for and availability (supply) of certain kinds of workers at specific points in time. For example, human capital analysts argue that women diminish their human capital when they leave the labor force to engage in childbearing and child-care activities. While women are out of the labor force, their human capital deteriorates from nonuse. When they return to work, women earn lower wages than men because they have fewer years of work experience

[concept quick review 10.1]

Sociological Perspectives on Gender Stratification

Perspective	Focus	Theory/Hypothesis
Functionalist	Macrolevel analysis of women's and men's roles	Traditional gender roles ensure that expressive and instrumental tasks will be performed.
		Human capital model
Conflict	Power and economic differentials between men and women	Unequal political and economic power heightens gender-based social inequalities.
Feminist Approaches	Feminism should be embraced to reduce sexism and gender inequality.	1. Liberal feminism 2. Radical feminism 3. Socialist feminism 4. Multicultural feminism

- **Popular Culture:** Have students explore Linda Hirshman's argument that women who sacrifice their careers for child-rearing are diminishing their lives and livelihoods: "When their children are infants (under a year), 54% of females with graduate or professional degrees are not working full time (18% are working part time and 36% are not working at all) (Linda Hirshman, *Get to Work*).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

▲ According to the human capital model, women may earn less in the labor market because of their child-rearing responsibilities. What other sociological explanations are offered for the lower wages that women receive?

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unequally valued by society (Kemp, 1994). Similarly, the human capital model is rooted in the premise that individuals are evaluated based on their human capital in an open, competitive market where education, training, and other job-enhancing characteristics are taken into account. From this perspective, those who make less money (often men of color and all women) have no one to blame but themselves.

Critics note that instead of blaming people for their choices, we must acknowledge other realities. Wage discrimination occurs in two ways: (1) the wages are higher in male-dominated jobs, occupations, and segments of the labor market, regardless of whether women take time for family duties, and (2) in any job, women and people of color will be paid less (Lorber, 1994).

and have "atrophied human capital" because their education and training may have become obsolete (Kemp, 1994: 70).

Evaluation of Functionalist and Neoclassical Economic Perspectives Although Parsons and other functionalists did not specifically endorse the gendered division of labor, their analysis suggests that it is natural and perhaps inevitable. However, critics argue that problems inherent in traditional gender roles, including the personal role strains of men and women and the social costs to society, are minimized by this approach. For example, men are assumed to be "money machines" for their families when they might prefer to spend more time in child-rearing activities. Also, the woman's place is assumed to be in the home, an assumption that ignores the fact that many women hold jobs due to economic necessity.

In addition, the functionalist approach does not take a critical look at the structure of society (especially the economic inequalities) that makes educational and occupational opportunities more available to some than to others. Furthermore, it fails to examine the underlying power relations between men and women or to consider the fact that the tasks assigned to women and to men are

Conflict Perspectives

According to many conflict analysts, the gendered division of labor within families and in the workplace results from male control of and dominance over women and resources. Differentials between men and women may exist in terms of economic, political, physical, and/or interpersonal power. The importance of a male monopoly in any of these arenas depends on the significance of that type of power in a society (Richardson, 1993). In hunting and gathering and horticultural societies, male dominance over women is limited because all members of the society must work in order to survive (Collins, 1971; Nielsen, 1990). In agrarian societies, however, male sexual dominance is at its peak. Male heads of household gain a monopoly not only on physical power but also on economic power, and women become sexual property.

Although men's ability to use physical power to control women diminishes in industrial societies, men still remain the head of household and control the property. In addition, men gain more power through their predominance in the most highly paid and prestigious occupations and the highest elected offices. By contrast, women have the ability in the marriage market to trade their sexual

▲ Although the demographic makeup of the U.S. Senate has been gradually changing in recent decades, men still dominate it, a fact that the conflict perspective attributes to a very old pattern in human societies.

resources, companionship, and emotional support for men's financial support and social status. As a result, women as a group remain subordinate to men (Collins, 1971; Nielsen, 1990).

All men are not equally privileged; some analysts argue that women and men in the upper classes are more privileged, because of their economic power, than men in lower-class positions and all people of color (Lorber, 1994). In industrialized societies, persons who occupy elite positions in corporations, universities, the mass media, and government or who have great wealth have the most power (Richardson, 1993). Most of these are men, however.

Conflict theorists in the Marxist tradition assert that gender stratification results from private ownership of the means of production; some men not only gain control over property and the distribution of goods but also gain power over women. According to Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, marriage serves to enforce male dominance. Men of the

capitalist class instituted monogamous marriage (a gendered institution) so that they could be certain of the paternity of their offspring, especially sons, whom they wanted to inherit their wealth. Feminist analysts have examined this theory, among others, as they have sought to explain male domination and gender stratification.

Feminist Perspectives

*Feminism—the belief that women and men are equal and should be valued equally and have equal rights—*is embraced by many men as well as women. It holds in common with men's studies the view that gender is a socially constructed concept

> **feminism** the belief that all people—both women and men—are equal and that they should be valued equally and have equal rights.

- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss what changes liberal and radical feminists might suggest for overcoming male dominance in society and culture. What social and cultural institutions might need to change? How would the two approaches differ?
- **Historical Perspective:** In the 61 years since the U.N. was founded, no woman has ever held the position of Secretary-General, despite many qualified women candidates (National Organization for

Women). Ask students to explore this issue further, including specific female candidates who were passed over.
- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to write down their own interpretations of this statement by author Susan Faludi: "Women are enslaved by their own liberation." Have them explore Faludi's work to get context for this statement.

you can make a difference

Joining Organizations to Overcome Sexism and Gender Inequality

Over the past four decades, many college students—like you—have been actively involved in organizations seeking to dismantle sexism and reduce gender-based inequalities in the United States and other nations. Two people speak about the importance of feminist advocacy for women and men:

> I was raised on a pure, unadulterated feminist ethic. . . . [But] the feminism I was raised on was very cerebral. It forced a world full of people to change the way they think about women. I want more than their minds. I want to see them do it. . . . I know that sitting on the sidelines will not get me what I want from my movement. And it is mine. . . . Don't be fooled into thinking that feminism is old-fashioned. The movement is ours and we need it. . . . The next generation is coming. (Neuborne, 1995: 29–35)
>   —Ellen Neuborne, a reporter for *USA Today*

> For men who are messed up (that is, facing problems related to their emotional lives, sexuality, their place in society, and gender politics—in other words, me and virtually every other man I have ever met) feminism offers the best route to understanding the politics of such personal problems and coming to terms with those problems. (Jensen, 1995: 111)
>   —Robert Jensen, a journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin

If you are interested in joining an organization that deals with the problem of sexism or organizes activities such as Take Back the Night, an annual event that promotes awareness of violence against women, contact your college's student activities office.

Opportunities for involvement in local, state, and national organizations that promote women's and/or men's rights are available. Here are a few examples:

- The National Organization for Women (NOW), 1100 H St. NW, 3rd floor, Washington, DC 20005. (202) 628-8669. NOW works to end gender bias and seeks greater representation of women in all areas of public life. On the Internet, NOW provides links to other feminist resources: **www.now.org**
- National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS), P.O. Box 455, Louisville, CO 80027. (303) 666-7043. NOMAS has a *profeminist stance* that seeks to end sexism and an *affirmative stance* on the rights of gay men and lesbians: **www.nomas.org**

On the Internet:

- *MenWeb (Men's Voices Magazine)* is an e-zine that offers support and advocacy for men. It features articles on the men's movement and a national calendar of men's events, as well as links to other sites: **http://menweb.org**

that has important consequences in the lives of all people (Craig, 1992). According to the sociologist Ben Agger (1993), men can be feminists and propose feminist theories; both women and men have much in common as they seek to gain a better understanding of the causes and consequences of gender inequality. Over the past three decades, many different organizations have been formed to advocate causes uniquely affecting women or men and to help people gain a better understanding of gender inequality (see the You Can Make a Difference box).

Feminist theory seeks to identify ways in which norms, roles, institutions, and internalized expectations limit women's behavior. It also seeks to demonstrate how women's personal control operates even within the constraints of relative lack of power (Stewart, 1994).

Liberal Feminism In liberal feminism, gender equality is equated with equality of opportunity. The roots of women's oppression lie in women's lack of equal civil rights and educational opportunities. Only when these constraints on women's participation are removed will women have the same chance for success as men. This approach notes the importance of gender-role socialization and suggests that changes need to be made in what children learn from their families, teachers, and the media about

appropriate masculine and feminine attitudes and behavior. Liberal feminists fight for better child-care options, a woman's right to choose an abortion, and the elimination of sex discrimination in the workplace.

Radical Feminism

According to radical feminists, male domination causes all forms of human oppression, including racism and classism (Tong, 1989). Radical feminists often trace the roots of patriarchy to women's childbearing and child-rearing responsibilities, which make them dependent on men (Firestone, 1970; Chafetz, 1984). In the radical feminist view, men's oppression of women is deliberate, and ideological justification for this subordination is provided by other institutions such as the media and religion. For women's condition to improve, radical feminists claim, patriarchy must be abolished. If institutions are currently gendered, alternative institutions—such as women's organizations seeking better health care, day care, and shelters for victims of domestic violence and rape—should be developed to meet women's needs.

Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminists suggest that women's oppression results from their dual roles as paid *and* unpaid workers in a capitalist economy. In the workplace, women are exploited by capitalism; at home, they are exploited by patriarchy (Kemp, 1994). Women are easily exploited in both sectors; they are paid low wages and have few economic resources. Gendered job segregation is "the primary mechanism in capitalist society that maintains the superiority of men over women, because it enforces lower wages for women in the labor market" (Hartmann, 1976: 139). As a result, women must do domestic labor either to gain a better-paid man's economic support or to stretch their own wages (Lorber, 1994). According to socialist feminists, the only way to achieve gender equality is to eliminate capitalism and develop a socialist economy that would bring equal pay and rights to women.

Multicultural Feminism

Recently, academics and activists have been rethinking the experiences of women of color from a feminist perspective. The experiences of African American women and Latinas/Chicanas have been of particular interest to some social analysts. Building on the civil rights and feminist movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, some contemporary black feminists have focused on the cultural experiences of African American women. A central assumption of this analysis is that race, class, and gender are forces that simultaneously oppress African American women (Hull, Bell-Scott, and Smith, 1982). The effects of these three statuses cannot be adequately explained as "double" or "triple" jeopardy (race + class + gender = a poor African American woman) because these ascribed characteristics are not simply added to one another. Instead, they are multiplicative in nature (race × class × gender); different characteristics may be more significant in one situation than another. For example, a well-to-do white woman (class) may be in a position of privilege when compared to people of color (race) and men from lower socioeconomic positions (class), yet be in a subordinate position as compared with a white man (gender) from the capitalist class (Andersen and Collins, 1998). In order to analyze the complex relationship among these characteristics, the lived experiences of African American women and other previously "silenced people" must be heard and examined within the context of particular historical and social conditions.

Another example of multicultural feminist studies is the work of the psychologist Aida Hurtado (1996), who explored the cultural identification of Latina/Chicana women. According to Hurtado, distinct differences exist between the world views of the white (non-Latina) women who participate in the women's movement and many Chicanas, who have a strong sense of identity with their own communities. Hurtado (1996) suggests that women of color do not possess the "relational privilege" that white women have because of their proximity to white patriarchy through husbands, fathers, sons, and others. Like other multicultural feminists, Hurtado calls for a "politics of inclusion," creating social structures that lead to positive behavior and bring more people into a dialogue about how to improve social life and reduce inequalities.

Evaluation of Conflict and Feminist Perspectives

Conflict and feminist perspectives provide insights into the structural aspects of gender inequality in society. These approaches emphasize factors external to individuals that

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #9: Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-National Content
- **U.S. Census:** There were an estimated 159,000 stay-at-home dads in 2006. These married fathers with children younger than 15 have remained out of the labor force for more than one year primarily so they can care for the family while their wives work outside the home. These fathers cared for 283,000 children. Among these stay-at-home dads: 60% had two or more children . . . 35% had children younger than 3 living with them.

How Do We "Do Gender" in the Twenty-First Century?

What distinctive ways of acting and feeling are characteristic of women? Of men? For centuries, people have used a male/female dichotomy to answer these questions and, in the process, have identified women's and men's behaviors as opposites in many respects: Men are supposed to be "real men" and meet the normative conception of *masculinity* by being aggressive, independent, and powerful, whereas women are supposed to demonstrate *femininity* by being passive, dependent, and weak.

However, many theorists using a symbolic interactionist perspective suggest that gender is something that we *do* rather than being a set of masculine or feminine traits that resides within the individual. Sociologists Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman (1987) coined the term "doing gender" to refer to the process by which we *socially* create differences between males and females that are not based on natural, essential, or biological factors but instead

© Image Source/Getty Images

▶ GENDER AND APPEARANCE

How do we do gender on a shopping trip? Consider, for example, the differences in clothing shown in this photo. For the man, a casual outing means wearing jeans, sandals, and a partially unbuttoned shirt. For the woman, a casual outing means a "pulled together" outfit with heels, a sexy dress, her hair in place, and carefully positioned sunglasses.

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◀ GENDER AND HOME LIFE

Although in recent years more men have assumed greater responsibility at home with regard to household tasks and child rearing, women are more likely to be seen as the primary caregivers for children. Does our society still hold women, more than men, accountable for the well-being of children?

are based on the things we do in our social interactions. According to West and Zimmerman (1987), *accountability* is involved in the process of doing gender: We know that our actions will be evaluated by others based on how well they think we meet the normative conceptions of appropriate attitudes and activities that are expected of people in our sex category (the socially required displays that identify a person as being either male or female).

What is the primary difference in these two approaches? These viewpoints are based on different assumptions. The male/female dichotomy is based on the assumption that women and men have inherently different traits, whereas the concept of *doing gender* is based on the assumption that, through our interactions with others, we produce, reproduce, and sustain the social meanings that are accorded to gender in any specific society at any specific point in time (in other words, those meanings may change from time to time and from place to place). By focusing on gender as an *accomplishment* (rather than something that is previously established), symbolic interactionists emphasize that some people's resistance to existing gendered norms is probable and that social change is possible. Symbolic interactionist theories also make us aware that change is less likely to take place when people feel constrained to be accountable to others for their behavior as women or men (Fenstermaker and West, 2002).

When you look at the pictures on these three pages, think about how the people in each setting are "doing gender" in everyday life. Are they doing gender based on what they perceive to be the normative expectations of others? Or are they doing gender as they see fit? What do you think?

▼ **GENDER AND SOCIAL INTERACTION**

How are the men shown here doing gender after their game of pick-up basketball? Consider, for example, what they are wearing, how they are sitting, and how they are communicating with one another. If three women were in this photo instead of three men, in what ways would their attire, actions, and expressions be different?

© Ed Bock/Surf/Corbis

© Tim Pannell/Corbis

▲ **GENDER AND CAREERS**

In recent decades, more women have become doctors and lawyers than in the past. How has this affected the way that people do gender in settings that reflect their profession? Do professional women look and act more like their male colleagues, or have men changed their appearance and activities at work as a result of having female colleagues?

© moodboard/Alamy

◀ **GENDER AND SUCCESS**

When you hear someone referred to as a "wealthy entrepreneur," do you tend to think of a man or a woman? Are the typical trappings of success—such as luxury cars and expensive private airplanes—more associated with how men or how women do gender? Do you believe that this will change in the future?

reflect & analyze

1. If you went to a medical clinic for the first time and was told that your physician was "Dr. Smith," would you automatically assume that this person was a man? If so, why?
2. Is your social behavior dependent on gender context? In other words, do you behave differently when around members of your own sex than you

do in mixed situations? Come up with a specific example of a situation where you felt the need to adapt your behavior because of social and gender expectations.
3. Do you think that wide differences in how two people look when they go out on a date can affect the outcome of their encounter? Why or why not?

▶ turning to video

Watch the ABC video *Are Men Smarter? Sexism in the Classroom* (running time 4:33), available on the Kendall Companion Website and through Cengage Learning eResources accounts. This special report focuses on the experience of leading neurobiologist Ben Barres, who became a female-to-male transsexual at the age of forty. Having been active in his field as both Barbara and Ben, Dr. Barres has gained unique perspective on the biased perceptions of men and women in science. As you watch the video, think about the photographs, commentary, and questions that you encountered in this photo essay. After you've watched the video, consider another question: How do Ben Barres's life experiences and professional accomplishments reflect West and Zimmerman's concept of "doing gender"?

▲ Latinas have become increasingly involved in social activism for causes that they believe are important. This woman is showing her support for amnesty for undocumented workers in the United States.

▲ Author Susan Faludi believes that men and boys are being "stiffed" by current trends in U.S. society, including education. Do you agree?

contribute to the oppression of white women and people of color; however, they have been criticized for emphasizing the differences between men and women without taking into account the commonalities they share. Feminist approaches have also been criticized for their emphasis on male dominance without a corresponding analysis of the ways in which some men may also be oppressed by patriarchy and capitalism.

Recently, the debate has continued about whether the feminist movement has diminished the well-being of boys and men. Sociologist William J. Goode (1982) suggests that some men have felt "under attack" by women's demands for equality because the men do not see themselves as responsible for societal conditions such as patriarchy and attribute their own achievements to hard work and intelligence, not to built-in societal patterns of male domination and female subordination.

In *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man,* the author and journalist Susan Faludi (1999) argues that men are not as concerned about the possibility of the feminist movement diminishing their own importance as they are experiencing an identity crisis brought about by the current societal emphasis on wealth, power, fame, and looks (often to the exclusion of significant social values). According to Faludi, men are increasingly aware of their body image and are spending ever-increasing sums of money on men's cosmetics, health and fitness gear and classes, and cigar bars and "gentlemen's clubs." The popularity of her book, among others, suggests that issues of gender inequality and of men's and women's roles in society are far from resolved.

Gender Issues in the Future

Over the past century, women made significant progress in the labor force (Reskin and Padavic, 2002). Laws were passed to prohibit sexual discrimination in the workplace and school. Affirmative action programs helped make women more visible in education, government, and the professional world. More women entered the political arena as candidates instead of as volunteers in the campaign offices of male candidates (Lott, 1994).

Many men joined movements to raise their consciousness, realizing that what is harmful to women may also be harmful to men. For example, women's

- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disk also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.
- **CourseMate:** The Sociology CourseMate for this text gives your students access to an interactive ebook, flash cards, video, and other study and learning tools, including quizzes that provide

immediate feedback. It's easiest for students to log in at **www.cengagebrain.com.**
- **For Discussion:** What do your students think will be the most important changes regarding gender issues in the twenty-first century? What issues do they think will remain the same?

lower wages in the labor force suppress men's wages as well; in a two-paycheck family, women who are paid less contribute less to the family's finances, thus placing a greater burden on men to earn more money.

In the midst of these changes, however, many gender issues remain unresolved in the twenty-first century. In the labor force, gender segregation and the wage gap are still problems. As the United States attempts to climb out of the worst economic recession in decades, job loss has affected both women and men. However, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the wages of the typical woman who has a job have risen slightly faster than those of the typical man. Rather than this being considered a gain for women, some analysts suggest that it is a situation where everyone is losing but that men are simply losing more because of job insecurity or loss, declining real wages, and loss of benefits such as health care and pension funds.

In the United States and other nations of the world, gender equity, political opportunities, education, and health care remain pressing problems for women. How will the economic problems of the twenty-first century affect gender inequality? It is too soon to tell, but the fallout from the economic crisis will probably be most strongly felt by those individuals who are already in the greatest social and financial peril. What do you think might be done to provide more equal opportunities for girls and women even in difficult economic times?

chapter review

• How do sex and gender differ?

Sex refers to the biological categories and manifestations of femaleness and maleness; gender refers to the socially constructed differences between females and males. In short, sex is what we (generally) are born with; gender is what we acquire through socialization.

• How do gender roles and gender identity differ from gendered institutions?

Gender role encompasses the attitudes, behaviors, and activities that are socially assigned to each sex and that are learned through socialization. Gender identity is an individual's perception of self as either female or male. By contrast, gendered institutions are those structural features that perpetuate gender inequality.

• How does the nature of work affect gender equity in societies?

In most hunting and gathering societies, fairly equitable relationships exist between women and men because neither sex has the ability to provide all of the food necessary for survival. In horticultural societies, a fair degree of gender equality exists because neither sex controls the food supply. In agrarian societies, male dominance is overt; agrarian tasks require more labor and physical strength, and females are often excluded from these tasks because they are viewed as too weak or too tied to child-rearing activities. In industrialized societies, a gap exists between nonpaid work performed by women at home and paid work performed by men and women. A wage gap also exists between women and men in the marketplace.

• What are the key agents of gender socialization?

Parents, peers, teachers and schools, sports, and the media are agents of socialization that tend to reinforce stereotypes of appropriate gender behavior.

• What causes gender inequality in the United States?

Gender inequality results from economic, political, and educational discrimination against women. In most workplaces, jobs are either gender segregated or the majority of employees are of the same gender. Although the degree of gender segregation in the professional workplace has declined since the 1970s, racial and ethnic segregation remains deeply embedded.

• How is occupational segregation related to the pay gap?

Many women work in lower-paying, less-prestigious jobs than men. This occupational segregation leads to a disparity, or pay gap, between women's and men's earnings. Even when women are employed in the same job as men, on average they do not receive the same, or comparable, pay.

● **How do functionalists and conflict theorists differ in their view of division of labor by gender?**

According to functionalist analysts, women's roles as caregivers in contemporary industrialized societies are crucial in ensuring that key societal tasks are fulfilled. While the husband performs the instrumental tasks of economic support and decision making, the wife assumes the expressive tasks of providing affection and emotional support for the family. According to conflict analysts, the gendered division of labor within families and the workplace—particularly in agrarian and industrial societies—results from male control and dominance over women and resources.

key terms

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questions for critical thinking

1. Do the media reflect societal attitudes on gender, or do the media determine and teach gender behavior? (As a related activity, watch television for several hours, and list the roles for women and men depicted in programs and those represented in advertising.)

2. Examine the various academic departments at your college. What is the gender breakdown of the faculty in selected departments? What is the gender breakdown of undergraduates and graduate students in those departments? Are there major differences among various academic areas of teaching and study? What hypothesis can you come up with to explain your observations?

turning to video

Watch the CBS video *Women in the Military* (running time 4:11), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video explores the possibility that, for female soldiers, a tour of duty in Iraq or Afghanistan can be much harder than for their male counterparts. As you watch the video, think about your own family members' or friends' experience in the military, or imagine what being in a war zone is like for a soldier. After you watch the video, try answering these questions: What can be done to reduce the likelihood that female soldiers, in addition to dealing with the stress of war, may also have to deal with sexual assault from their fellow soldiers? What would your plan require to be considered successful?

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● Alternatively, you may search by this book's title to locate its complimentary resources.

I've heard a lot of people who are out of work say it's kind of a blessing, that you have more time to spend with your family. I love my family and my family comes first, and my family means more than anything to me, but it hasn't been that way for me.

—Paul Bachmuth, an energy consultant who has been out of work for nearly a year, expressing concern about the toll that job woes have taken on his family (qtd. in Luo, 2009: A1)

My dad's around a lot more [since he lost his job], so it's a little strange because he gets frustrated he's not at work, and he's not being challenged. So I think me and my dad are a lot closer now because we can spend a lot more time together, but we fight a lot more maybe because he's around 24–7.

—Paul's daughter, Hannah, describing changes that occurred at home since her father became unemployed (qtd. in Luo, 2009: A1)

▲ Families can provide comfort and support, but they can also be the source of discord and strife, a situation more likely to occur during difficult economic times.

I lost my job in March, and from there on, everything went downhill. After struggling and struggling and not being able to pay my house payments or my other bills, I finally sucked up my pride. I got food stamps just to help feed my daughter.

—Vicky Newton, a single mother, talking about how losing her job as an insurance agency customer-service representative limited her ability to provide for her daughter (qtd. in Luo and Thee-Brenan, 2009: A1)

Everything gets touched [by losing a job]. All your relationships are touched by it. You're never your normal happy-to-lucky person. Your countenance, your self-esteem goes. You think, "I'm not employable."

—Colleen Klemm, a former landscaping company manager, discussing how job loss affected her self-esteem and created relationship problems (qtd. in Luo and Thee-Brenan, 2009: A26)

Dear Abby: I have started a promising career I thoroughly enjoy. But my husband, "Derrick," has been laid off from his job because of the economy. I love Derrick with all my heart. I hate to see him hurting. . . . Losing his job appears to have damaged his self-esteem as a man and, with it, our ability to connect. . . . I desperately want to help, but I'm getting scared, too. . . .

—"Praying in Nebraska," a woman who wrote a letter to the syndicated columnist "Dear Abby," revealing the anguish that she feels about her husband being laid off (qtd. in Phillips, 2009)

Chapter Focus Question

Why are many family-related concerns—such as financial hardships and unemployment of family members—viewed primarily as personal problems rather than as social concerns requiring macrolevel solutions?

Throughout good and bad economic times, families are important to people because the family is a vital social institution in society and often serves as the major source of support for individuals (Kreider and Elliott, 2009). However, in periods like the 1930s depression or the current "Great Recession," families are particularly affected by problems in the economy. Worldwide, the economies in various nations have been undergoing transformation, and in the United States alone, about two million jobs have been lost in recent years. Our country has a 9.7 percent unemployment rate, and this counts only individuals who are actively seeking employment, not those who have become discouraged and have given up looking for work. Many families experience long-term repercussions from a national or global economic crisis and the financial and emotional havoc that such crises wreak on workers and their families. For example, studies have found that

individuals are feeling more tension and having more arguments with other family members because of personal fears that people have regarding unemployment, loss of housing values, mortgage foreclosures, and other personal and financial problems (Luo and Thee-Brenan, 2009). It is not surprising to sociologists that families and personal relationships are affected by financial insecurity: Individuals are forced to deal with problems of low self-esteem associated with job loss and seeking new employment, and they must focus on how to take care of their family in tough economic times. People in the lower tiers of the U.S. class structure are confronted with problems such as these all of

the time; however, this level of anxiety is somewhat new to many individuals in the middle and upper-middle classes in this country.

Family problems related to economic crises are not limited to the United States: People in many countries are affected by changes in the global economy. In this chapter, we examine the increasing complexity of family life in the United States and other nations. Pressing social issues such as financial hardship, increasing teenage pregnancy rates, divorce, and child-care problems will be used as examples of how families and intimate relationships continue to change. Before reading on, test your knowledge about some contemporary trends in U.S. family life by taking the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz.

Families in Global Perspective

As the nature of family life and work has changed in high-, middle-, and low-income nations, the issue of what constitutes a "family" has been widely debated. For many years, the standard sociological definition of *family* has been a group of people who are related to one another by bonds of blood, marriage, or adoption and who live together, form an economic unit, and bear and raise children. Many people believe that this definition should not be expanded—that social approval should not be extended to other relationships simply because the persons in those relationships wish to consider themselves a family. However, others challenge this definition because it simply does not match the reality of family life in contemporary society (Lamanna and Riedmann, 2009). Today's families include many types of living arrangements and relationships, including single-parent households, unmarried couples, lesbian and gay couples, and multiple generations (such as grandparent, parent, and child) living in the same household. To accurately reflect these changes in family life, some sociologists believe that we need a more encompassing definition of what constitutes a family. Accordingly, we will define *families* **as relationships in which people live together with commitment, form an economic unit and care for any young, and consider their identity to be significantly attached to the group.** Sexual expression and parent–child relationships are a part of most, but not all, family relationships.

Although families differ widely around the world, they also share certain common concerns in their everyday lives. Food, clothing, shelter, and child care are necessities important to all people. Various non-governmental agencies of the United Nations have established international priorities to help families. Suggestions have included the development of "social infrastructures for the care and education of children of working parents in order to reduce their . . . burden" and implementation of flexible working hours so that parents will have more opportunities to spend time with their children (Pietilä and Vickers, 1994: 115). Sociologists and other social analysts continue to study problems associated with family life in the United States and other nations in hopes of identifying the most important issues and devising possible solutions to some of these pressing problems.

How do sociologists approach the study of families? In our study of families, we will use our sociological imagination to see how our personal experiences are related to the larger happenings in society. At the microlevel, each of us has a "biography," based on our experience within our family; at the macrolevel, our families are embedded in a specific social context that has a major effect on them. We will examine the institution of the family at both of these levels, starting with family structure and characteristics.

Family Structure and Characteristics

In preindustrial societies, the primary form of social organization is through kinship ties. *Kinship* **refers to a social network of people based on common ancestry, marriage, or adoption.** Through kinship networks, people cooperate so that they can acquire the basic necessities of life, including food and shelter. Kinship systems can also serve as a means by which property is transferred, goods are produced and distributed, and power is allocated.

In industrialized societies, other social institutions fulfill some of the functions previously taken care of by the kinship network. For example, political systems provide structures of social control and authority, and economic systems are responsible for the production and distribution of goods and services. Consequently, families in industrialized societies serve fewer and more-specialized purposes than do families in preindustrial societies. Contemporary families are responsible primarily for regulating

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- **Historical Perspective:** "Nobody has ever before asked the nuclear family to live all by itself in a box the way we do. With no relatives, no support, we've put it in an impossible situation" (Margaret Mead). Have students comment on Mead's observation.
- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disk provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint® slides, videos, PowerPoint® and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.

- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask student to write about their own family legacies in light of the following: "We all grow up with the weight of history on us. Our ancestors dwell in the attics of our brains as they do in the spiraling chains of knowledge hidden in every cell of our bodies" (Shirley Abbott).

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Contemporary Trends in U.S. Family Life?

True	False	
T	**F**	1. The percentage of married-couple family households is higher today than it has been in the past.
T	**F**	2. About one-third of all U.S. family households are composed of a married couple with one or more children under age 18.
T	**F**	3. Americans today are more likely than in the past to cohabit, divorce, marry later, or not marry at all.
T	**F**	4. Couples who cohabit before they get married are more likely to stay married.
T	**F**	5. The rate of teenage pregnancies has decreased each year in the twenty-first century.
T	**F**	6. Stay-at-home moms are more likely to be younger, Latina (Hispanic), and foreign-born than mothers in the workforce.
T	**F**	7. Over the past 40 years, married, college-educated Americans have made larger economic gains than unmarried persons who possess less than a college education.
T	**F**	8. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, a larger percentage of U.S. men are married to women whose education and income exceed their own than in past decades.

Answers on page 350.

sexual activity, socializing children, and providing affection and companionship for family members.

Families of Orientation and Procreation

During our lifetime, many of us will be members of two different types of families—a family of orientation and a family of procreation. The **family of orientation is the family into which a person is born and in which early socialization usually takes place.** Although most people are related to members of their family of orientation by blood ties, those who are adopted have a legal tie that is patterned after a blood relationship. The **family of procreation is the family that a person forms by having or adopting children.** Both legal and blood ties are found in most families of procreation. The relationship between a husband and wife is based on legal ties; however, the relationship between a parent and child may be based on either blood ties or legal ties, depending on whether the child has been adopted.

Some sociologists have emphasized that "family of orientation" and "family of procreation" do not encompass all types of contemporary families. Instead, many gay men and lesbians have *families we choose*—social arrangements that include intimate relationships between couples and close familial relationships among other couples and other adults and children. According to the sociologist Judy Root Aulette (1994), "families we choose" include blood ties and legal ties, but they also include *fictive kin*—persons who are not actually related by blood but who are accepted as family members.

Extended and Nuclear Families

Sociologists distinguish between extended families and nuclear families based on the number of generations that live

> **families** relationships in which people live together with commitment, form an economic unit and care for any young, and consider their identity to be significantly attached to the group.
>
> **kinship** a social network of people based on common ancestry, marriage, or adoption.
>
> **family of orientation** the family into which a person is born and in which early socialization usually takes place.
>
> **family of procreation** the family that a person forms by having or adopting children.

- **Active Learning:** Ask students to compare their answers to the Sociology and Everyday Life questions with those of the students sitting around them. Which questions did most of your students answer correctly? What did your students base their answers on—experience, guesswork?

- **Extra Examples:** Introduce your students to some of the other forms that contemporary families take. Do orientation and procreation accurately describe today's family functions? What important functions do families of orientation serve? What about families of procreation?

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Contemporary Trends in U.S. Family Life

1. **False.** U.S. Census Bureau data show that the percentage of married-couple family households (75 percent in 2007) has decreased from the 1970s, when these units constituted 87 percent of all family households.

2. **True.** About one-third (32 percent) of all family groups are composed of married couples with one or more children under age 18.

3. **True.** Americans are more likely than in the past to cohabit, divorce, marry later, or not marry at all. A variety of reasons have been identified for changes in these patterns.

4. **False.** Recent research indicates that couples who cohabit before they get married are less likely to stay married; however, their chances of remaining married improve if they were already engaged when they began living together.

5. **False.** After more than a decade of declining teenage pregnancy, the pregnancy rate among girls aged 15 to 19 increased about 3 percent in 2009. Although teenage pregnancy rates for whites remain lower than for African Americans and Latinas, the pregnancy rates increased for all three groups.

6. **True.** U.S. Census Bureau reports indicate that the 5.6 million stay-at-home mothers in 2007 were younger and more likely to be Latina (Hispanic) and foreign-born than mothers who were in the labor force.

7. **True.** Married, college-educated Americans have made larger economic gains than have other groups over the past four decades.

8. **True.** According to a recent study by the Pew Research Center, a larger share of men (22 percent) today are married to women whose income exceeds their own, compared with only 4 percent of married men in 1970.

Sources: Based on Edwards, 2009; Fry and Cohn, 2010; Kreider and Elliott, 2009; Lewis, 2010; Parker-Pope, 2010; and Roberts, 2010b.

within a household. An *extended family* **is a family unit composed of relatives in addition to parents and children who live in the same household.** These families often include grandparents, uncles, aunts, or other relatives who live close to the parents and children, making it possible for family members to share resources. In horticultural and agricultural societies, extended families are extremely important; having a large number of family members participate in food production may be essential for survival. Today, extended-family patterns are found in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and some parts of eastern and southern Europe (Busch, 1990). With the advent of industrialization and urbanization, maintaining the extended-family pattern becomes more difficult. Increasingly, young people move from rural to urban areas in search of employment in the industrializing sector of the economy. At that time, some extended families remain, but the nuclear family typically becomes the predominant family form in the society.

A *nuclear family* **is a family composed of one or two parents and their dependent children, all of whom live apart from other relatives.** A traditional definition specifies that a nuclear family is made up of a "couple" and their dependent children; however, this definition became outdated when a significant shift occurred in the family structure. A comparison of Census Bureau data from 1970 and 2007 shows that there has been a significant decline in the percentage of U.S. households comprising a married couple with their own children under eighteen years of age (see "Census Profiles: Household Composition"). Conversely, there has been an increase in the percentage of households in which either a woman or a man lives alone.

Marriage Patterns

Across cultures, families are characterized by different forms of marriage. **Marriage is a legally**

- **For Discussion:** Have students provide examples of "families we choose" from their own lives and the lives of their friends and family members. In what ways do such connections fulfill or not fulfill the functions of extended and nuclear families?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** Have students define *serial monogamy* through brainstorming and discussion. Why do they think this

has become an increasingly common pattern in the United States?

- **Media Coverage:** "The U.S. Senate's top Democrat called for a federal investigation into the activities of polygamists in Western states. Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, a Mormon, said in a letter to U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales that a task force should be formed to look into interstate activities of polygamists.

census profiles

Household Composition, 1970 and 2007

The Census Bureau asks a representative sample of the U.S. population about their marital status and also asks those individuals questions about other individuals residing in their household. Based on the most recent data, the Census Bureau reports that the percentage distribution of nonfamily and family households has changed substantially during the past four decades. The most noticeable trend is the decline in the number of married-couple households with their own children living with them, which decreased from about 40 percent of all households in 1970 to less than 23 percent in 2007. The distribution shown below reflects this significant change in family structure.

Persons living alone **17.1%**

Other nonfamily households **1.7%**

Other family households **10.6%**

Married couples without children **30.3%**

Married couples with children* **40.3%**

1970

Persons living alone **26.9%**

Other nonfamily households **5.6%**

Other family households **16.8%**

Married couples without children **28.3%**

Married couples with children* **22.5%**

2007

☐ Family household   ☐ Nonfamily household

*Own children under age 18.

Source: Kreider and Elliott, 2009.

▼ Whereas the relationship between spouses is based on legal ties, relationships between parents and children may be established by either blood or legal ties.

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==recognized and/or socially approved arrangement between two or more individuals that carries certain rights and obligations and usually involves sexual activity.== In most societies, marriage involves a mutual commitment by each partner, and linkages between two individuals and families are publicly demonstrated.

extended family a family unit composed of relatives in addition to parents and children who live in the same household.

nuclear family a family composed of one or two parents and their dependent children, all of whom live apart from other relatives.

marriage a legally recognized and/or socially approved arrangement between two or more individuals that carries certain rights and obligations and usually involves sexual activity.

'For too long, this outrageous activity has been disguised in the mask of religious freedom,' Reid said. 'But child abuse and human servitude have nothing to do with religious freedom and must not be tolerated'" (Associated Press, 9/2006).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students write for ten minutes on the Census Profile about household composition changes over the past four decades. Ask each student to write on what is most significant about these changes.

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▲ Polygamy is the concurrent marriage of a person of one sex with two or more persons of the opposite sex. Although most people in Iran do not practice this pattern of marriage, some men are married to more than one wife.

In the United States, the only legally sanctioned form of marriage is *monogamy—a marriage between two partners, usually a woman and a man.* For some people, marriage is a lifelong commitment that ends only with the death of a partner. For others, marriage is a commitment of indefinite duration. Through a pattern of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, some people practice *serial monogamy—a succession of marriages in which a person has several spouses over a lifetime but is legally married to only one person at a time.*

Polygamy is the concurrent marriage of a person of one sex with two or more members of the opposite sex. The most prevalent form of polygamy is *polygyny—the concurrent marriage of one man with two or more women.* Polygyny has been practiced in a number of societies, including parts of Europe until the Middle Ages. More recently,

some marriages in Islamic societies in Africa and Asia have been polygynous; however, the cost of providing for multiple wives and numerous children makes the practice impossible for all but the wealthiest men. In addition, because roughly equal numbers of women and men live in these areas, this nearly balanced sex ratio tends to limit polygyny.

The second type of polygamy is *polyandry—the concurrent marriage of one woman with two or more men.* Polyandry is very rare; when it does occur, it is typically found in societies where men greatly outnumber women because of high rates of female infanticide.

Patterns of Descent and Inheritance

Even though a variety of marital patterns exist across cultures, virtually all forms of marriage establish a system of descent so that kinship can be determined and inheritance rights established. In preindustrial societies, kinship is usually traced through one parent (unilineally). The most common pattern of unilineal descent is *patrilineal descent—a system of tracing descent through the father's side of the family.* Patrilineal systems are set up in such a manner that a legitimate son inherits his father's property and sometimes his position upon the father's death. In nations such as India, where boys are seen as permanent patrilineal family members but girls are seen as only temporary family members, girls tend to be considered more expendable than boys (O'Connell, 1994). Recently, some scholars have concluded that cultural and racial nationalism in China is linked to the idea of patrilineal descent being crucial to the modern Chinese national identity (Dikotter, 1996).

Even with the less common pattern of *matrilineal descent—a system of tracing descent through the mother's side of the family—*women may not control property. However, inheritance of property and position is usually traced from the maternal uncle (mother's brother) to his nephew (mother's son). In some cases, mothers may pass on their property to daughters.

By contrast, kinship in industrial societies is usually traced through both parents (bilineally). The most common form is *bilateral descent—a system of tracing descent through both the mother's and father's sides of the family.* This pattern is used in

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the United States for the purpose of determining kinship and inheritance rights; however, children typically take the father's last name.

Power and Authority in Families

Descent and inheritance rights are intricately linked with patterns of power and authority in families. The most prevalent forms of familial power and authority are patriarchy, matriarchy, and egalitarianism. A *patriarchal family* is a family structure in which authority is held by the eldest male (usually the father). The male authority figure acts as head of the household and holds power and authority over the women and children, as well as over other males. A *matriarchal family* is a family structure in which authority is held by the eldest female (usually the mother). In this case, the female authority figure acts as head of the household. Although there has been a great deal of discussion about matriarchal families, scholars have found no historical evidence to indicate that true matriarchies ever existed.

The most prevalent pattern of power and authority in families is patriarchy. Across cultures, men are the primary (and often sole) decision makers regarding domestic, economic, and social concerns facing the family. The existence of patriarchy may give men a sense of power over their own lives, but it can also create an atmosphere in which some men feel greater freedom to abuse women and children.

An *egalitarian family* is a family structure in which both partners share power and authority equally. Recently, a trend toward more-egalitarian relationships has been evident in a number of countries as women have sought changes in their legal status and increased educational and employment opportunities. Some degree of economic independence makes it possible for women to delay marriage or to terminate a problematic marriage (O'Connell, 1994). However, one study of the effects of egalitarian values on the allocation and performance of domestic tasks in the family found that changes were relatively slow in coming. According to the study, fathers were more likely to share domestic tasks in nonconventional families where members held more-egalitarian values. Similarly, children's gender-role typing was more closely linked to their parents' egalitarian values and nonconventional

lifestyles than to the domestic tasks they were assigned (Weisner, Garnier, and Loucky, 1994).

Residential Patterns

Residential patterns are interrelated with the authority structure and method of tracing descent in families. *Patrilocal residence* refers to the custom of a married couple living in the same household (or community) as the husband's family. Across cultures, patrilocal residency is the most common pattern. One example of contemporary patrilocal residency can be found in al-Barba, a lower-middle-class neighborhood in the Jordanian city of Irbid (McCann, 1997). According to researchers, the high cost of renting an apartment or building a new home has resulted in many sons building their own living quarters onto their parents' home, resulting in

monogamy a marriage between two partners, usually a woman and a man.

polygamy the concurrent marriage of a person of one sex with two or more members of the opposite sex.

polygyny the concurrent marriage of one man with two or more women.

polyandry the concurrent marriage of one woman with two or more men.

patrilineal descent a system of tracing descent through the father's side of the family.

matrilineal descent a system of tracing descent through the mother's side of the family.

bilateral descent a system of tracing descent through both the mother's and father's sides of the family.

patriarchal family a family structure in which authority is held by the eldest male (usually the father).

matriarchal family a family structure in which authority is held by the eldest female (usually the mother).

egalitarian family a family structure in which both partners share power and authority equally.

patrilocal residence the custom of a married couple living in the same household (or community) as the husband's family.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** Do dating patterns you have observed at college tend to suggest that endogamous relationships are most prevalent? Do people appear to be of similar social class? Racial/ethnic backgrounds? What other important social factors can you identify by observation?

multifamily households consisting of an older married couple, their unmarried children, their married sons, and their sons' wives and children.

Few societies have residential patterns known as *matrilocal residence—the custom of a married couple living in the same household (or community) as the wife's parents.* In industrialized nations such as the United States, most couples hope to live in a *neolocal residence—the custom of a married couple living in their own residence apart from both the husband's and the wife's parents.*

To this point, we have examined a variety of marriage and family patterns found around the world. Even with the diversity of these patterns, most people's behavior is shaped by cultural rules pertaining to endogamy and exogamy. *Endogamy is the practice of marrying within one's own group.* In the United States, for example, most people practice endogamy: They marry people who come from the same social class, racial–ethnic group, religious affiliation, and other categories considered important within their own social group. *Exogamy is the practice of marrying outside one's own social group or category.* Depending on the circumstances, exogamy may not be noticed at all, or it may result in a person being ridiculed or ostracized by other members of the "in" group. The three most important sources of positive or negative sanctions for intermarriage are the family, the church, and the state. Participants in these social institutions may look unfavorably on the marriage of an in-group member to an "outsider" because of the belief that it diminishes social cohesion in the group (Kalmijn, 1998). However, educational attainment is also a strong indicator of marital choice. Higher education emphasizes individual achievement, and college-educated people may be less likely than others to identify themselves with their social or cultural roots and thus more willing to marry outside their own social group or category if their potential partner shares a similar level of educational attainment (Hwang, Saenz, and Aguirre, 1995; Kalmijn, 1998).

Theoretical Perspectives on Families

The *sociology of family* is the subdiscipline of sociology that attempts to describe and explain patterns of family life and variations in family structure. Functionalist perspectives emphasize the functions that families perform at the macrolevel of society, whereas conflict and feminist perspectives focus on families as a primary source of social inequality. Symbolic interactionists examine micro-level interactions that are integral to the roles of different family members.

Functionalist Perspectives

Functionalists emphasize the importance of the family in maintaining the stability of society and the well-being of individuals. According to Emile Durkheim, marriage is a microcosmic replica of the larger society; both marriage and society involve a mental and moral fusion of physically distinct individuals (Lehmann, 1994). Durkheim also believed that a division of labor contributes to greater efficiency in all areas of life—including marriages and families—even though he acknowledged that this division imposes significant limitations on some people.

In the United States, Talcott Parsons was a key figure in developing a functionalist model of the

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▲ Functionalist theorists believe that families serve a variety of functions that no other social institution can adequately fulfill. In contrast, conflict and feminist theorists believe that families may be a source of conflict over values, goals, and access to resources and power. Children in upper-class families have many advantages and opportunities that are not available to other children.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Sociological Imagination:** "The life-fate of the modern individual depends not only upon the family into which he was born or which he enters by marriage, but increasingly upon the corporation in which he spends the most alert hours of his best years" (C. Wright Mills). Have the class discuss and write a brief evaluation of this statement.

- **Research:** "If it is to be done well, child-rearing requires, more than most activities of life, a good deal of decentering from one's own needs and perspectives. Such decentering is relatively easy when a society is stable and when there is an extended, supportive structure that the parent can depend upon" (David Elkind). Have the class research this decentering process and factors that affect it.

family. According to Parsons (1955), the husband/father fulfills the *instrumental role* (meeting the family's economic needs, making important decisions, and providing leadership), whereas the wife/mother fulfills the *expressive role* (running the household, caring for children, and meeting the emotional needs of family members).

Contemporary functionalist perspectives on families derive their foundation from Durkheim. Division of labor makes it possible for families to fulfill a number of functions that no other institution can perform as effectively. In advanced industrial societies, families serve four key functions:

1. *Sexual regulation.* Families are expected to regulate the sexual activity of their members and thus control reproduction so that it occurs within specific boundaries. At the macrolevel, incest taboos prohibit sexual contact or marriage between certain relatives. For example, virtually all societies prohibit sexual relations between parents and their children and between brothers and sisters.
2. *Socialization.* Parents and other relatives are responsible for teaching children the necessary knowledge and skills to survive. The smallness and intimacy of families make them best suited for providing children with the initial learning experiences they need.
3. *Economic and psychological support.* Families are responsible for providing economic and psychological support for members. In preindustrial societies, families are economic production units; in industrial societies, the economic security of families is tied to the workplace and to macrolevel economic systems. In recent years, psychological support and emotional security have been increasingly important functions of the family.
4. *Provision of social status.* Families confer social status and reputation on their members. These statuses include the ascribed statuses with which individuals are born, such as race/ethnicity, nationality, social class, and sometimes religious affiliation. One of the most significant and compelling forms of social placement is the family's class position and the opportunities (or lack thereof) resulting from that position. Examples of class-related opportunities are access to quality health care, higher education, and a safe place to live.

Conflict and Feminist Perspectives

Conflict and feminist analysts view functionalist perspectives on the role of the family in society as idealized and inadequate. Rather than operating harmoniously and for the benefit of all members, families are sources of social inequality and conflict over values, goals, and access to resources and power.

According to some conflict theorists, families in capitalist economies are similar to the work environment of a factory. Women are dominated by men in the home in the same manner that workers are dominated by capitalists and managers in factories (Engels, 1970/1884). Although childbearing and care for family members in the home contribute to capitalism, these activities also reinforce the subordination of women through unpaid (and often devalued) labor. Other conflict analysts are concerned with the effect that class conflict has on the family. The exploitation of the lower classes by the upper classes contributes to family problems such as high rates of divorce and overall family instability.

Some feminist perspectives on inequality in families focus on patriarchy rather than class. From this viewpoint, men's domination over women existed long before capitalism and private ownership of property (Mann, 1994). Women's subordination is rooted in patriarchy and men's control over women's labor power (Hartmann, 1981). According to one scholar, "Male power in our society is expressed in economic terms even if it does not originate in property relations; women's activities in the home have been undervalued at the same

matrilocal residence the custom of a married couple living in the same household (or community) as the wife's parents.

neolocal residence the custom of a married couple living in their own residence apart from both the husband's and the wife's parents.

endogamy cultural norms prescribing that people marry within their social group or category.

exogamy cultural norms prescribing that people marry outside their social group or category.

sociology of family the subdiscipline of sociology that attempts to describe and explain patterns of family life and variations in family structure.

• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

time as their labor has been controlled by men" (Mann, 1994: 42). In addition, men have benefited from the privileges they derive from their status as family breadwinners.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives

Early symbolic interactionists such as Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead provided key insights on the roles we play as family members and how we modify or adapt our roles to the expectations of others—especially significant others such as parents, grandparents, siblings, and other relatives. How does the family influence the individual's self-concept and identity? In order to answer questions such as this one, contemporary symbolic interactionists examine the roles of husbands, wives, and children as they act out their own parts and react to the actions of others. From

such a perspective, what people think, as well as what they say and do, is very important in understanding family dynamics.

According to the sociologists Peter Berger and Hansfried Kellner (1964), interaction between marital partners contributes to a shared reality. Although newlyweds bring separate identities to a marriage, over time they construct a shared reality as a couple. In the process, the partners redefine their past identities to be consistent with new realities. Development of a shared reality is a continuous process, taking place not only in the family but in any group in which the couple participates together. Divorce is the reverse of this process; couples may start with a shared reality and, in the process of uncoupling, gradually develop separate realities (Vaughan, 1985).

Symbolic interactionists explain family relationships in terms of the subjective meanings and everyday

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▲ Marriage is a complicated process involving rituals and shared moments of happiness. When marriage is followed by divorce, couples must abandon a shared reality and then reestablish individual ones.

- **For Discussion:** Have students compare the following statement to symbolic interactionist perspectives on the "shared reality" of marriage: "Marriage was not designed to fulfill our high emotional expectations. It was a way to subsist, to raise and feed your yourself and your kids. It is not optimized for personal fulfillment" (Andrew J. Cherlin, *Public and Private Families*).

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Research:** Have students research fathers' involvement in their children's schooling, and its association with better grades. This correlation is apparent in biological parent families, for stepfathers, and for fathers heading single-parent families (Christine Winquist Nord and Jerry West, 2001).

interpretations that people give to their lives. As the sociologist Jessie Bernard (1982/1973) pointed out, women and men experience marriage differently. Although the husband may see *his* marriage very positively, the wife may feel less positive about *her* marriage, and vice versa. Researchers have found that husbands and wives may give very different accounts of the same event and that their "two realities" frequently do not coincide (Safilios-Rothschild, 1969).

Postmodernist Perspectives

According to postmodern theories, we have experienced a significant decline in the influence of the family and other social institutions. As people have pursued individual freedom, they have been less inclined to accept the structural constraints imposed on them by institutions. Given this assumption, how might a postmodern perspective view contemporary family life? For example, how might this approach answer the question "How is family life different in the information age"? Social scientist David Elkind (1995) describes the postmodern family as *permeable*—capable of being diffused or invaded in such a manner that the family's original nature is modified or changed. According to Elkind (1995), if the nuclear family is a reflection of the age of modernity, the permeable family reflects the postmodern assumptions of difference and irregularity. This is evident in the fact that the nuclear family is now only one of many family forms. Similarly, under modernity the idea of romantic love has given way to the idea of consensual love: Individuals agree to have sexual relations with others whom they have no intention of marrying or, if they marry, do not necessarily see the marriage as having permanence. Maternal love has also been transformed into shared parenting, which includes not only mothers and fathers but also caregivers who may either be relatives or nonrelatives (Elkind, 1995).

Urbanity is another characteristic of the postmodern family. The boundaries between the public sphere (the workplace) and the private sphere (the home) are becoming much more open and flexible. In fact, family life may be negatively affected by the decreasing distinction between what is work time and what is family time. As more people are becoming connected "24/7" (twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week), the boss who in the past

would not call at 11:30 P.M. may send an e-mail asking for an immediate response to some question that has arisen while the person is away on vacation with family members (Leonard, 1999). According to some postmodern analysts, this is an example of the "power of the new communications technologies to integrate and control labour despite extensive dispersion and decentralization" (Haraway, 1994: 439).

The Concept Quick Review summarizes sociological perspectives on the family. Taken together, these perspectives on the social institution of families reflect various ways in which familial relationships may be viewed in contemporary societies. Now we shift our focus to love, marriage, intimate relationships, and family issues in the United States.

Developing Intimate Relationships and Establishing Families

The United States has been described as a "nation of lovers"; it has been said that we are "in love with love." Why is this so? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that our ideal culture emphasizes *romantic love,* which refers to a deep emotion, the satisfaction of significant needs, a caring for and acceptance of the person we love, and involvement in an intimate relationship (Lamanna and Riedmann, 2009).

Love and Intimacy

In the late nineteenth century, during the Industrial Revolution, people came to view work and home as separate spheres in which different feelings and emotions were appropriate (Coontz, 1992). The public sphere of work—men's sphere—emphasized self-reliance and independence. By contrast, the private sphere of the home—women's sphere—emphasized the giving of services, the exchange of gifts, and love. Accordingly, love and emotions became the domain of women, and work and rationality became the domain of men (Lamanna and Riedmann, 2009). Although the roles of women and men changed dramatically in the twentieth century, women and men may still not share the same perceptions about romantic love today. According to the sociologist Francesca Cancian (1990), women tend to express their feelings verbally whereas men tend to express their

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- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Media Coverage:** "Freedom in the bedroom is a novel concept in China, where for decades communist minders dictated most aspects of people's private lives. Today 70% of Beijing residents say they have had sexual relations before marriage, compared with just 15.5% in 1989, according to Li Yinhe,

a sociologist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences" (*Time,* 12/2005).
- **Historical Perspective:** "Rather than marrying for love, people tried to marry higher up, to marry into better families and gain societal status via arranged marriages, which then became a system of maneuvering and betrayal. This purpose for marriage was about forming political and economic alliances and ultimately gave the men authority over

[concept quick review 11.1]

Theoretical Perspectives on Families

	Focus	Key Points	Perspective on Family Problems
Functionalist	Role of families in maintaining stability of society and individuals' well-being.	In modern societies, families serve the functions of sexual regulation, socialization, economic and psychological support, and provision of social status.	Family problems are related to changes in social institutions such as the economy, religion, education, and law/government.
Conflict/Feminist	Families as sources of conflict and social inequality.	Families both mirror and help perpetuate social inequalities based on class and gender.	Family problems reflect social patterns of dominance and subordination.
Symbolic Interactionist	Family dynamics, including communication patterns and the subjective meanings that people assign to events.	Interactions within families create a shared reality.	How family problems are perceived and defined depends on patterns of communication, the meanings that people give to roles and events, and individuals' interpretations of family interactions.
Postmodernist	Permeability of families.	In postmodern societies, families are diverse and fragmented. Boundaries between workplace and home are blurred.	Family problems are related to cyberspace, consumerism, and the hyperreal in an age increasingly characterized by high-tech "haves" and "have-nots."

love through nonverbal actions, such as running an errand for someone or repairing a child's broken toy.

Love and intimacy are closely intertwined. Intimacy may be psychic ("the sharing of minds"), sexual, or both. Although sexuality is an integral part of many intimate relationships, perceptions about sexual activities vary from one culture to the next and from one time period to another. For example, kissing is found primarily in Western cultures; many African and Asian cultures view kissing negatively (Reinisch, 1990).

For many years, the work of the biologist Alfred C. Kinsey was considered to be the definitive research on human sexuality, even though some of his methodology had serious limitations. More recently, the work of Kinsey and his associates has been superseded by the National Health and Social Life Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago (see Laumann

et al., 1994; Michael et al., 1994). Based on interviews with more than 3,400 men and women aged 18 to 59, this random survey tended to reaffirm the significance of the dominant sexual ideologies. Most respondents reported that they engaged in heterosexual relationships, although 9 percent of the men said they had had at least one homosexual encounter resulting in orgasm. Although 6.2 percent of men and 4.4 percent of women said that they were at least somewhat attracted to others of the same gender, only 2.8 percent of men and 1.4 percent of women identified themselves as gay or lesbian. According to the study, persons who engaged in extramarital sex found their activities to be more thrilling than those with a marital partner, but they also felt more guilt. Persons in sustained relationships such as marriage or cohabitation found sexual activity to be the most satisfying emotionally and physically.

women and women a security blanket in their husbands. It was not until about 200 years ago that it became respectable to marry for love because of the Enlightenment and the radical ideas of the French and American revolutions" (Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, A History*).

• **Table Note:** Lead students in a step-by-step discussion of the Concept Quick Review. Ask students to work in teams to come up with examples for each of the categories in the table.

Cohabitation and Domestic Partnerships

Attitudes about cohabitation have changed in the past three decades. Until recently, the Census Bureau defined *cohabitation* as the sharing of a household by one man and one woman who are not related to each other by kinship or marriage, but recently has expanded this to a more inclusive definition. For our purposes, we will define **cohabitation as referring to two people who live together, and think of themselves as a couple, without being legally married.** It is not known how many people actually cohabit because the Census Bureau does not ask about emotional or sexual involvement between unmarried individuals sharing living quarters or between gay and lesbian couples.

Based on Census Bureau data, the people who are most likely to cohabit are under age 45, have been married before, or are older individuals who do not want to lose financial benefits (such as retirement benefits) that are contingent upon not remarrying. Among younger people, employed couples are more likely to cohabit than college students are.

Today, some people view cohabitation as a form of "trial marriage." Some people who have cohabited do eventually marry the person with whom they have been living, whereas others do not. A recent study of 11,000 women found that there was a 70 percent marriage rate for women who remained in a cohabiting relationship for at least 5 years. However, of the women in that study who cohabited and then married their partner, 40 percent became divorced within a 10-year period (Bramlett and Mosher, 2001). Whether these findings will be supported by subsequent research remains to be seen. But we do know that studies over the past two decades have supported the proposition that couples who cohabit before marriage do not necessarily have a stable relationship following marriage (Bumpass, Sweet, and Cherlin, 1991; London, 1991; Roberts, 2010b).

Among heterosexual couples, many reasons exist for cohabitation; for gay and lesbian couples, however, no alternatives to cohabitation exist in most U.S. states. For that reason, **many lesbians and gays seek recognition of their *domestic partnerships*—household partnerships in which an unmarried couple lives together in a committed, sexually intimate relationship and is granted the same rights and benefits as those accorded to married heterosexual couples** (Aulette, 1994; Gerstel and Gross, 1995).

▼ In the United States, the notion of romantic love is deeply intertwined with our beliefs about how and why people develop intimate relationships and establish families. Not all societies share this concern with romantic love. However, in this country the number of opportunities for romance is sometimes increased by online matching services, such as this one, which caters to farmers and people who love nature.

cohabitation a situation in which two people live together, and think of themselves as a couple, without being legally married.

domestic partnerships household partnerships in which an unmarried couple lives together in a committed, sexually intimate relationship and is granted the same rights and benefits as those accorded to married heterosexual couples.

- **For Discussion:** Have students research and discuss under what circumstances cohabitation is most likely to contribute to marital success. When is it least likely?
- **U.S. Census:** Of the 12 million one-parent family groups, the 10 million maintained by women were more likely than the 2 million maintained by men to include more than one child and to have family incomes below the poverty level.
- **Recent Events:** "If your employer offers health insurance coverage for domestic partners, you'll probably first be asked to sign an affidavit about your relationship. Most employers have clear definitions of who qualifies as a 'domestic partner.' In addition, some employers impose waiting periods, sometimes up to one year, before insurance coverage for your partner begins" (Insure.com).

However, this definition represents an ideal type; the reality of domestic partnerships varies from state to state. Although benefits such as health and life insurance coverage are extremely important to *all* couples, Gayle, a lesbian, points out that "It makes me angry that [heterosexuals] get insurance benefits and all the privileges, and Frances [her partner] and I take a beating financially. We both pay our insurance policies, but we don't get the discounts that other people get and that's not fair" (qtd. in Sherman, 1992: 197). Moreover, in some states with limited protection of domestic partnerships, some employers may choose to offer full benefits to domestic partners whereas other employers do not.

Over the past few years, much controversy has arisen over the legal status of gay and lesbian couples, particularly those who seek to make their relationship a legally binding commitment through marriage. Some states have allowed marriage licenses to be issued to same-sex couples only to have voters decide or courts rule that such marriages will not be allowed. Other states, including Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, have legalized same-sex marriages. The District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) and the Coquille Indian Tribe in Oregon have also made same-sex marriages legal. However, same-sex marriage is recognized only at the state level because—for the purposes of federal law—the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act explicitly defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman. As a result, no act or agency of the federal government currently recognizes same-sex marriage.

Marriage

Why do people get married? Couples get married for a variety of reasons. Some do so because they are "in love," desire companionship and sex, want to have children, feel social pressure, are attempting to escape from a bad situation in their parents' home, or believe that they will have more money or other resources if they get married. These factors notwithstanding, the selection of a marital partner is actually fairly predictable. As previously discussed, most people in the United States tend to choose marriage partners who are similar to themselves. **Homogamy refers to the pattern of individuals marrying those who have similar characteristics, such as race/ ethnicity, religious background, age, education, or social class.** However, homogamy provides only the general framework within which people select their partners; people are also influenced by other factors. For example, some researchers claim that people want partners whose personalities match their own in significant ways. Thus, people who are outgoing and friendly may be attracted to other people with those same traits. However, other researchers claim that people look for partners whose personality traits differ from but complement their own.

Housework and Child-Care Responsibilities

Today, women constitute slightly more than one-half of all paid workers in the United States, and mothers are the primary breadwinner or co-breadwinner in nearly two-thirds of U.S. families. What this means is that more than 50 percent of all marriages in the United States are **dual-earner marriages—marriages in which both spouses are in the labor force.** Over half of all employed women hold full-time, year-round jobs. Even when their children are very young, most working mothers work full time. For example, in 2008 more than 75 percent of employed mothers with children under age 6 worked full time (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Moreover, as Chapter 10 points out, many married women leave their paid employment at the end of the day and then go home to perform hours of housework and child care. Sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1989, 2003) refers to this as the **second shift—the domestic work that employed women perform at home after they complete their workday on the job.** Thus, many married women contribute to the economic well-being of their families and also meet many, if not all, of the domestic needs of family members by cooking, cleaning, shopping, taking care of children, and managing household routines. According to Hochschild, the unpaid housework that women do on the second shift amounts to an extra month of work each year. In households with small children or many children, the amount of housework increases. Across race and class, numerous studies have confirmed that domestic work remains primarily women's work (Gerstel and Gross, 1995). Hochschild (2003: 28) states that continuing problems regarding the

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- **Extra Examples:** Have students find current data on divorce and summarize their findings in class. Have them start with resources from this site: **divorcemag.com/statistics/statsUS.shtml.**
- **Research:** Have students examine the research of Naomi Cahn and June Carbone, which looks at the higher incidence of divorce and teen pregnancy in traditionally conservative "red" states, versus lower numbers in traditionally liberal "blue" states.

Have them pay particular attention to the role attributed to the average age of marriage in these states. See *Red Families v. Blue Families: Legal Polarization and the Creation of Culture* (Oxford, 2010).

- **Research:** In 2006, 58 percent of mothers with children age 5 and under worked outside of the home. That number rose to 74 percent for women with children ages 6–17 (*Money,* 2/2006).

▲ The debate over who should be allowed to get married is extremely divisive. In April 2009 the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that gay marriage is legal in that state; at top are some supporters of this decision. However, California's Proposition 8, a successful referendum that outlawed gay marriage in that state, was upheld by the California Supreme Court in May 2009, much to the delight of Prop 8's supporters, some of whom are shown in the bottom photo.

second shift in many families are a sign that the gender revolution has stalled:

> The move of masses of women into the paid work-force has constituted a revolution. But the slower shift in ideas of "manhood," the resistance of shar-ing work at home, the rigid schedules at work make for a "stall" in this gender revolution. It is a stall in the change of institutional arrangements of which men are the principal keepers.

As Hochschild points out, the second shift remains a problem for many women in dual-earner marriages.

In recent years, more husbands have attempted to share some of the household and child-care responsibilities. However, studies continue to show that when husbands share some of the household responsibilities, they typically spend much less time in these activities than do their wives. Women and men perform different household tasks, and the deadlines for their work vary widely. Recurring tasks that have specific times for completion (such as bathing a child or cooking a meal) tend to be the women's responsibility; by contrast, men are more likely to do the periodic tasks that have no highly structured schedule (such as mowing the lawn or changing the oil in the car). Some men are also more reluctant to perform undesirable tasks such as scrubbing the toilet or diapering a baby, or to give up leisure pursuits. However, gender reversals have occurred in many families, particularly in view of the national economic downturn, which has hurt employment of men more than that of women: A larger share of men now perform some or all of the housework and child-care responsibilities at home while their wives are in the workplace.

Couples with more-egalitarian ideas about women's and men's roles tend to share more equally in food preparation, housework, and child care (Wright et al., 1992). For some men, the shift to a

homogamy the pattern of individuals marrying those who have similar characteristics, such as race/ethnicity, religious background, age, education, or social class.

dual-earner marriages marriages in which both spouses are in the labor force.

second shift Arlie Hochschild's term for the domestic work that employed women perform at home after they complete their workday on the job.

• **U.S. Census:** In a typical week during the winter of 2002, 11.6 million (63 percent) of the 18.5 million children under 5 years of age were in some type of regular child-care arrangement.

▲ Juggling housework, child care, and a job in the paid workforce is all part of the average day for many women. Why does sociologist Arlie Hochschild believe that many women work a "second shift"?

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more egalitarian household occurs gradually, as Wesley, whose wife works full time, explains:

> It was me taking the initiative, and also Connie pushing, saying, "Gee, there's so much that has to be done." At first I said, "But I'm supposed to be the breadwinner," not realizing she's also the breadwinner. I was being a little blind to what was going on, but I got tired of waiting for my wife to come home to start cooking, so one day I surprised the hell out [of] her and myself and the kids, and I had supper waiting on the table for her. (qtd. in Gerson, 1993: 170)

In the United States, millions of parents rely on child care so that they can work and so that their young children can benefit from early educational experiences that will help in their future school endeavors. However, during the current economic downturn, the cost of such programs may be prohibitive for many families. Although organized after-school programs have become more numerous,

the percentage of children staying home alone has increased over the past five years. About 26 percent of school-aged children (15.1 million) stay alone after the school day ends until a parent returns home from work. Children need productive and safe activities to engage in while their parents are working, but many spend time eating junk food, watching television, talking on cell phones, playing video games, and being under the supervision of older brothers or sisters who may not be particularly interested in taking care of them (McClure, 2010).

Child-Related Family Issues and Parenting

Not all couples become parents. Those who decide not to have children often consider themselves to be "child-free," whereas those who do not produce children through no choice of their own may consider themselves "childless."

Deciding to Have Children

Cultural attitudes about having children and about the ideal family size began to change in the United States in the late 1950s. Women, on average, are now having 2.1 children each (see "Sociology Works!"). However, rates of fertility differ across racial and ethnic categories. In 2006, for example, Latinas (Hispanic women) had a total fertility rate of 2.9, which was 50 percent above that of white (non-Hispanic) women (National Center for Health Statistics, 2007). Among Latinas, the highest rate of fertility was found among Mexican American women, whereas Puerto Rican and Cuban American women had relatively lower rates.

Advances in birth control techniques over the past four decades—including the birth control pill and contraceptive patches and shots—now make it possible for people to decide whether or not they want to have children, how many they wish to have, and to determine (at least somewhat) the spacing of their births. However, sociologists suggest that fertility is linked not only to reproductive technologies but also to women's beliefs that they do or do not have other opportunities in society that are viable alternatives to childbearing (Lamanna and Riedmann, 2009).

Today, the concept of reproductive freedom includes both the desire *to have* or *not to have* one

- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss factors that make their own families strong, in light of the following: "In truth a family is what you make it. It is made strong, not by number of heads counted at the dinner table, but by the rituals you help family members create, by the memories you share, by the commitment of time, caring, and love you show to one another, and by the hopes for the future you have as individuals and as a unit" (Marge Kennedy).

- **U.S. Census:** Changes in marriage patterns can also be observed in the proportion of the population that has not married. In 2008, 33.5 percent of men and 26.8 percent of women 15 years and older had never married, up from 28 and 22 percent for men and women, respectively, in 1970.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #9: Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Cross-National Content

sociology works!

Social Factors Influencing Parenting: From the Housing Market to the Baby Nursery

One reason there are so few children in Italy is that housing is so hard to come by. Houses are bigger in the U.S. and generally more available. That may help explain why Americans have more babies.

> —Robert Engelman, vice president for programs at the Worldwatch Institute, an environmental research organization, and author of *More: Population, Nature, and What Women Want* (qtd. in Leland, 2008: A12)

Social scientists have long traced a connection between housing and fertility. When homes are scarce or beyond the means of young couples, as in the 1930s, couples delay marriage or have fewer children. This tendency helps account for the relatively dismal birth rates of many developed nations. . . . (Leland, 2008: A12)

For many years, demographers and other sociologists who specialize in population trends have sought to identify how biological and social factors affect fertility rates in various nations. Although biological factors such as general health and levels of nutrition in a region clearly affect the number of children a couple may produce, social factors are also important in determining the estimated number of children a woman will have in her lifetime (see Chapter 15 for additional information). A key social factor is the housing market where a couple lives: The ability to buy a house and having a relatively large home may influence a couple's decision about how many children to have. Early in the 2000s, the housing market in some areas of the United States provided an opportune time for more young couples to purchase their own home. Mortgages were readily available, and it typically did not take much cash (in the way of a down payment) up front to sign the contract and move into one's dream home. The availability of such loans to people who really couldn't afford the home they were buying has since come back to haunt many underfunded home buyers. By 2006, however, the babies were arriving, and the fertility rate in the United States had grown to an estimated 2.1 children for every woman of child-bearing age, reaching the highest level since the 1970s (Leland, 2008).

Sociological insights on the social aspects of fertility, which at first might appear to be primarily a biological phenomenon, have provided us with new information on why people decide to have children and how many children they might have. However, much remains unknown about the relationship between the housing market and the maternity ward, including how income and feelings of optimism or pessimism about the local and national economy might affect a couple's decisions regarding parenting.

Will the baby boomlet continue in the future? According to some social analysts, the boomlet may be short-lived because of a downturn in the economy and the housing market, which has culminated in fewer new homes being built and brought about more foreclosures—two key factors that may discourage couples from either having children or producing larger families.

reflect & analyze

How might sociological findings about factors that influence a couple's decision to have children be useful in your community? For example, why is information about the availability of housing and local fertility trends important to school board members and administrators when they are making enrollment projections or deciding where to build a new school in the future?

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or more children. According to the sociologists Leslie King and Madonna Harrington Meyer (1997), many U.S. women spend up to one-half of their life attempting to control their reproductivity. Other analysts have found that women, more often than men, are the first to choose a child-free lifestyle (Seccombe, 1991). However, the desire not to have children often comes in conflict with our society's *pronatalist bias*, which assumes that having children is the norm and can be taken for granted, whereas those who choose not to have children believe they must justify their decision to others (Lamanna and Riedmann, 2009).

However, some couples experience the condition of *involuntary infertility,* whereby they want to have a child but find that they are physically unable to do so. *Infertility* is defined as an inability to conceive after a year of unprotected sexual relations. Today, infertility affects nearly five million U.S. couples, or

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• **Box Note:** The "Reflect & Analyze" question in this Sociology Works! would be a great start for a research paper. Students could investigate the process the local school district goes through when making decisions about zoning and building new schools.

sociology in global perspective

Wombs-for-Rent: Outsourcing Births to India

Picture four people—three adults and one infant—as they might be shown on *CBS News:* One person in the photo is Karen Kim, a lovely young woman from California, who is cuddling her infant son, Brady. Another person is Karen's husband, Thomas, who lovingly looks on at the mother and child. Brady, the Kims' new son, is the third person in the photo, but who is the fourth person—a woman with long black hair, a red dress, and pearl earrings? Her name is Dr. Nayna Patel, and she is the physician who made it possible for the Kims to become parents because she runs Akanksha Fertility Clinic in Anand, India, where surrogate mothers give birth so that infertile couples such as the Kims can have children. (*CBS News,* 2007)

The notion of extracting resources from the Third World in order to enrich the First World is hardly new. It harks back to imperialism in its most literal form: the nineteenth-century extraction of gold, ivory, and rubber from the Third World. . . . Today, as love and care become the "new gold," the female part of the story has grown in prominence.

—Sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild (2003: 194) describes what she believes is happening as young women in low-income nations such as the Philippines leave their own children behind to work abroad for long periods of time, taking care of other people's children and households; however, these words certainly can also be applied to nations such as India, where women are serving as surrogate mothers for infertile couples in the United States, Britain, Taiwan, and beyond. (qtd. in Dolnick, 2008)

The pregnant women at Akanksha Fertility Clinic (where the Kims' son was born) are professional surrogate mothers. Each surrogate must have at least one child of her own before she is allowed to become a surrogate mother. The clinic established this rule based on the assumption that having a child shows potential clients that the surrogate can successfully carry and deliver a baby and that she has other children at home to love and will not be resistant to giving up a newborn that she gestated and birthed (Kohl, 2007).

Why do some infertile couples in the United States, Britain, and elsewhere want to "hire" a woman in India to have their child? Most couples who engage in this practice have made numerous attempts to have a child through in vitro fertilization and other assisted reproductive technologies. If they have been unsuccessful in their efforts, the couple may first attempt to find a surrogate in the United States, but they quickly learn that a gestational surrogate costs more than $50,000, whereas the cost of an Indian surrogate ranges from about $2,250 to $5,000 plus medical expenses (Kohl, 2007; United Press International, 2007). According to Dr. Patel, earning money through surrogacy helps uplift Indian women: It

one in twelve couples in which the wife is between the ages of fifteen and forty-four (Gabriel, 1996). Research suggests that fertility problems originate in females in approximately 30–40 percent of the cases and with males in about 40 percent of the cases; in the other 20 percent of the cases, the cause is impossible to determine (Gabriel, 1996). A leading cause of infertility is sexually transmitted diseases, especially those cases that develop into pelvic inflammatory disease (Gold and Richards, 1994). It is estimated that about half of infertile couples who seek treatments such as fertility drugs, artificial insemination, and surgery to unblock fallopian tubes can be helped; however, some are unable to conceive despite expensive treatments such as *in vitro fertilization,* which costs as much as $11,000 per attempt (Gabriel, 1996). According to the sociologist Charlene Miall (1986), women who are involuntarily childless engage in "information management" to combat the social stigma associated with childlessness. Their tactics range from avoiding people who make them uncomfortable to revealing their infertility so that others will not think of them as "selfish" for being childless. Some people who are involuntarily childless may choose surrogacy or adoption as alternative ways of becoming a parent (see the Sociology in Global Perspective box).

Adoption

Adoption is a legal process through which the rights and duties of parenting are transferred from a child's biological and/or legal parents to a new legal parent or parents. This procedure gives the adopted child

- **For Discussion:** Ask the class to brainstorm circumstances under which they would consider adoption and to consider the following statement: "We look at adoption as a very sacred exchange. It was not done lightly on either side. I would dedicate my life to this child" (Jamie Lee Curtis, actress and adoptive mother).

- **Research:** Have students add up the average costs of adoption— domestic public agency adoption: $0 to $2,500; domestic private agency adoption: $4,000 to $30,000+; domestic independent adoption: $8,000 to $30,000+; intercountry private agency or independent adoption: $7,000 to $25,000 (Adoption.com).

© AP Photo/Ajit Solanki

▲ A surrogate mother (left) has delivered a baby for Karen Kim (center), with the help of infertility specialist Dr. Nayna Patel (right). This practice, sometimes called "rent-a-womb," remains controversial.

provides money for their household and makes them more independent. For example, the typical woman might earn more for one surrogate pregnancy than she would earn in fifteen years from other kinds of employment (*CBS News,* 2007).

Is there any problem with global "rent-a-womb"? If there is an agreement between a surrogate mother and a couple who badly wants a child, some analysts believe that "offer and acceptance" is nothing more than capitalism at work—where there is a demand (for infants by infertile couples), there will be a supply (from low-income surrogate mothers). However, some ethicists raise troubling questions about the practice of commercial surrogacy: A mother should give birth to her child because it is hers and she loves it, not because she is being paid to give birth to someone else's baby. Other social critics are concerned about the potential mistreatment of low-income women who may be exploited or may suffer long-term emotional damage from functioning as a surrogate (Dunbar, 2007). For the time being, in clinics such as the one in Anand, India, hopeful parents just provide the egg, the sperm, and the money, and all the rest is done for them by the clinic and the surrogates, who live in a spacious house where they are taken care of by maids, cooks, and doctors who want them to remain healthy and happy throughout their pregnancies—after all, it's good business!

reflect & analyze

What are your thoughts on surrogacy? Is there any difference between surrogacy when it occurs in high-income nations such as the United States and Britain as compared to situations in which the parents live in a high-income nation and the surrogate mother lives in a lower-income nation? How might we relate the specific issue of outsourced surrogacy to some larger concerns about families and intimate relationships that we have discussed in this chapter?

all the rights of a biological child. In most adoptions, a new birth certificate is issued, and the child has no future contact with the biological parents; however, some states have "right-to-know" laws under which adoptive parents must grant the biological parents visitation rights.

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, 1.1 percent of women and 2.3 percent of men between the ages of 18 and 44 had adopted a child. Although this is a very small number, it reflects an interesting change in how data are gathered. This was the first time that never-married women and men were counted, as compared to previous studies that had reported only on the experience of married women. One of the possible reasons why men may have a higher rate of adoption than women is that when parents divorce, children are more likely to live in households with their biological mothers than with their biological fathers. When these single parents remarry, the new husbands have greater opportunities to adopt these stepchildren than the new wives. Women between the ages of 35 and 39 are the largest category of individuals actively seeking to adopt a child (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008a).

Matching children who are available for adoption with prospective adoptive parents can be difficult. The available children have specific needs, and the prospective parents often set specifications on the type of child they want to adopt. Some adoptions are by relatives of the child; others are by infertile couples (although many fertile couples also adopt). Increasing numbers of gays, lesbians, and people who are single are adopting children. Although thousands of children are available for adoption each year

• **Box Note:** Ask your students to come to class with prepared answers to the "Reflect & Analyze" questions. Have students work in small groups for the sharing of ideas and opinions. Discuss emerging themes with the entire class.

in the United States, many prospective parents seek out children in developing nations such as Romania, South Korea, and India. The primary reason is that the available children in the United States are thought to be "unsuitable." They may have disabilities, or they may be sick, nonwhite (most of the prospective parents are white), or too old. In addition, fewer infants are available for adoption today than in the past because better means of contraception exist, abortion is more readily available, and more unmarried teenage parents decide to keep their babies.

Teenage Pregnancies

Teenage pregnancies are a popular topic in the media and political discourse, and the United States has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the Western industrialized world (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 1997). After more than 10 years of declining teenage pregnancy, the pregnancy rate among girls aged 15 to 19 increased 3 percent from 2005 to 2006 (the latest year for which full data are available). In 2006 the total number of live births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 17 was 22.0, and for women ages 18 and 19 the number was 73.0, in both instances the first increase since 1991 (Lewis, 2010). Because the teenage pregnancy rate includes a count of births, abortions, and miscarriages, this rate will probably continue to increase in the coming years. Although the gap between African American and Latina teen pregnancy rates has closed, the rates for both categories remain much higher than for white (non-Hispanic) females.

What are the primary reasons for the high rates of teenage pregnancy? At the microlevel, several issues are most important: (1) many sexually active teenagers do not use contraceptives; (2) teenagers—especially those from some low-income families and/or subordinate racial and ethnic groups—may receive little accurate information about the use of, and problems associated with, contraception; (3) some teenage males (due to a double standard based on the myth that sexual promiscuity is acceptable among males but not females) believe that females should be responsible for contraception; and (4) some teenagers view pregnancy as a sign of male prowess or as a way to gain adult status. At the macrolevel, structural factors also contribute to teenage pregnancy rates. Lack of education and employment opportunities in some central-city and rural areas may discourage young people's thoughts

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▲ In the 2007 film *Juno,* the title character, played by Ellen Page, becomes pregnant while still in high school. Although this film is a comedy, it takes a surprisingly straightforward look at the reality of teenage pregnancy.

• **Media Coverage:** "Current technological and scientific trends are building on each other, apparently moving us toward a world in which all of adult humanity, even great-grandparents, can have the sex drive of a high school senior. But is that really the standard of normal that we want to embrace?" (*Discover,* 9/2008). Have students respond to this question.

• **Research:** Have students discuss the following statistics: 52 percent of teenagers who signed an abstinence program's promise to remain virgins until marriage had sex within one year, according to a study of 14,000 teens (*Los Angeles Times,* 5/2006).

• **Research:** Help the class to find the research behind the following statistics: "Compared with high-school peers who became sexually active at about the average age of sexual debut, those who did not

of upward mobility. Likewise, religious and political opposition has resulted in issues relating to reproductive responsibility not being dealt with as openly in the United States as in some other nations. Finally, advertising, films, television programming, magazines, music, and other forms of media often flaunt the idea of being sexually active without showing the possible consequences of such behavior.

Teen pregnancies have been of concern to analysts who suggest that teenage mothers may be less skilled at parenting, are less likely to complete high school than their counterparts without children, and possess few economic and social supports other than their relatives (Maynard, 1996; Moore, Driscoll, and Lindberg, 1998). In addition, the increase in births among unmarried teenagers may have negative long-term consequences for mothers and their children, who have severely limited educational and employment opportunities and a high likelihood of living in poverty. Moreover, the Children's Defense Fund (2008) estimates that among those who first gave birth between the ages of fifteen and nineteen, 43 percent will have a second child within three years.

Teenage fathers have largely been left out of the picture. According to the sociologist Brian Robinson (1988), a number of myths exist regarding teenage fathers: (1) they are worldly wise "superstuds" who engage in sexual activity early and often, (2) they are "Don Juans" who sexually exploit unsuspecting females, (3) they have "macho" tendencies because they are psychologically inadequate and need to prove their masculinity, (4) they have few emotional feelings for the women they impregnate, and (5) they are "phantom fathers" who are rarely involved in caring for and rearing their children. However, these myths overlook the fact that some teenage males try to be good fathers.

Single-Parent Households

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in single- or one-parent households due to divorce and to births outside of marriage. Single parents maintain 25 percent of U.S. households where they live with their own children under the age of 18. These figures exclude single parents who are living with an unmarried partner. ▶ Map 11.1 shows that
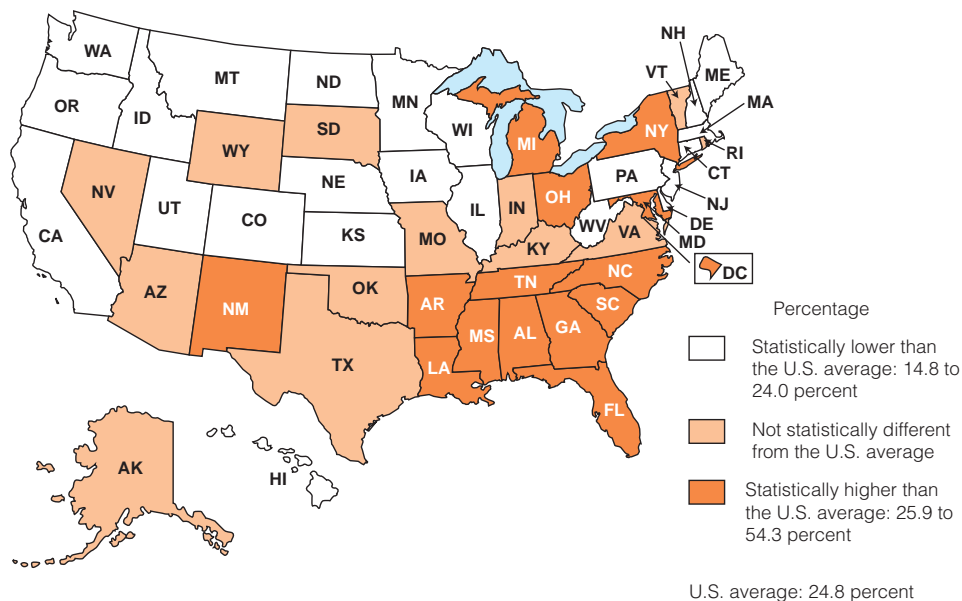
▲ MAP 11.1 PERCENTAGE OF SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18 BY STATE: 2007

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

become sexually active until a later age were 50% less likely to engage in delinquent behavior" (Stacy Armour and Dana L. Haynie, 2/2007).
- **U.S. Census:** According to 2007 census data, there were 2.38 million single fathers, up from 400,000 in 1970. Currently, among single parents living with their children, 17.4 percent are men.
- **For Discussion:** Ask the class to identify the social norms that may hinder the effectiveness of single fathers.

- **U.S. Census:** Among single fathers, 32.3 percent are raising two or more children under 18 years old, 57.8 percent are divorced or separated, 20.9 percent have never been married, and 12.9 percent are under the poverty line. This compares to 45.7 percent, 45.1 percent, 34.2 percent, and 27 percent, for single mothers, respectively (2007 census data).

most of the states with the largest percentages of single-parent households are in the South, with the exception of New Mexico, Michigan, Ohio, and New York. The area with highest percentage of single-parent households is the District of Columbia (54 percent), whereas Utah (15 percent) is the state with the lowest percentage (Kreider and Elliott, 2009).

Even for a person with a stable income and a network of friends and family to help with child care, raising a child alone can be an emotional and financial burden. Single-parent households headed by women have been stereotyped by some journalists, politicians, and analysts as being problematic for children. About 42 percent of all white children and 86 percent of all African American children will spend part of their childhood living in a household headed by a single mother who is divorced, separated, never married, or widowed (Garfinkel and McLanahan, 1986). According to sociologists Sara McLanahan and Karen Booth (1991), children from mother-only families are more likely than children in two-parent families to have poor academic achievement, higher school absentee and dropout rates, early marriage and parenthood, higher rates of divorce, and more drug and alcohol abuse. Does living in a one-parent family *cause* all of this? Certainly not! Many other factors—including poverty, discrimination, unsafe neighborhoods, and high crime rates—contribute to these problems.

Lesbian mothers and gay fathers are counted in some studies as single parents; however, they often share parenting responsibilities with a same-sex partner. Due to homophobia (hatred and fear of homosexuals and lesbians), lesbian mothers and gay fathers are more likely to lose custody to a heterosexual parent in divorce disputes (Falk, 1989; Robson, 1992). In any case, between one million and three million gay men in the United States and Canada are fathers. Some gay men are married natural fathers, others are single gay men, and still others are part of gay couples who have adopted children. Very little research exists on gay fathers; what research does exist tends to show that noncustodial gay fathers try to maintain good relationships with their children (Bozett, 1988). A more recent study suggests that custodial gay fathers "are likely to divide the work involved in child care relatively evenly and that they are happy with their couple relationships" (*Lesbian & Gay Parenting,* 2005: 8).

Single fathers who do not have custody of their children may play a relatively limited role in the lives of those children. Although many remain actively involved in their children's lives, others may become "Disneyland daddies" who take their children to recreational activities and buy them presents for special occasions but have a very small part in their children's day-to-day lives. Sometimes, this limited role is by choice, but more often it is caused by workplace demands on time and energy, the location of the ex-wife's residence, and limitations placed on visitation by custody arrangements.

Two-Parent Households

Since the 1970s, the percentage of children living in two-parent households has dropped, while the percentage living with a single parent has increased

© Masterfile

▲ Mothers and fathers in single-parent households are confronted with the necessity of meeting most of their children's daily needs without help from others. However, even in two-parent households, children are not guaranteed a happy childhood simply because both parents live in the same household.

• **Sociological Imagination:** Have students provide a written assessment of the following, along with reasons they may or may not want to have children: "We find delight in the beauty and happiness of children that makes the heart too big for the body" (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

(see ▶ Figure 11.1). In 2008, almost 70 percent of children lived with two parents, while nearly 23 percent lived with only their mother and 3.5 percent lived with only their father. In computing these statistics, parents include not only biological parents but also stepparents who adopt their children. However, foster parents are considered nonrelatives.

Parenthood in the United States is idealized, especially for women. According to the sociologist Alice Rossi (1992), maternity is the mark of adulthood for women, whether or not they are employed. In contrast, men secure their status as adults by their employment and other activities outside the family (Hoffnung, 1995).

For families in which a couple truly shares parenting, children have two primary caregivers. Some parents share parenting responsibilities by choice; others share out of necessity because both hold full-time jobs. Some studies have found that men's taking an active part in raising the children is beneficial not only for mothers (who then have a little more time for other activities) but also for the men and the children. The men benefit through increased access to children and greater opportunity to be nurturing parents (Coltrane, 1989).

Remaining Single

Some never-married people remain single by choice. Reasons include opportunities for a career (especially for women), the availability of sexual partners without marriage, the belief that the single lifestyle is full of excitement, and the desire for self-sufficiency and freedom to change and experiment (Stein, 1976, 1981). Some scholars have concluded that individuals who prefer to remain single hold more-individualistic values and are less family oriented than those who choose to marry. Friends and personal growth tend to be valued more highly than marriage and children (Cargan and Melko, 1982; Alwin, Converse, and Martin, 1985).

Other never-married individuals remain single out of necessity. Being single is an economic necessity for those who cannot afford to marry and set up their own household. Structural changes in the economy have limited the options of many working-class young people. Even some college graduates have found that they cannot earn enough money to set up a household separate from that of their parents.

The proportion of singles varies significantly by racial and ethnic group, as shown in ▶ Figure 11.2. Among persons age 15 and over, 41.3 percent of African Americans have never married, compared with 32 percent of Latinos/as, 25.8 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, and 23.5 percent of whites. Among women age 20 and over, the difference is even more pronounced; almost twice as many African American women in this age category have never married, compared with U.S. women of the same age in general (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

Although a number of studies have examined why African Americans remain single, few studies have focused on Latinos/as. Some analysts cite the diversity of experiences among Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, and Puerto Ricans as the reason for this lack of research. Existing research attributes increased rates of singlehood among Latinos/as to several factors,
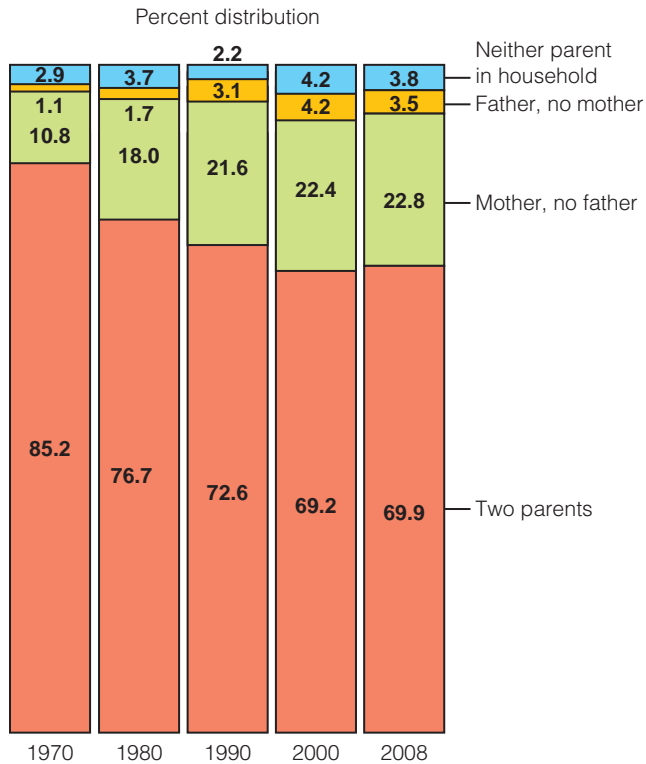
Percent distribution

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

▲ **FIGURE 11.1** **LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS OLD FOR SELECTED YEARS: 1970–2008**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

WHITE

AFRICAN AMERICAN

LATINO/A

ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN
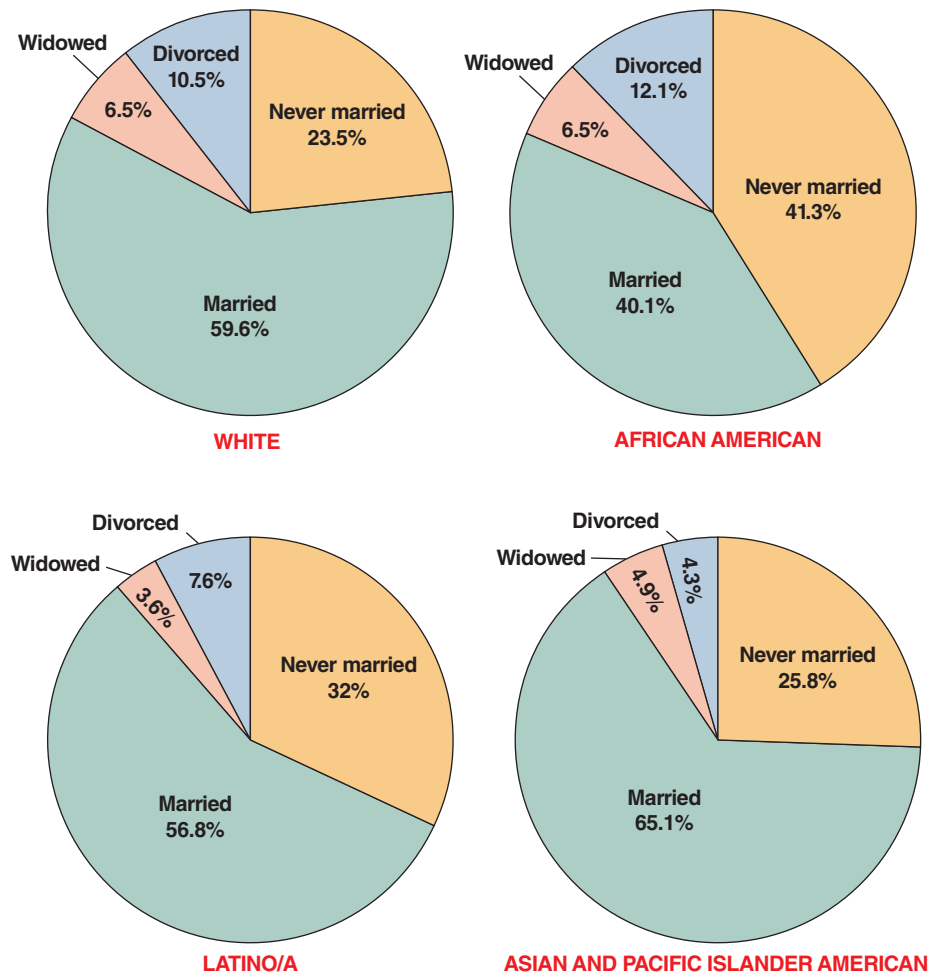
▶ **FIGURE 11.2**
MARITAL STATUS OF U.S. POPULATION AGE 15 AND OVER BY RACE/ETHNICITY
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

including the youthful age of the Latino/a population and economic conditions experienced by many young Latinos/as (see Mindel, Habenstein, and Wright, 1988).

Transitions and Problems in Families

Families go through many transitions and experience a wide variety of problems, ranging from high rates of divorce and teen pregnancy to domestic abuse and family violence. These all-too-common experiences highlight two important facts about families: (1) for good or ill, families are central to our existence, and (2) the reality of family life is far more complicated than the idealized image of families found in the media and in many political discussions. Moreover, as people grow older, transitions inevitably occur in family life.

Family Transitions Based on Age and the Life Course

Throughout our lives, our families play an important role in our individual development. People are assigned different roles and positions based on their age and the family structure in a particular society. Stages in the contemporary life course in industrialized nations typically include infancy and childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood.

Infancy and Childhood Infancy and childhood are largely creations of industrialized nations.

• **For Discussion:** One research study indicates that fathers with higher levels of religious participation tended to be more engaged with their one-year-olds than fathers with lower levels of religious participation (Richard J. Petts, 9/2007). Can your class explain possible correlations?

• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
• **Sociological Imagination:** Have students analyze Figure 11.2 and write about the significance of these statistics.

In agricultural societies, children are often a source of physical labor for both their families and the larger society. By contrast, children in industrialized nations are expected to attend school and learn the necessary skills for future employment rather than perform unskilled labor. In this context, families must provide for extensive periods of time in which their children are economically dependent upon them.

Adolescence and Young Adulthood In contemporary industrialized countries, adolescence roughly spans the teenage years. As compared with preindustrial societies, in which adolescents are seen as adults, adolescents in industrialized nations are treated by their families, teachers, and others as neither children nor adults. Young adulthood, which follows adolescence and lasts to about age 39, is socially significant because during this time people are expected to establish their own families and get a job.

Middle Adulthood The concept of middle adulthood—people between the ages of 40 and 65—did not exist until fairly recently. For most people, middle adulthood represents the time during which their families have the highest levels of income, and they may conclude child rearing but begin an era of grandparenting. Today, more grandparents have partial or full responsibility for rearing their grandchildren.

Late Adulthood Late adulthood is generally considered to begin at age 65—which for some people is "normal" retirement age. *Retirement*—the institutionalized separation of an individual from an occupational position, with continuation of income through a retirement pension based on prior years of service—means the end of a status that has long been a source of income and a means of personal identity. Loss of such status may produce family discord for a period of time as spouses become adjusted to having more time alone with each other. Increasingly, however, older adults are maintaining either full-time or part-time employment outside the home. For those older adults who are financially able, travel and other leisure-time pursuits may become the focus of their activities rather than daily attendance at a job.

Many older adults continue to live in their own homes; however, some may prefer smaller housing units or apartments if they no longer have other family

▲ What can people across generations learn by taking time to talk to each other? Can the learning process flow in both directions?

members residing in the household. Those who have chronic medical conditions or need the assistance of others may rely on *assisted-living* arrangements—a concept that refers to housing, support services, and health care designed to meet the varied needs of older adults who need help with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, food preparation, or taking medications. For others, living with family members remains the preferred approach. Factors involved in living arrangements of older family members include how close they live to other relatives and friends and how frequently they react with one another.

At each stage in the life course, family life differs significantly based on the number of people and the diversity of age categories represented in the social unit at that time. Although some families provide their members with love, warmth, and satisfying emotional experiences, others may be hazardous to the individual's physical and mental well-being. Because of this dichotomy in family life, sociologists have described families as both a "haven in a heartless world" (Lasch, 1977) and a "cradle of violence" (Gelles and Straus, 1988).

Family Violence

Violence between men and women in the home is often called spouse abuse or domestic violence. *Spouse abuse* refers to any intentional act or series of

- **Research:** Compared with teens who frequently had dinner with their families (five nights or more per week), those who had dinner with their families only two nights per week or less were twice as likely to be involved in substance abuse. They were 2.5 times as likely to smoke cigarettes, more than 1.5 times as likely to drink alcohol, and nearly 3 times as likely to try marijuana (National Center of Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 9/2005).

- **U.S. Census:** Nearly 53 percent of U.S. males and 43 percent of U.S. females between the ages of 18 and 24 were living at home with their parents in 2006. More than 6 million grandparents have grandchildren living in their households, and more than 2.4 million of those grandparents are fully responsible for the children's basic needs.
- **Global Perspective:** In May 2006 the Georgian parliament adopted the country's first domestic violence law, which was

acts—whether physical, emotional, or sexual—that causes injury to a female or male spouse (Wallace, 2002). According to sociologists, the term *spouse abuse* refers not only to people who are married but also to those who are cohabiting or involved in a serious relationship, as well as those individuals who are separated or living apart from their former spouse (Wallace, 2002).

How much do we know about family violence? Women, as compared with men, are more likely to be the victims of violence perpetrated by intimate partners. Recent statistics indicate that women are five times more likely than men to experience such violence and that many of these women live in households with children younger than age 12. However, we cannot know the true extent of family violence because much of it is not reported to police. For example, it is estimated that only about one-half of the intimate-partner violence against women in the 1990s was reported to police (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). African American women were more likely than other women to report such violence, which may further skew data about who is most likely to be victimized by a domestic partner (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000).

Although everyone in a household where family violence occurs is harmed psychologically, whether or not they are the victims of violence, children are especially affected by household violence. It is estimated that between three million and ten million children witness some form of domestic violence in their homes each year, and there is evidence to suggest that domestic violence and child maltreatment often take place in the same household (Children's Defense Fund, 2008). According to some experts, domestic violence is an important indicator that child abuse and neglect are also taking place in the household.

In some situations, family violence can be reduced or eliminated through counseling, the removal of one parent from the household, or other steps that are taken either by the family or by social service or law enforcement officials. However, children who witness violence in the home may display certain emotional and behavioral problems that adversely affect their school life and communication with other people. In some families, the problems of family violence are great enough that the children are removed from the household and placed in foster care.

Children in Foster Care

Not all of the children in foster care come from violent homes, but many foster children have been in dysfunctional homes where parents or other relatives lacked the ability to meet the children's daily needs. *Foster care* refers to institutional settings or residences where adults other than a child's own parents or biological relatives serve as caregivers. States provide financial aid to foster parents, and the intent of such programs is that the children will either return to their own families or be adopted by other families. However, this is often not the case for "difficult to place" children, particularly those who are over 10 years of age, have illnesses or disabilities, or are perceived as suffering from "behavioral problems." More than 500,000 children are in foster care at any given time, with about one-fourth of them being cared for by relatives. About 60 percent of children in foster care are children of color (Children's Defense Fund, 2008). Many children in foster care have limited prospects for finding a permanent home; however, a few innovative programs have offered hope for children who previously had been moved from one foster care setting to another (see the You Can Make a Difference box).

Problems in the family contribute to the large numbers of children who are in foster care. Such factors include parents' illness, unemployment, or death; violence or abuse in the family; and high rates of divorce.

Elder Abuse

Abuse and neglect of older persons have received increasing public attention in recent years, due both to the increasing number of older people and to the establishment of more-vocal groups to represent their concerns. *Elder abuse* refers to physical abuse, psychological abuse, financial exploitation, and medical abuse or neglect of people age 65 or older (Hooyman and Kiyak, 2011).

The National Academy of Sciences (2003) estimates that between one million and two million people age 65 and older in the United States have been the victims of physical or mental abuse. Just as with violence against children or women, it is difficult to determine how much abuse against older persons occurs. Many victims are understandably

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drafted following extensive consultation with nongovernmental organizations. It introduces a definition of domestic violence into Georgian legislation and provides a legal basis for the issuance of protection and restraint orders (Amnesty International USA).

• **Research:** "Children in foster care are more likely than other children to exhibit high levels of behavioral and emotional problems. They are also more likely to be suspended or expelled from school and

to exhibit low levels of school engagement and involvement with extracurricular activities. Children in foster care are also more likely to have received mental health services in the past year, to have a limiting physical, learning, or mental health condition, or to be in poor or fair health" (Childtrends.org).

• **Research:** "A national survey of state adult protective agencies released in 2006 turned up, in one year, 565,747 reports of

you can make a difference

Providing Hope and Help for Children

I take it personally when I see kids mistreated. I just think they need an advocate to fight for them. . . . For me, it's very simple: The kids' needs come first. That's the bottom line at Hope Meadows. We make decisions as if these are our own children, and when you think that way, your decisions are different than if you are just trying to work within a bureaucratic system.

> —sociologist Brenda Eheart describing why she founded Hope Meadows (qtd. in Smith, 2001: 22)

After five years of research into the adoptions of older children, the sociologist Brenda Eheart realized that foster families faced many problems when they tried to help children who had been moved from home to home. Thinking that she might be able to make a difference, Eheart developed the plan for Hope Meadows, a community established in 1994 on an abandoned Illinois air force base. Hope Meadows is made up of a three-block-long series of ranch houses that provide multigenerational and multiracial housing for foster children, their temporary families, and older adults who live and work with the children. Older adults who interact with the children receive reduced rent in exchange for at least six hours per week of volunteer work. Foster families that reside at Hope Meadows gain a feeling of community as they work together to help children who have experienced severe abuse or neglect, have been exposed to drugs and numerous foster homes, and often have physical, emotional, and behavioral problems.

Since its commencement, Hope Meadows has been largely successful in helping children get adopted. However, children are not the only beneficiaries of this community: Older residents gain the benefit of interacting with children and feeling that they can *make a positive contribution* to the lives of others (Barovick, 2001). Debbie Calhoun, a foster parent at Hope Meadows, has suggested things that children need the most when they come there, and we can make a difference by providing the children in our lives with these same things (based on Smith, 2001):

- *Understanding.* We need to gain an awareness of how children feel and why they say and do certain things.
- *Trust.* We need to help children to see us as people they can rely on and believe in as people they can trust.
- *Love.* We must show children that they are loved and that they will still be loved even when they make mistakes.
- *Compassion.* We must show children compassion because they must experience compassion in order to be able to show it to others.
- *Time.* We must give children time to be a part of our lives, and we must also give them time to adjust and to start over when they need to do so.
- *Security.* We must help children to feel secure in their surroundings and to believe that there is stability or permanency in their living arrangements.
- *Praise.* We must tell children when they are doing well and not always be critical of them.
- *Discipline.* We must let children know what behavior is acceptable and what behavior is not, all the while showing them that we love them, even when discipline is necessary.
- *Self-Esteem.* We must help children feel good about themselves.
- *Pride.* We should provide opportunities for children to learn to take pride in their accomplishments and in themselves.

If these suggestions are beneficial for children in foster care settings, then they are certainly useful ideas for each of us to implement in our own families and communities as well. What other ideas would you add to the list? Why?

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reluctant to talk about it. One study indicates that slightly over 2 percent of all older people experience physical abuse (Pillemer and Finkelhor, 1988; Atchley and Barusch, 2004). Although this may appear to be a small percentage, it represents a large number of people. Studies have shown that elder abuse tends to be concentrated among those over age 75 (Steinmetz, 1987). Most of the victims are white, middle-class to lower-middle-class Protestant women, age 75–85, who suffer some form of impairment (Garbarino, 1989). Sons, followed by daughters, are the most frequent abusers of older persons.

abuse of vulnerable adults—larceny, neglect and cruelty of all sorts" (AARP).

- **For Discussion:** Have the class discuss whether having children demonstrates a person's faith in the future. Why or why not? "We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today" (Stacia Tauscher).

- **Box Note:** More information about Hope Meadows can be found at generationsofhope.org.

What causes elder abuse? Scholars do not agree on an answer to this question. Some believe that elder abuse may occur in families because of ageism, which you will recall is prejudice and discrimination against people on the basis of age. Other analysts link elder abuse with the physical impairment of some elderly persons; however, little evidence has been found to support that conclusion. Similarly, the sociologist Karl Pillemer found no support for the common assumption that elderly persons who are dependent on their children are more likely to be abused. To the contrary, the abusers are very likely to be *dependent on the older person* for housing and financial assistance (Pillemer, 1985).

Divorce

Divorce is the legal process of dissolving a marriage that allows former spouses to remarry if they so choose. Most divorces today are granted on the grounds of *irreconcilable differences,* meaning that there has been a breakdown of the marital relationship for which neither partner is specifically blamed. Prior to the passage of more-lenient divorce laws, many states required that the partner seeking the divorce prove misconduct on the part of the other spouse. Under *no-fault divorce laws,* however, proof of "blameworthiness" is generally no longer necessary.

Over the past 100 years, the U.S. divorce rate (number of divorces per 1,000 population) has varied from a low of 0.7 in 1900 to an all-time high of 5.3 in 1981; by 2007, it had decreased to 3.6 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Although many people believe that marriage should last for a lifetime, others believe that marriage is a commitment that may change over time.

One study found that 43 percent of first marriages end in separation or divorce within 15 years; however, other analysts have disputed that percentage on the grounds that about one in ten of those who married between 1985 to 1989 had not reached their fifteenth anniversary by the time the 2004 survey was conducted. For those married at least 15 years, only 33.4 percent of first marriages ended before their fifteenth anniversary (35.7 percent for women and 31.2 percent for men). Moreover, some couples did not reach their fifteenth anniversary because of death, rather than divorce

(Wolfers, 2008). ▶ Figure 11.3 shows the latest available U.S. divorce rates for each state.

Causes of Divorce   Why do divorces occur? As you will recall from Chapter 1, sociologists look for correlations (relationships between two variables) in attempting to answer questions such as this. Existing research has identified a number of factors at both the macrolevel and microlevel that make some couples more or less likely to divorce. At the macrolevel, societal factors contributing to higher rates of divorce include changes in social institutions, such as religion and family. Some religions have taken a more lenient attitude toward divorce, and the social stigma associated with divorce has lessened. Further, as we have seen in this chapter, the family institution has undergone a major change that has resulted in less economic and emotional dependency among family members—thus reducing a barrier to divorce.

At the microlevel, a number of factors contribute to a couple's "statistical" likelihood of divorcing. Here are some of the primary social characteristics of those most likely to get divorced:

- Marriage at an early age (59 percent of marriages to brides under 18 end in separation or divorce within 15 years) (National Centers for Disease Control, 2001)
- A short acquaintanceship before marriage
- Disapproval of the marriage by relatives and friends
- Limited economic resources and low wages
- A high school education or less (although deferring marriage to attend college may be more of a factor than education per se)
- Parents who are divorced or have unhappy marriages
- The presence of children (depending on their gender and age) at the start of the marriage

The interrelationship of these and other factors is complicated. For example, the effect of age is intertwined with economic resources; persons from families at the low end of the income scale tend to marry earlier than those at more affluent income levels. Thus, the question becomes whether age itself is a factor or whether economic resources are more closely associated with divorce.

- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to write an essay on the following statement and their own views about love and marriage: "Americans, who make more of marrying for love than any other people, also break up more of their marriages, but the figure reflects not so much the failure of love as the determination of people not to live without it" (Morton Hunt).

- **For Discussion:** Have students assess the following: "The cultural story is that people changed their mind about the importance of marriage to children. They changed their mind about whether parents should stay together in a marriage that's less than perfect for the sake of their children. They dramatically changed their mind about the relationship [of] sex [and] parenthood to marriage, so that those things that were tightly connected

	Rates per 1,000 population[a, b]			
United States[c]	**1990** 4.7	**2000** 4.2	**2004** 3.7	**2007** 3.6
Alabama	6.1	5.4	4.7	4.3
Alaska	5.5	4.4	4.8	4.3
Arizona	6.9	4.4	4.2	3.9
Arkansas	6.9	6.9	6.3	5.9
California	4.3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Colorado	5.5	n.a.	4.4	4.4
Connecticut	3.2	2.0	2.9	3.1
Delaware	4.4	4.2	3.7	4.5
District of Columbia	4.5	3.0	1.7	1.6
Florida	6.3	5.3	4.8	4.7
Georgia	5.5	3.9	n.a.	n.a.
Hawaii	4.6	3.9	n.a.	n.a.
Idaho	6.5	5.4	5.1	4.9
Illinois	3.8	3.2	2.6	2.6
Indiana	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Iowa	3.9	3.3	2.8	2.6
Kansas	5.0	4.0	3.3	3.3
Kentucky	5.8	5.4	4.9	4.6
Louisiana	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Maine	4.3	4.6	3.6	4.5
Maryland	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.1
Massachusetts	2.8	3.0	2.2	2.2
Michigan	4.3	4.0	3.5	3.5
Minnesota	3.5	3.1	2.8	n.a.
Mississippi	5.5	5.2	4.5	4.9

	Rates per 1,000 population[a, b]			
	1990	**2000**	**2004**	**2007**
Missouri	5.1	4.8	3.8	3.8
Montana	5.1	2.4	3.8	3.7
Nebraska	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.1
Nevada	11.4	9.6	6.4	6.5
New Hampshire	4.7	5.8	3.9	3.9
New Jersey	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0
New Mexico	4.9	5.3	4.6	4.3
New York	3.2	3.4	3.0	2.9
North Carolina	5.1	4.8	4.4	4.1
North Dakota	3.6	3.2	2.8	2.4
Ohio	4.7	4.4	3.7	3.3
Oklahoma	7.7	3.7	n.a.	5.2
Oregon	5.5	5.0	4.1	4.0
Pennsylvania	3.3	3.2	2.5	2.8
Rhode Island	3.7	3.1	3.0	2.8
South Carolina	4.5	3.7	3.2	3.3
South Dakota	3.7	3.6	3.2	3.1
Tennessee	6.5	6.1	5.0	4.9
Texas	5.5	4.2	3.6	3.3
Utah	5.1	4.5	3.9	3.4
Vermont	4.5	8.6	3.9	3.8
Virginia	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.8
Washington	5.9	4.7	4.1	4.5
West Virginia	5.3	5.2	4.7	5.0
Wisconsin	3.6	3.3	3.1	2.9
Wyoming	6.6	5.9	5.3	5.5

▲ **FIGURE 11.3** U.S. DIVORCE RATES BY STATE, 1990–2007

[a]Based on total population residing in area; population enumerated as of April 1 for 1990 and estimated as of July 1 for all other years.
[b]Includes annulments.
[c]U.S. totals for the number of divorces are an estimate that includes states not reporting (California, Colorado, Indiana, and Louisiana).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

The relationship between divorce and factors such as race, class, and religion is another complex issue. Although African Americans are more likely than whites of European ancestry to get a divorce, other factors—such as income level and discrimination in society—must also be taken into account. Latinos/as share some of the problems faced by African Americans, but their divorce rate

to marriage now sort of operate independently of marriage" (Barbara Dafoe Whitehead).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Research:** According to research reported in the 1997 book *A Generation at Risk,* the worst situations for children are high-conflict marriages that last and low-conflict marriages that end in divorce.

And it turns out that most divorces fall into the latter category: A whopping 70 percent of divorces end "low-conflict" marriages.
- **Research:** The Barna Group, a California organization that studies evangelical Christian trends, has produced two studies about divorce that found that born-again Christians were just as likely to divorce as those who are not born-again Christians (*New York Times,* 11/2004).

is only slightly higher than that of whites of European ancestry. Religion may affect the divorce rate of some people, including many Latinos/as who are Roman Catholic. However, despite the Catholic doctrine that discourages divorce, the rate of Catholic divorces is now approximately equal to that of Protestant divorces.

Consequences of Divorce   Divorce may have a dramatic economic and emotional impact on family members. An estimated 60 percent of divorcing couples have one or more children. By age sixteen, about one out of every three white children and two out of every three African American children will experience divorce within their families. As a result, most of them will remain with their mothers and live in a single-parent household for a period of time. In recent years, there has been a debate over whether children who live with their same-sex parent after divorce are better off than their peers who live with an opposite-sex parent. However, sociologists have found virtually no evidence to support the belief that children are better off living with a same-sex parent (Powell and Downey, 1997).

Although divorce decrees provide for parental joint custody of approximately 100,000–200,000 children annually, this arrangement may create unique problems for some children. Furthermore, some children experience more than one divorce during their childhood because one or both of their parents may remarry and subsequently divorce again.

But divorce does not have to be always negative. For some people, divorce may be an opportunity to terminate destructive relationships. For others, it may represent a means to achieve personal growth by managing their lives and social relationships and establishing their own social identity. Still others choose to remarry one or more times.

Remarriage

Most people who divorce get remarried. In recent years, more than 40 percent of all marriages have been between previously married brides and/or

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▲ Remarriage and blended families create new opportunities and challenges for parents and children alike.

- **U.S. Census:** According to 2008 census data, 19.4 percent of men and 19.3 percent of women have married twice, while roughly 5 percent or each gender have married three or more times. Have students research the ages at which these remarriages take place, for each gender.

- **For Discussion:** Although the United States has a very high divorce rate, we also have a very high remarriage rate. Ask students why they think our postindustrial society continues to place so much emphasis on marriage. What are some of the most important advantages?

grooms. Among individuals who divorce before age thirty-five, about half will remarry within three years of their first divorce (Bramlett and Mosher, 2001). Most divorced people remarry others who have been divorced. However, remarriage rates vary by gender and age. At all ages, a greater proportion of men than women remarry, often relatively soon after the divorce. Among women, the older a woman is at the time of divorce, the lower her likelihood of remarrying. Women who have not graduated from high school and who have young children tend to remarry relatively quickly; by contrast, women with a college degree and without children are less likely to remarry (Bramlett and Mosher, 2001).

As a result of divorce and remarriage, complex family relationships are often created. Some people become part of stepfamilies or **blended families, which consist of a husband and wife, children from previous marriages, and children (if any) from the new marriage.** At least initially, levels of family stress may be fairly high because of rivalry among the children and hostilities directed toward stepparents or babies born into the family. In spite of these problems, however, many blended families succeed. The family that results from divorce and remarriage is typically a complex, binuclear family in which children may have a biological parent and a stepparent, biological siblings and stepsiblings, and an array of other relatives, including aunts, uncles, and cousins.

According to the sociologist Andrew Cherlin (1992), the norms governing divorce and remarriage are ambiguous. Because there are no clear-cut guidelines, people must make decisions about family life (such as whom to invite for a birthday celebration or wedding) based on their beliefs and feelings about the people involved.

Family Issues in the Future

As we have seen, families and intimate relationships changed dramatically during the twentieth century. Some people believe that the family as we know it is doomed. Others believe that a return to traditional family values will save this important social institution and create greater stability in society. However, the sociologist Lillian

Rubin (1986: 89) suggests that clinging to a traditional image of families is hypocritical in light of our society's failure to support families: "We are after all, the only advanced industrial nation that has no public policy of support for the family whether with family allowances or decent publicly-sponsored childcare facilities." Some laws even have the effect of hurting children whose families do not fit the traditional model. For example, cutting back on government programs that provide food and medical care for pregnant women and infants will result in seriously ill children rather than model families (Aulette, 1994).

According to the psychologist Bernice Lott (1994: 155), people's perceptions about what constitutes a family will continue to change in the future:

> Persons on whom one can depend for emotional support, who are available in crises and emergencies, or who provide continuing affections, concern, and companionship can be said to make up a family. Members of such a group may live together in the same household or in separate households, alone or with others. They may be related by birth, marriage, or a chosen commitment to one another that has not been legally formalized.

Some of these changes are already becoming evident. For example, many men are attempting to take an active role in raising their children and helping with household chores. Many couples terminate abusive relationships and marriages.

Regardless of problems facing families today, many people still demonstrate their faith in the future by getting married and having children. It will be interesting to see what people in the future decide to do about marriage and parenthood. How many children will people have? What will family life be like in 2020 or 2030? What will your own family be like?

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blended family a family consisting of a husband and wife, children from previous marriages, and children (if any) from the new marriage.

- **Active Learning:** Ask students to look back at the different theoretical perspectives and to construct a description of the ideal family of the future. The description should have elements from each perspective.
- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disk also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.
- **CourseMate:** The Sociology CourseMate for this text gives your students access to an interactive ebook, flashcards, video, and other study and learning tools, including quizzes that provide immediate feedback. It's easiest for students to log in at **www.cengagebrain.com.**

chapter review

● **What is the family?**

Today, families may be defined as relationships in which people live together with commitment, form an economic unit and care for any young, and consider their identity to be significantly attached to the group.

● **How does the family of orientation differ from the family of procreation?**

The family of orientation is the family into which a person is born; the family of procreation is the family a person forms by having or adopting children.

● **What pattern of marriage is legally sanctioned in the United States?**

In the United States, monogamy is the only form of marriage sanctioned by law. Monogamy is a marriage between two partners, usually a woman and a man.

● **What are the primary sociological perspectives on families?**

Functionalists emphasize the importance of the family in maintaining the stability of society and the well-being of individuals. Conflict and feminist perspectives view the family as a source of social inequality and an arena for conflict. Symbolic interactionists explain family relationships in terms of the subjective meanings and everyday interpretations that people give to their lives. Postmodern analysts view families as being permeable, capable

of being diffused or invaded so that the original purpose is modified.

● **What are the major stages in the family life course?**

The major stages are infancy and childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood.

● **How are families in the United States changing?**

Families are changing dramatically in the United States. Cohabitation has increased significantly in the past three decades. With the increase in dual-earner marriages, women have become larger contributors to the financial well-being of their families, but some have become increasingly burdened by the second shift—the domestic work that employed women perform at home after they complete their workday on the job. Many single-parent families also exist today.

● **What is divorce, and what are some of its causes?**

Divorce is the legal process of dissolving a marriage. At the macrolevel, changes in social institutions may contribute to an increase in divorce rates; at the microlevel, factors contributing to divorce include age at marriage, length of acquaintanceship, economic resources, education level, and parental marital happiness.

key terms

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blended families 377

cohabitation 359

domestic partnerships 359

dual-earner marriages 360

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polygamy 352

polygyny 352

second shift 360

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questions for critical thinking

1. In your opinion, what constitutes an ideal family? How might functionalist, conflict, feminist, and symbolic interactionist perspectives describe this family?

2. Suppose that you wanted to find out about women's and men's perceptions about love and marriage. What specific issues might you examine? What would be the best way to conduct your research?

3. You have been appointed to a presidential commission on child-care problems in the United States. How to provide high-quality child care at affordable prices is a key issue for the first meeting. What kinds of suggestions would you take to the meeting? How do you think your suggestions should be funded? How does the future look for children in high-, middle-, and low-income families in the United States?

turning to video

Watch the CBS video *Technology and the Family* (running time 2:11), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video examines the effects of cell phones, texting, instant messaging, and email on busy families. As you watch the video, consider your own family's use of mobile technologies. After you watch the video, consider this question: Does all of the technology that's part of most families and other intimate relationships bring the people in these relationships closer together? Why or why not?

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Education and Religion

We are teaching our children a theory [evolution] that most of us don't believe in. I don't think God creates everything on a day-to-day basis, like the color of the sky. But I do believe he created Adam and Eve—instantly.

—Steve Farrell, a resident of Dover, Pennsylvania, explaining why he approves of the Dover school board's decision to require eighth-grade biology teachers to teach "intelligent design"—an assertion that the universe is so complex that an intelligent, supernatural power must have created it—as an alterative to the theory of evolution (qtd. in Powell, 2004: A1)

© AP Photo/Jay Laprete

▲ **For many years, people have argued about what should (or should not) be taught in U.S. public schools, including the teaching of creationism or intelligent design as contrasted with evolution. Shown here is Dr. Kenneth Miller, a biology professor, during a discussion of the pros and cons of incorporating the teaching of intelligent design into the Ohio state science curriculum.**

I *definitely* would prefer to believe that God created me than that I'm 50th cousin to a silverback ape. What's wrong with wanting our children to hear about all the holes in the theory of evolution?

—Lark Myers, another resident of Dover, who also wants her child to learn about intelligent design at school (qtd. in Powell, 2004: A1)

I believe it is wrong to introduce a non-scientific "explanation" of the origins of life into the science curriculum. This policy was not endorsed by the Dover High School science department. I think this policy was approved for religious reasons, not to improve science education for my child.

—Tammy Kitzmiller, one of the eleven parents who filed a lawsuit (*Kitzmiller v. Dover*) against the school board, challenging its controversial decision (qtd. in ACLU, 2005)

People have an impatience about science. They think it's this practical process that explains how everything works, but that's the least interesting part. We understand a lot of the mechanisms of evolution but it's what

we *don't* understand that makes it exciting. . . . It's very clear that intelligent design has become a stalking-horse. If these school boards had their druthers, they would teach Noah's flood and the 6,000-year-old design of Earth. My fear is that they are making real headway in the popular imagination.

—Kenneth R. Miller, a university biologist and the author of the biology textbook used in Dover before the school board's decision, explaining why he believes that the teaching of intelligent design in public classrooms is a very bad idea (qtd. in Powell, 2004: A1)

Chapter Focus Question

Why are education and religion powerful and influential forces in contemporary society?

What is all the controversy about? How did a small school district draw so much attention to itself and end up with a district judge ruling that the school board's decision to introduce intelligent design as an alternative to evolution violated the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution?

The argument over intelligent design is the latest debate in a lengthy battle over the teaching of creationism versus evolutionism in public schools, and it is only one of many arguments that will continue to take place regarding the appropriate relationship between public education and religion in the United States. More than seventy years ago, for example, evolutionism versus creationism was hotly debated in the famous "Scopes monkey trial," so named because of Charles Darwin's assertion that human beings had evolved from lower primates. In this case, John Thomas Scopes, a substitute high school biology teacher in Tennessee, was found guilty of teaching evolution, which denied the "divine creation of man as taught in the Bible." Although an appeals court later overturned Scopes's conviction and $100 fine (on the grounds that the fine was excessive), teaching evolution in Tennessee's public schools remained illegal until 1967 (Chalfant, Beckley, and Palmer, 1994). By contrast, recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings have looked unfavorably on the teaching of creationism in public schools, based on a provision in the Constitution that requires a "wall of separation" between church (religion) and state (government). Initially, this wall of separation was erected to protect religion from the state, not the state from religion.

Who is to decide what should be taught in U.S. public schools? What is the purpose of education? Of religion? In this chapter, we examine education and religion, two social institutions that have certain commonalities both as institutions and as objects of sociological inquiry. Before reading on, test your knowledge about the impact that religion has had on U.S. education by taking the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz.

An Overview of Education and Religion

Education and religion are powerful and influential forces in contemporary societies. Both institutions impart values, beliefs, and knowledge considered essential to the social reproduction of individual personalities and entire cultures (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Education and religion both grapple with issues of societal stability and social change, reflecting society even as they attempt to shape it. Education and religion also share certain commonalities as objects of sociological study; for example, both are socializing institutions. Whereas early socialization is primarily informal and takes place within our families and friendship networks, as we grow older, socialization passes to the more formalized organizations created for the specific purposes of education and religion.

Areas of sociological inquiry that specifically focus on those institutions are (1) the *sociology of education,* which primarily examines formal education or schooling in industrial societies, and (2) the *sociology of religion,* which focuses on religious groups and organizations, on the behavior of individuals within those groups, and on ways in which religion is intertwined with other social institutions (Roberts, 2004). Let's start our examination by looking at sociological perspectives on education.

Sociological Perspectives on Education

Education is the social institution responsible for the systematic transmission of knowledge, skills, and cultural values within a formally organized structure. In all societies, people must acquire certain knowledge and skills in order to survive. In less-developed societies, these skills might include hunting, gathering, fishing, farming, and self-preservation. In contemporary, developed societies, knowledge and skills are often related to the requirements of a highly competitive job market.

Sociologists have divergent perspectives on the purpose of education in contemporary society. Functionalists suggest that education contributes to the maintenance of society and provides people with an opportunity for self-enhancement and upward

Manifest functions—open, stated, and intended goals or consequences of activities within an organization or institution. In education, these are:

- socialization
- transmission of culture
- social control
- social placement
- change and innovation

Latent functions—hidden, unstated, and sometimes unintended consequences of activities within an organization. In education, these include:
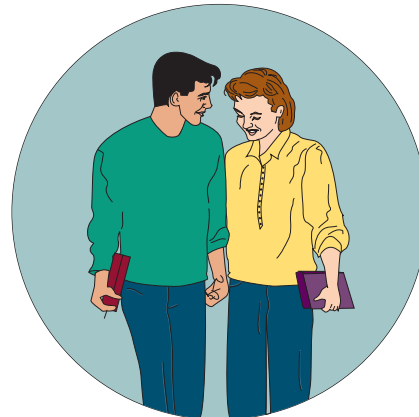
- matchmaking and production of social networks
- restricting some activities
- creating a generation gap

▲ FIGURE 12.1 MANIFEST AND LATENT FUNCTIONS OF EDUCATION

- **Historical Perspective:** "On June 19, 1987, the Supreme Court ruled that a Louisiana law requiring that creation science be taught in public schools whenever evolution was taught constituted an unconstitutional infringement on the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment" (*New York Times,* 6/1987). Have students research subsequent Supreme Court decisions on this topic.

- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disc provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint® slides, videos, PowerPoint® and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About the Impact of Religion on U.S. Education?

True	False	
T	**F**	1. The U.S. Constitution originally specified that religion should be taught in the public schools.
T	**F**	2. Virtually all sociologists have advocated the separation of moral teaching from academic subject matter.
T	**F**	3. The federal government has limited control over how funds are spent by school districts because most of the money comes from the state and local levels.
T	**F**	4. Parochial schools have decreased in enrollment as interest in religion has waned in the United States.
T	**F**	5. The number of children from religious backgrounds other than Christianity and Judaism has grown steadily in public schools over the past three decades.
T	**F**	6. Debates over textbook content focus only on elementary education because of the vulnerability of young children.
T	**F**	7. More parents are instructing their own children through home schooling because of their concerns about what public schools are (or are not) teaching their children.
T	**F**	8. The U.S. Congress has the ultimate authority over whether religious education can be included in public school curricula.

Answers on page 384.

social mobility. Conflict theorists argue that education perpetuates social inequality and benefits the dominant class at the expense of all others. Symbolic interactionists focus on classroom dynamics and the effect of self-concept on grades and aspirations.

Functionalist Perspectives on Education

Functionalists view education as one of the most important components of society. According to Durkheim, education is the "influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life" (Durkheim, 1956: 28). Durkheim asserted that moral values are the foundation of a cohesive social order and that schools have the responsibility of teaching a commitment to the common morality.

From this perspective, students must be taught to put the group's needs ahead of their individual desires and aspirations. Contemporary functionalists suggest that education is responsible for teaching U.S. values. However, not all analysts agree on what those values should be or what functions education should serve in contemporary societies. In analyzing the values and functions of education,

sociologists using a functionalist framework distinguish between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions and latent functions of education are compared in ▶ Figure 12.1.

Manifest Functions of Education Some functions of education are *manifest functions,* previously defined as the open, stated, and intended goals or consequences of activities within an organization or institution. Examples of manifest functions in education include teaching specific subjects, such as science, mathematics, reading, history, and English. Education serves five major manifest functions in society:

1. *Socialization.* From kindergarten through college, schools teach students the student role, specific academic subjects, and political socialization. In primary and secondary schools, students are taught specific subject matter appropriate to their

> **education** the social institution responsible for the systematic transmission of knowledge, skills, and cultural values within a formally organized structure.

- **Extra Examples:** Use the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz as a basis for some of your presentations regarding this chapter. Find out which questions are of most interest to your students, and use these as starting points.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **Sociological Imagination:** Why is the transmission of cultural norms and values a complex process in diverse societies such as the United States? How can schools cope with this problem in the future?
- **For Discussion:** Ask students if the following describes their experience of education: "If we value independence, if we are

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Religion and Education

1. **False.** Due to the diversity of religious backgrounds of the early settlers, no mention of religion was made in the original Constitution. Even the sole provision that currently exists (the establishment clause of the First Amendment) does not speak directly of the issue of religious learning in public education.

2. **False.** Obviously, contemporary sociologists hold strong beliefs and opinions on many subjects; however, most of them do not think that it is their role to advocate specific stances on a topic. Early sociologists were less inclined to believe that they had to be "value-free." For example, Durkheim strongly advocated that education should have a moral component and that schools had a responsibility to perpetuate society by teaching a commitment to the common morality.

3. **True.** Most public school revenue comes from local funding through property taxes and state funding from a variety of sources, including sales taxes, personal income taxes, and, in some states, oil revenues or proceeds from lotteries.

4. **False.** Just the opposite has happened. As parents have felt that their children were not receiving the type of education they desired in public schools, parochial schools have flourished. Christian schools have grown to over five thousand in number; Jewish parochial schools have also grown rapidly over the past decade.

5. **True.** Although about 86 percent of those age 18 and over in the 48 contiguous states of the United States describe their religion as some Christian denomination, there has still been a significant increase in those who either adhere to no religion (7.5 percent) or who are Jewish, Muslim/Islamic, Unitarian-Universalist, Buddhist, or Hindu.

6. **False.** Attempts to remove textbooks occur at all levels of schooling. A recent case involved the removal of Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale" and Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* from a high school curriculum.

7. **True.** Some parents choose home schooling for religious reasons; others embrace it for secular reasons, including fear for their children's safety and concerns about the quality of public schools.

8. **False.** Ultimately, issues relating to the separation of church and state, including religious instruction in public schools, are constitutional issues that are decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in the absence of a constitutional amendment.

Sources: Based on Ballantine and Hammack, 2009; Gibbs, 1994; Greenberg and Page, 2002; Johnson, 1994; Kosmin and Lachman, 1993; and Roof, 1993.

age, skill level, and previous educational experience. At the college level, students focus on more detailed knowledge of subjects that they have previously studied while also being exposed to new areas of study and research.

2. *Transmission of culture.* Schools transmit cultural norms and values to each new generation and play an active part in the process of assimilation, whereby recent immigrants learn dominant cultural values, attitudes, and behavior so that they can be productive members of society.

3. *Social control.* Schools are responsible for teaching values such as discipline, respect, obedience, punctuality, and perseverance. Schools teach conformity by encouraging young people to be good students, conscientious future workers, and law-abiding citizens (see "Sociology Works!").

4. *Social placement.* Schools are responsible for identifying the most qualified people to fill available positions in society. As a result, students are channeled into programs based on individual ability and academic achievement. Graduates receive the appropriate credentials for entry into the paid labor force.

5. *Change and innovation.* Schools are a source of change and innovation. As student populations change over time, new programs are introduced to meet societal needs; for example, sex education, drug education, and multicultural studies have been implemented in some schools to help

disturbed by the growing conformity of knowledge, of values, of attitudes, which our present system induces, then we may wish to set up conditions of learning which make for uniqueness, for self-direction, and for self-initiated learning" (Carl Rogers). Do they agree with Rogers's conclusions?

- **Sociological Imagination:** Students can further investigate some of the questions and answers from the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz and write brief reports to present to the class.

students learn about pressing social issues. Innovation in the form of new knowledge is required of colleges and universities. Faculty members are encouraged, and sometimes required, to engage in research and to share the results with students, colleagues, and others.

Latent Functions of Education   In addition to manifest functions, all social institutions, including education, have some *latent functions,* which, as you will recall, are the hidden, unstated, and sometimes unintended consequences of activities within an organization or institution. Education serves at least three latent functions:

1. *Restricting some activities.* Early in the twentieth century, all states passed *mandatory education laws* that require children to attend school until they reach a specified age or until they complete a minimum level of formal education. Out of these laws grew one latent function of education, which is to keep students off the streets and out of the full-time job market for a number of years, thus helping keep unemployment within reasonable bounds (Braverman, 1974).

2. *Matchmaking and production of social networks.* Because schools bring together people of similar ages, social class, and race/ethnicity, young people often meet future marriage partners and develop social networks that may last for many years.

3. *Creating a generation gap.* Students may learn information in school that contradicts beliefs held by their parents or their religion. When education conflicts with parental attitudes and beliefs, a generation gap is created if students embrace the newly acquired perspective.

As we have seen, education fulfills both manifest and latent functions in society; however, some aspects of this important social institution may be impaired and generate problems not only for students but also for others in the larger society (such as lagging educational standards that result in employees coming into the workforce with fewer marketable skills).

Dysfunctions of Education   Functionalists acknowledge that education has certain dysfunctions. Some analysts argue that U.S. education is not promoting the high-level skills in reading, writing,

science, and mathematics that are needed in the workplace and the global economy. For example, mathematics and science education in the United States does not compare favorably with that found in many other industrialized countries (see ■ Table 12.1). In the latest available (2007) Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), which compares the mathematics and science performance of U.S. students with that of their peers in other nations, U.S. eighth-grade students scored lower than did students in a number of other nations, including Chinese Taipei, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, and England (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008).

Are U.S. schools dysfunctional as a result of scores such as these? Analysts do not agree on what these score differences mean. Clearly, test scores are subject to a variety of interpretations; however, for most functionalist analysts, lagging test scores are a sign

table 12.1

Results of the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (selected nations)

Country	Math Score	Science Score
Singapore	593	567
Korea, Republic of	597	553
Hong Kong SAR	572	530
Chinese Taipei	598	561
Japan	570	554
England	513	542
Hungary	517	539
Russian Federation	512	530
United States	508	520
Sweden	491	511
Israel	463	468
Turkey	432	454
Indonesia	397	427
Columbia	380	417
Saudi Arabia	329	403
El Salvador	340	387
Ghana	309	303

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2008.

- **IRM:** Student Activities: Latent Functions of Education. Have students work together in small groups to compose a list of some of the latent functions of education they have experienced. Stress to your class how important these unintended consequences really are in our lives.
- **Media Coverage:** "The 2006 Shape of the Nation report concluded that most states are failing to provide students with adequate physical education requirements. The percentage of students who attend a daily physical education class has dropped from 42% in 1991 to 28% in 2003" (CNN, 8/2006).
- **For Discussion:** Have the class discuss Charles Sykes's argument that educators' emphasis on egalitarianism and building self-esteem has caused an eroding of true learning in the U.S. classroom. Sykes's recommended reforms include abolishing

sociology works!

Stopping Bullying: Character Building and Social Norms

News Item: Fifteen-year-old Phoebe Prince spent her last day enduring relentless bullying before she walked home from school and hanged herself. The South Hadley, Massachusetts, ninth-grader suffered a "nearly three-month campaign of verbally assaultive behaviour and threats of physical harm," Northwestern District Attorney Elizabeth Scheibel said when she announced the results of her investigation into Phoebe's death. (Green, 2010)

The nation was shocked when a teenager whose family had recently emigrated from Ireland took her own life after enduring months of verbal assaults and threats after she briefly dated a popular boy. Phoebe was harassed in school, on Facebook, and in text messages. Nine students at her school were charged in the bullying of Phoebe Prince, and some analysts believe school authorities should be held accountable because they did not do enough to stop the bullying. Unfortunately, Phoebe Prince's case is not an isolated incident of bullying: As many as eight out of ten U.S. students in upper elementary, middle, and high schools who have access to an anonymous online messaging service that provides them the ability to communicate the problem to school counselors and

▶ Sociologist H. Wesley Perkins sees the problem of bullying as an issue involving norms: If bullying becomes uncool, young people will be less likely to take part in it and more likely to help someone who is a victim of this very harmful activity.

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that dysfunctions exist in the nation's educational system. According to this approach, improvements will occur only when more stringent academic requirements are implemented for students. Dysfunctions may also be reduced by more thorough teacher training and consistent testing of instructors. Overall, functionalists typically advocate the importance of establishing a more rigorous academic environment in which students are required to learn the basics that will make them competitive in school and in the job market.

Conflict Perspectives on Education

In contrast with the functionalist perspective, conflict theorists argue that schools often perpetuate class, racial–ethnic, and gender inequalities as some groups seek to maintain their privileged position at the expense of others (Ballantine and Hammack, 2009).

Cultural Capital and Class Reproduction

Although there are many factors—including intelligence, family income, motivation, and previous

the federal Department of Education and its state counterparts, abolishing undergraduate schools of education, establishing more alternative routes to teacher certification, and providing merit raises for good teachers (Charles Sykes, *Dumbing Down Our Kids: Why American Children Feel Good About Themselves But Can't Read, Write, or Add*).

- **Box Note:** What concepts/lessons from the chapter on deviance can your students use to better understand the bullying phenomenon?
- **Sociological Imagination:** Students should quickly write a paragraph describing the norms and values of their high school that tended to promote bullying.

administrators report that they have been the victims of bullying (Gary, 2007). Other studies have shown that between 15 to 25 percent of U.S. students are bullied with some frequency and that 15 to 20 percent admit that they bully others with some frequency during the school year (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008b).

What is bullying? By definition, bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying is often repeated, and the child who is routinely the object of the bullying usually has a difficult time defending himself or herself (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008b).

What have sociologists learned that might be useful for eliminating negative behavior and maintaining social control in schools? One method of reducing bullying is rooted in character education, which focuses on the reinforcement of acceptable character traits, such as respect and responsibility. From character-education courses and online studies, students learn problem-solving techniques, conflict-resolution approaches, and communication skills to help them interact with one another in a more positive manner.

However, an alternative approach has been suggested by such sociologists as H. Wesley Perkins, who emphasizes that the best practice in bullying prevention and intervention is to focus on the *social environment* of the school. According to Perkins, to reduce bullying it is important to change the climate of the school and social norms regarding bullying. As you will recall from Chapter 2, norms are established rules of behavior or standards of conduct; therefore, a school's social norms must establish standards of conduct that make it "uncool" for one person to bully another but "cool" for individuals to help out those who are bullied. Perkins developed a

social norms approach to preventing bullying which assumes that a person's behavior may be strongly influenced by the *incorrect* perceptions the individual holds about how other members of his or her social group think and act. From this approach, the first step to reducing the problem of bullying is to correct students' misperceptions about how prevalent this type of behavior really is: If students think that bullying is very common in their school and that "everybody is doing it," they may believe that the social norms support such behavior. If this misperception can be corrected, bullying will decrease as students come to see that the "nonbully status" is the social norm (Teicher, 2006).

Emphasizing the social environment of education and its norms is an important sociological contribution to our understanding of both positive and negative actions that take place in schools. It also makes us aware that social institutions fulfill a variety of important functions in society and that one of those functions for education is to maintain social control and to encourage civility among participants, whether or not they subscribe to moral values that teach them to "Love thy neighbor. . . ." Although it is also important to focus on character education for students and to teach them to respect others and have a sense of responsibility for their own actions, all of us have a responsibility for maintaining a social environment in which all individuals are treated with kindness and respect. Bullying isn't just a matter of "kids being kids": It is a serious sociological problem and must be dealt with as such.

reflect & analyze

What do you think about the problem of bullying? How can sociology help us to reduce problems such as this?

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achievement—that are important in determining how much education a person will attain, conflict theorists argue that access to quality education is closely related to social class. From this approach, education is a vehicle for reproducing existing class relationships. According to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the school legitimates and reinforces the social elites by engaging in specific practices that uphold the patterns of behavior and the attitudes of the dominant class. Bourdieu asserts that students from diverse class backgrounds come to

school with differing different amounts of **cultural capital—social assets that include values, beliefs, attitudes, and competencies in language and culture** (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Cultural capital involves "proper" attitudes toward education, socially approved dress and manners, and

> **cultural capital** Pierre Bourdieu's term for people's social assets, including values, beliefs, attitudes, and competencies in language and culture.

- **Research:** "Surveys have estimated that between 9% and 34% of kids have experienced cyberbullying in some way over the course of a year, with about 16% targeted monthly or more often, according to ISK, a non-profit organization that aims to improve the health and safety of kids . . ." (*Forbes,* 9/2008).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **For Discussion:** Ask students what factors that they believe contribute to the continuing racial segregation in schools. Why have efforts to desegregate or integrate many schools failed?
- **Extra Examples:** When you introduce the concept of cultural capital, elaborate on Pierre Bourdieu's belief that cultural capital is an important dimension of formal education. Describe some

knowledge about books, art, music, and other forms of high and popular culture.

Middle- and upper-income parents endow their children with more cultural capital than do working-class and poverty-level parents. Because cultural capital is essential for acquiring an education, children with less cultural capital have fewer opportunities to succeed in school. For example, standardized tests that are used to group students by ability and to assign them to classes often measure students' cultural capital rather than their "natural" intelligence or aptitude. Thus, a circular effect occurs: Students with dominant cultural values are more highly rewarded by the educational system. In turn, the educational system teaches and reinforces those values that sustain the elite's position in society.

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▲ Children who are able to visit museums, libraries, and musical events may gain cultural capital that other children do not possess. What is cultural capital? Why is it important in the process of class reproduction?

Tracking and Social Inequality Closely linked to the issue of cultural capital is how tracking in schools is related to social inequality. *Tracking refers to the practice of assigning students to specific curriculum groups and courses on the basis of their test scores, previous grades, or other criteria.* Conflict theorists believe that tracking seriously affects many students' educational performance and their overall academic accomplishments. In elementary schools, tracking is often referred to *ability grouping* and is based on the assumption that it is easier to teach a group of students who have similar abilities. However, class-based factors also affect which children are most likely to be placed in "high," "middle," or "low" groups, often referred to by such innocuous terms as "Blue Birds," "Red Birds," and "Yellow Birds." This practice is described by Ruben Navarrette, Jr. (1997: 274–275), who tells us about his own experience with tracking:

> One fateful day, in the second grade, my teacher decided to teach her class more efficiently by dividing it into six groups of five students each. Each group was assigned a geometric symbol to differentiate it from the others. There were the Circles. There were the Squares. There were the Triangles and Rectangles.
>
> I remember being a Hexagon. . . . I remember something else, an odd coincidence. The Hexagons were the smartest kids in the class. These distinctions are not lost on a child of seven. . . . Even in the second grade, my classmates and I knew who was smarter than whom. And on the day on which we were assigned our respective shapes, we knew that our teacher knew, too. As Hexagons, we would wait for her to call on us, then answer by hurrying to her with books and pencils in hand. We sat around a table in our "reading group," chattering excitedly to one another and basking in the intoxication of positive learning. We did not notice, did not care to notice, over our shoulders, the frustrated looks on the faces of Circles and Squares and Triangles who sat quietly at their desks, doodling on scratch paper or mumbling to one another. We knew also that, along with our geometric shapes, our books were different and that each group had different amounts of work to do. . . . The Circles had the easiest books and were assigned to read only a few pages at a time. . . . Not surprisingly, the Hexagons had the most

specific examples of cultural capital for your class, such as mentoring.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** Have the class discuss ways that the ability to pay for a college education may reproduce class divisions. What are the effects of race, class, and gender on social reproduction in higher education?

- **Research:** Have students research and assess data on testing gaps in education, including the following summary: "African Americans score lower than European Americans on vocabulary, reading, and math tests, as well as on tests that claim to measure scholastic aptitude and intelligence. The gap . . . has narrowed since 1970, but the typical American black still scores below 75% of American

difficult books of all, those with the biggest words and the fewest pictures, and we were expected to read the most pages.

The result of all of this education by separation was exactly what the teacher had imagined that it would be: Students could, and did, learn at their own pace without being encumbered by one another. Some learned faster than others. Some, I realized only [later], did not learn at all.

As Navarrette suggests, tracking does make it possible for students to work together based on their perceived abilities and at their own pace; however, it also extracts a serious toll from students who are labeled as "underachievers" or "slow learners." Race, class, language, gender, and many other social categories may determine the placement of children in elementary tracking systems as much or more than their actual academic abilities and interests.

The practice of tracking continues in middle school/junior high and high school. Although schools in some communities bring together students from diverse economic and racial/ethnic backgrounds, the students do not necessarily take the same courses or move on the same academic career paths (Gilbert, 2010). Numerous studies have found that ability grouping and tracking affect students'

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▲ As Ruben Navarrette, Jr., so powerfully describes, school is extremely tedious for underachieving students, who may find themselves "tracked" in such a way as to deny them upward mobility in the future.

academic achievements and career choices (Oakes, 1985; Welner and Oakes, 2000). Moreover, some social scientists believe that tracking is one of the most obvious mechanisms through which students of color and those from low-income families receive a diluted academic program, making it much more likely that they will fall even further behind their white, middle-class counterparts (see Miller, 1995).

The Hidden Curriculum and Class, Gender, and Racial/Ethnic Inequalities According to conflict theorists, the *hidden curriculum is the transmission of cultural values and attitudes, such as conformity and obedience to authority, through implied demands found in the rules, routines, and regulations of schools* (Snyder, 1971).

Although all students are subjected to the hidden curriculum, students who are from low-income families and/or are African American or Hispanic (Latino/a) may be affected the most adversely by educational settings that have been established on the basis of upper- and middle-class white (non-Hispanic) values, attitudes, and behavior (AAUW, 2008). When teachers from middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds instruct students from lower-income families, the teachers often establish a more structured classroom and a more controlling environment for students. These teachers may also have lower expectations for students' academic achievements. Schools with many students from low-income families often emphasize procedures and rote memorization without focusing on decision making and choice, or on providing explanations of why something is done a particular way. Schools for middle-class students stress the processes (such as figuring and decision making) involved in getting the right answer. Schools for affluent students focus on creative activities in which students express their own ideas and apply them to the subject under consideration. Schools for students from elite families work to develop students'

tracking the assignment of students to specific curriculum groups and courses on the basis of their test scores, previous grades, or both.

hidden curriculum the transmission of cultural values and attitudes, such as conformity and obedience to authority, through implied demands found in rules, routines, and regulations of schools.

whites on almost every standardized test" (Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips, eds., *The Black–White Test Score Gap*).
- **Research:** "Tracking doesn't limit opportunities for the top tenth or so of students but is particularly disastrous for students whose abilities fall in the middle range" (Sanford Dornbusch, the Reed–Hodgson Professor of Human Biology, who holds joint

appointments in the Department of Sociology and the School of Education at Stanford University).
- **Extra Examples:** The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) opposes the use of tracking, a permanent approach where students are assessed and placed into specific classrooms with peers of similar ability, because of its demonstrated negative effect on many students.
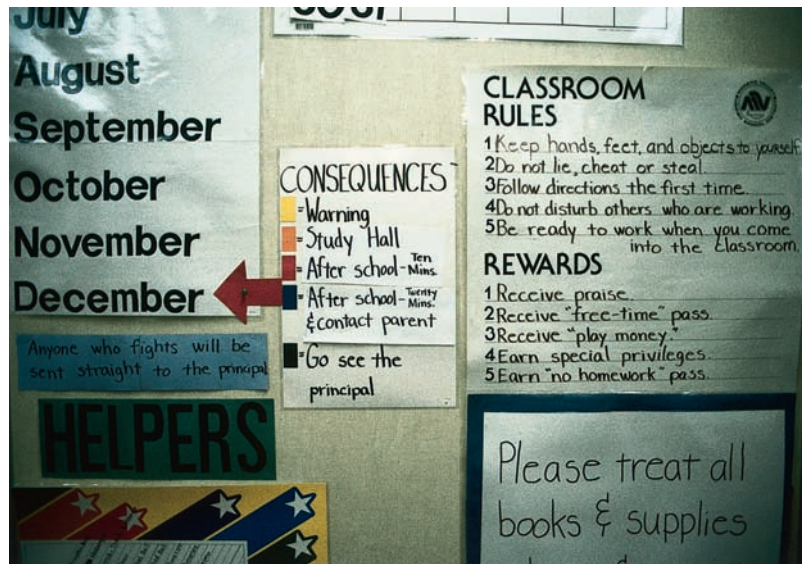
▲ Signs in this elementary classroom list the rules, rewards, and consequences of different types of student behavior. According to conflict theorists, schools impose rules on working-class and poverty-level students so that they will learn to follow orders and to be good employees in the workplace. How would functionalists and symbolic interactionists interpret these same signs?

analytical powers and critical-thinking skills, applying abstract principles to problem solving.

Through the hidden curriculum, schools inadvertently make students from lower-income families aware that when they grow up they will be expected to take orders from others, arrive at work punctually, follow bureaucratic rules, and experience high levels of boredom without complaining. Over time, these students may become frustrated with the educational system, not seeking how it can benefit them. As a result, they drop out or become low in academic achievement, which then makes it impossible for them to attend college and gain the credentials required for the better-paying occupations and professions (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Educational credentials are extremely important in a nation such as ours that emphasizes *credentialism—a process of social selection in which class advantage and social status are linked to the possession of academic qualifications* (Collins, 1979; Marshall, 1998). Credentialism is closely related to *meritocracy*—previously defined as a social system in which status is assumed to be acquired through individual ability and effort (Young, 1994/1958). Persons who acquire the appropriate credentials for a job are assumed to have gained the position through what

they know, not who they are or whom they know. According to conflict theorists, the hidden curriculum determines in advance that the most valued credentials will primarily stay in the hands of the middle and upper classes, so the United States is not actually as meritocratic as some might claim.

The hidden curriculum is also related to gender bias. For many years, the focus in education was on how gender bias harmed girls and women: Reading materials, classroom activities, and treatment by teachers and peers contributed to a feeling among many girls and young women that they were less important than male students. The accepted wisdom was that, over time, differential treatment undermines females' self-esteem and discourages them from taking certain courses, such as math and science, which have been dominated by male teachers and students. In the early 1990s the American Association of University Women issued *The AAUW Report: How Schools Shortchange Girls,* which highlighted inequalities in women's education and started a national debate on gender equity (AAUW, 1995). Over the past decade, improvements have occurred in girls' educational achievement, as females have attended and graduated from high school and college at a higher rate than their male peers. More females have enrolled in advanced placement or honors courses and in academic areas, such as math and science, where they had previously lagged (AAUW, 2008). However, some traditional gender differences persist at some grade levels, with boys generally outscoring girls on math tests by a small margin and girls outscoring boys on reading tests by a small margin.

Ironically, after many years of discussion about how the hidden curriculum and other problems in schools served to disadvantage female students, the emphasis has now shifted to the question of whether girls' increasing accomplishments from elementary school to college and beyond have come at the expense of boys and young men. But this is not

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **Popular Culture:** From *Grey's Anatomy* to *House,* the overwhelming warts-and-all portrait seems to be this: Doctors are human. They fall in love, they get angry, and they like a good chuckle—sometimes at the patient's expense. Learning respect and discretion is part of the so-called hidden curriculum—all of the things doctors learn on

the job that don't have to do with diagnosing and treating diseases (Theresa Tamkins, CNN, 2009).
- **Media Coverage:** "The 'boy crisis' is particularly acute for black males, judging by studies such as the recent report on dropouts by the Schott Foundation for Public Education, an educational think tank in Cambridge, Mass. That report found that fewer than half of

true, according to research by the AAUW (2008: 2): "Educational achievement is not a zero-sum game, in which a gain for one group results in a corresponding loss for the other. If girls' success comes at the expense of boys, one would expect to see boys' scores decline as girls' scores rise, but this has not been the case."

Generally, positive trends in the educational attainment of both woman and men mask the fact that many students are not making gains in school and that important variations in achievement exist by race/ethnicity and family income level (AAUW, 2008). For example, studies show that family income level has a strong influence on reading scores: Scores for boys and girls from *similar* family income levels are usually more alike than are the scores of girls and boys from *different* family income levels (AAUW, 2008). When we look at the variation in scores by family income, girls from higher-income families score higher on average than lower-income girls in both math and reading tests. Regardless of gender, large differences remain in scores on academic tests among students by race/ethnicity.

How are race/ethnicity and family income related to high school and college achievement? The AAUW report (2008: 52) sums up the situation as follows:

> Race/ethnicity and family income level are important factors in high school and college achievement regardless of gender. The story is familiar: White children are more likely to graduate from high school and attend and graduate from college than are their African American and Hispanic peers. Likewise, children from lower-income families are less likely than children from higher-income families to graduate from high school. Students from lower-income families are approximately five times more likely than students from higher income families to drop out of high school. Women and men from lower-income families are also less likely to attend, much less graduate from, college.

The conflict theorists' focus on the hidden curriculum calls our attention to the fact that students learn far more—both positively and negatively—than just the subject matter that is being taught in classrooms. They are exposed to a wide range of beliefs, values, attitudes, and behavioral expectations that are not directly related to subjects such as English, algebra, or history. Conflict theorists suggest that inequality is structurally produced and reproduced by formal and informal socialization processes in schools and other educational settings.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives on Education

Unlike functionalist analysts, who focus on the functions and dysfunctions of education, and conflict theorists, who focus on the relationship between education and inequality, symbolic interactionists focus on classroom communication patterns and educational practices, such as labeling, that affect students' self-concept and aspirations.

Labeling and the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Chapter 6 explains that *labeling* is the process whereby a person is identified by others as possessing a specific characteristic or exhibiting a certain pattern of behavior (such as being deviant). According to symbolic interactionists, the process of labeling is directly related to the power and status of those persons who do the labeling and those who are being labeled. In schools, teachers and administrators are empowered to label children in various ways, including grades, written comments on deportment (classroom behavior), and placement in classes. For example, based on standardized test scores or classroom performance, educators label some children as "special ed" or low achievers, whereas others are labeled as average or "gifted and talented." For some students, labeling amounts to a *self-fulfilling prophecy*—previously defined as an unsubstantiated belief or prediction resulting in behavior that makes the originally false belief come true (Merton, 1968). A classic form of labeling and the self-fulfilling prophecy occurs through the use of IQ (intelligence quotient) tests, which claim to measure a person's inherent intelligence, apart from any family or school influences on the individual. In many school systems, IQ tests are used as one criterion in determining student placement in classes and ability groups (see ▶ Figure 12.2).

> **credentialism** a process of social selection in which class advantage and social status are linked to the possession of academic qualifications.

black male students nationwide are graduating from high school" (Clarence Page, *Chicago Tribune,* 8/2008).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** Put students in small groups, and ask them to discuss self-fulfilling prophecies and labeling that happen in school. Help students to understand some of the ways that the educational system and learning experiences can categorize students in harmful ways.

Question 2: Consider the following two statements: all farmers who are also ranchers cannot come near town; and most of the ranchers who are also farmers cannot surf. Which of the following statements MUST be true?

○ Most of the farmers who cannot come near town can surf

○ Only some farmers who ranch can surf near town

○ A surfer who ranches and farms cannot surf near town

○ Some ranchers who farm can come to town to learn to surf

○ Any farmer who cannot surf also ranches

▲ **FIGURE 12.2 IQ TEST SAMPLE QUESTION**
IQ tests containing questions such as this are often used to place students in ability groups. Such placement can set the course of a person's entire education.

Using Labeling Theory to Examine the IQ Debate

The relationship between IQ testing and labeling theory has been of special interest to sociologists. In the 1960s, two social scientists conducted an experiment in an elementary school during which they intentionally misinformed teachers about the intelligence test scores of students in their classes (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Despite the fact that the students were randomly selected for the study and had no measurable differences in intelligence, the researchers informed the teachers that some of the students had extremely high IQ test scores, whereas others had average to below-average scores. As the researchers observed, the teachers began to teach "exceptional" students in a different manner from other students. In turn, the "exceptional" students began to outperform their "average" peers and to excel in their classwork. This study called attention to the labeling effect of IQ scores.

However, experiments such as this also raise other important issues: What if a teacher (as a result of stereotypes based on the relationship between IQ and race) believes that some students of color are less capable of learning? Will that teacher (often without realizing it) treat such students as if they are incapable of learning? In their controversial book *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life,* Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray (1994) argue that intelligence is genetically inherited and that people cannot be "smarter" than they are born to be, regardless of their environment or education. According to Herrnstein and Murray, certain racial–ethnic groups differ in average IQ and

are likely to differ in "intelligence genes" as well. For example, they point out that, on average, people living in Asia score higher on IQ tests than white Americans and that African Americans score 15 points lower on average than white Americans. Based on an all-white sample, the authors also concluded that low intelligence leads to social pathology, such as high rates of crime, dropping out of school, and winding up poor. In contrast, high intelligence typically leads to success, and family background plays only a secondary role. Many scholars disagree with Herrnstein and Murray's research methods and conclusions: What the authors claim is immutable intelligence is actually acquired skills (Weinstein, 1997). Despite this refutation, the idea of inherited mental inferiority tends to take on a life of its own when people want to believe that such differences exist.

Problems Within Elementary and Secondary Schools

Education in kindergarten through high school is a microcosm of many of the issues and problems facing the United States. The problems we examine in this section include unequal funding of public schools, high dropout rates, and racial segregation and resegregation.

Unequal Funding of Public Schools

One of the biggest problems in public education today results from unequal funding. Why does unequal funding exist? Most educational funds come from state legislative appropriations and local property taxes (see ▶ Figure 12.3). As shown in Figure 12.3, state sources contribute 46.6 percent of public elementary–secondary school system revenue, 44.4 percent comes from local sources, and only 9 percent comes from federal sources. Much of the money from federal sources is earmarked for special programs for students who are disadvantaged (e.g., the Head Start program) or who have a disability. Although public school spending increases in some regions of the country each year, an even greater increase can occur in student enrollment.

- **For Discussion:** Ask the class to discuss how perceptions about race and IQ could become a self-fulfilling prophecy for some students. Why do they think the controversy over race and IQ continues to resurface in the United States?
- **Extra Examples:** "As Herrnstein and Murray demonstrate at great length, measured intelligence correlates with success in school, ultimate job status, and the likelihood of becoming a member

of the cognitively entitled establishment. But correlation is not causation, and it is possible that staying in school causes IQ to go up (rather than vice versa) or that both IQ and schooling reflect some third causative factor, such as parental attention, nutrition, social class, or motivation. Indeed, nearly every one of their reported correlations can be challenged on such grounds" (Howard Gardner, *American Prospect* magazine, 12/1994).
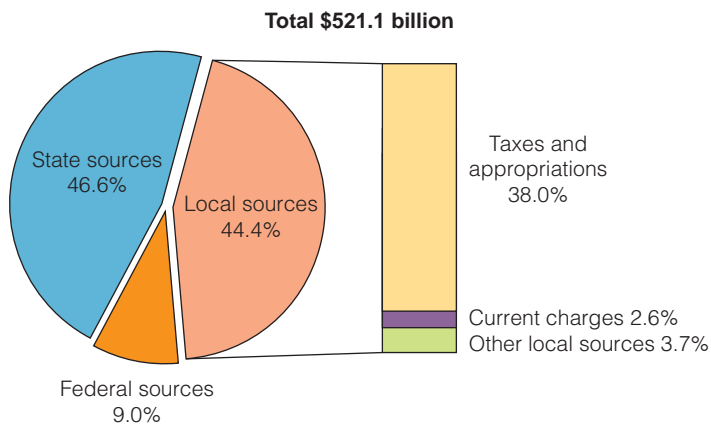
Total $521.1 billion

▲ **FIGURE 12.3** PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL PUBLIC ELEMENTARY−SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM REVENUE: 2005−2006

Source: census.gov, 2008.

Per capita spending on public and secondary education varies widely from state to state (see ▶ Map 12.1). In part, this is because the local property-tax base has been eroding in central cities as major industries have relocated or gone out of business. Many middle- and upper-income families have moved to suburban areas with their own property-tax base so their children can attend relatively new schools equipped with the latest textbooks and state-of-the-art computers—advantages that schools in central cities and poverty-ridden rural areas lack (see Kozol, 1991; Ballantine and Hammack, 2009).

Dropping Out

Although there has been a slight decrease in the overall school dropout rate in the past decade, each year almost one-third of public high school students fail
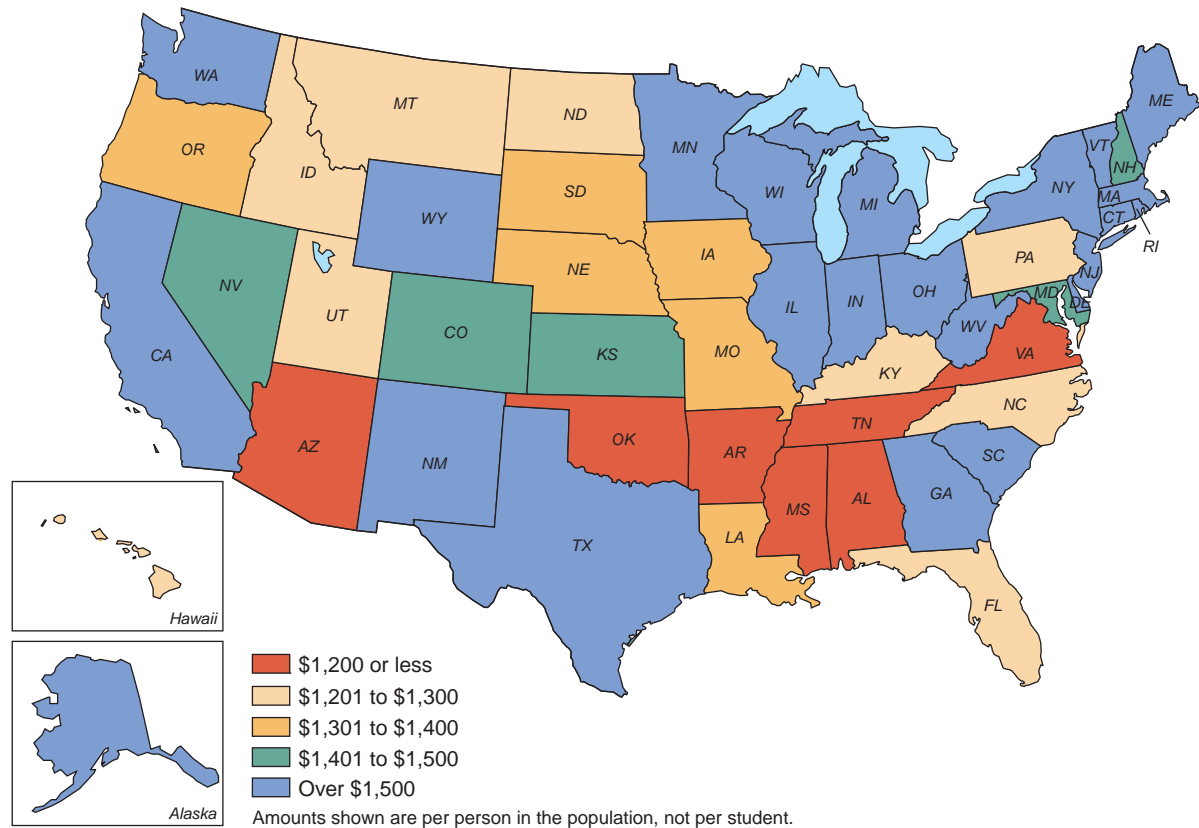
▲ **MAP 12.1** PER CAPITA PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SPENDING BY STATE

Amounts shown are per person in the population, not per student.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

• **Extra Examples:** Head Start is a program of the United States Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families (wikipedia).

• **Research:** The percentage of young adults who left school each year without successfully completing a high school program decreased from 1972 through 1987. Despite year-to-year fluctuations, the percentage of students dropping out of school each year has stayed relatively unchanged since 1987 (National Center for Educational Statistics).

to graduate from high school (see ▶ Figure 12.4 for graduation rates). Overall, every school day, 7,000 U.S. students leave high school never to return. Gender differences are evident in the dropout rate: Male students are consistently 8 percent less likely to graduate than female students, and the gap is as large as 14 percent between male and female African American students (National High School Center, 2008). Latinos/as (Hispanics) have the highest dropout rate (18.2 percent), followed by African Americans (9.1 percent) and non-Hispanic whites (7.8 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

Graduation Rates Among 50 Largest U.S. School Districts			
BEST		**WORST**	
Fairfax County, Va.	82.5%	Detroit	21.7%
Wake County, N.C.	82.2	City of Baltimore, Md.	38.5
Baltimore County, Md.	81.9	New York City	38.9
Montgomery County, Md.	81.5	Milwaukee	43.1
Cypress-Fairbanks, Texas	81.3	Cleveland	43.8

▲ **FIGURE 12.4** TOP FIVE AND BOTTOM FIVE GRADUATION RANKINGS AMONG THE FIFTY LARGEST PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Source: Reproduced with permission from the June 21, 2006, issue of *The Christian Science Monitor* (www.csmonitor.com). © 2006 The Christian Science Monitor. All rights reserved.

Why are Latinos/as more likely to drop out of high school than are other racial and ethnic groups? First, the category of "Hispanic" or "Latino/a" incorporates a wide diversity of young people—including those who trace their origins to Mexico, Puerto Rico, Haiti, and countries in Central and South America—who may leave school for a variety of reasons. Second, some students may drop out of school partly because their teachers have labeled them as "troublemakers." Some students have been repeatedly expelled from school before they actually become "dropouts."

Some students may view school as a waste of time. For example, Ronnie explains why he dropped out:

I thought [school] was a big waste of time. I knew older guys who had dropped out of the tenth grade and within a couple of years were makin' cash money as a mechanic or a carpenter. My brothers did the same thing. I didn't think I was learnin' no skill that I could get a job with in school. I wasn't very good in school. It was pretty damn boring. So I left. (qtd. in Pinderhughes, 1997: 58)

Students who drop out of school may be skeptical about the value of school even while they are still attending because they believe that school will not increase their job opportunities. Upon leaving school, many dropouts have high hopes of making some money and enjoying their newfound freedom. However, these feelings often turn to disappointment when they find that few jobs are available and that they do not meet the minimum educational requirements for any "good" jobs that exist (Pinderhughes, 1997).

Racial Segregation and Resegregation

In many areas of the United States, schools remain racially segregated or have become resegregated after earlier attempts at integration failed. In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled (in *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*) that "separate but equal" segregated schools are unconstitutional

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▲ Although many people believe that the United States is a racially integrated nation, a look at schools throughout the country reveals that many of them remain segregated or have become largely resegregated in recent decades.

- **Figure Note:** Graduation Rates: Compare these graduation rates with census data on the average income of residents in that area. Send students off to conduct this research and to report back to class.

- **Recent Events:** "The United States Supreme Court invalidated voluntary school desegregation plans. Conservatives had hoped the ruling would be a clear blow to the concept of racial diversity as a vital public policy while civil rights advocates worried that the ruling would obliterate the concept that race can be a factor in remedying societal discrimination" (NPR, 6/2007).

because they are inherently unequal. However, five decades later, racial segregation remains a fact of life in education.

Efforts to bring about *desegregation*—the abolition of legally sanctioned racial–ethnic segregation—or *integration*—the implementation of specific action to change the racial–ethnic and/or class composition of the student body—have failed in many districts throughout the country. Some school districts have bused students across town to achieve racial integration. Others have changed school attendance boundaries or introduced magnet schools with specialized programs such as science or the fine arts to change the racial–ethnic composition of schools. But school segregation does not exist in isolation. Racially segregated housing patterns are associated with the high rate of school segregation experienced by African American, Latina/o, and other students of color. Ethnic enclaves of recent immigrants may also result in a concentration of students in a particular school where they have no opportunity to interact with children from other income levels or family backgrounds.

Even in more-integrated schools, resegregation often occurs at the classroom level (Mickelson and Smith, 1995). Because of past racial discrimination and current socioeconomic inequalities, many children of color are placed in lower-level courses and special-needs classes. At the same time, non-Latina/o white and Asian American students are more likely to be enrolled in high-achievement courses and programs for the gifted and talented.

School Safety and School Violence

Problems such as bullying, harassment, and high dropout rates are a major concern in education because schools should provide a safe and supportive environment where students and teachers alike can feel secure. Today, officials in schools ranging from the elementary years to two-year colleges and four-year universities are focusing on how to reduce or eliminate bullying, harassment, and violence. In many schools, teachers and counselors are instructed in anger management and peer mediation, and they are encouraged to develop classroom instruction that teaches values such as respect and

responsibility (National Education Association, 2007). Some schools create partnerships with local law enforcement agencies and social service organizations to link issues of school safety to larger concerns about safety in the community and the nation. For example, the National Education Association's Safe Schools Program works with other national organizations to advocate for safe schools and communities and to create a positive learning environment for all students.

Clearly, some efforts to make schools a safe haven for students and teachers are paying off. Statistics related to school safety continue to show that U.S. schools are among the safest places for young people. According to the latest "Indicators of School Crime and Safety," jointly released by the National Center for Educational Statistics and the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, young people are more likely to be victims of violent crime at or near their home, on the streets, at commercial establishments, or at parks than they are at school (National Education Association, 2007). However, these statistics do not keep many people from believing that schools are becoming more dangerous with each passing year and that all schools should have high-tech surveillance equipment to help maintain a safe environment. As a result, many students attend classes in an academic environment that is somewhat similar to a prison. In some schools, all students, faculty, and staff are required to wear a photo ID around their necks or present a school-issued identity card upon entering the school grounds or buildings. They may also be required to pass through a weapons-scanning metal detector and have their backpacks or other personal items inspected or sent through an X-ray machine.

Even with all of these safety measures in place, violence and fear of violence continue to be pressing problems in schools throughout the United States. Each horrendous killing on a school campus further intensifies our fright and heightens our concern about how safe our schools really are. This concern extends from kindergarten onward because violent acts have resulted in numerous elementary and high school deaths in communities such as Jonesboro, Arkansas; Springfield, Oregon; Littleton, Colorado; Santee, California; Red Lake, Minnesota; and an Amish schoolhouse in rural Pennsylvania.

- **Media Coverage:** "It's astonishing that a nation so hugely, flagrantly nostalgic for the personal touch and the family doctor, the community festival and the small town, has watched quietly while its high schools have grown into big cities" (*Newsweek,* 3/2001). Have students discuss this statement, based on their own high school experiences.

- **Research:** Have the class research correlations between school size and violence: "In the wake of the Columbine shootings James Garbarino of Cornell, an expert on adolescent crime, said that if he could do one thing to stop violence, 'it would be to ensure that teenagers are not in high schools bigger than 400 to 500 students.' Yet nearly three out of four teenagers today go to a high school with an enrollment of more than 1,000" (*Newsweek,* 3/2001).

College and university campuses are also not immune to violence and multiple deaths as deranged individuals have engaged in acts of personal terrorism at the expense of students, professors, and other victims. In 1966 Charles Whitman, a University of Texas at Austin student, went to the top of the university's twenty-seven-story tower and shot and killed sixteen people while seriously wounding thirty-one others. Decades later, Cho Seung-Hui, a Virginia Tech student, killed thirty-two victims before taking his own life on the university's campus in Blacksburg, Virginia. Less than a year later, five students at Northern Illinois University were killed by a twenty-seven-year-old graduate of that school. In 2010 Amy Bishop, a University of Alabama at Huntsville professor who was allegedly angry over being denied tenure, started shooting a gun during a faculty meeting on campus and killed three faculty members and injured several others.

The aftermath of each of these tragedies saw a massive outpouring of public sympathy and a call for greater campus security. Gun-control advocates called for greater control over the licensing and ownership of firearms and for heightened police security on college campuses, whereas pro-gun advocates argued that people should be allowed to carry firearms on campus for their own protection. Recently, lawmakers in twenty states have introduced measures seeking to relax concealed-weapons restrictions on college and university campuses. At this writing, only Utah had adopted a policy that allows concealed handguns on campus, but legislators in other states continue to debate this issue. Many college administrators, faculty, students, and campus and community law enforcement personnel have expressed serious concern about allowing concealed weapons on campus because having weapons readily available might make a bad situation even worse.

© AP Photo/Butch Dill

▲ The aftereffects of mass killings such as the recent ones at Virginia Tech and the University of Alabama at Huntsville can be devastating for a campus community. Here, a UAH student indicates both her grief and her hope.

Opportunities and Challenges in Colleges and Universities

Who attends college? What sort of college or university do they attend? For students who complete high school, access to colleges and universities is determined not only by prior academic record but also by the ability to pay. One of the most remarkable success stories over the last fifty years has been the development and rapid growth of community colleges in the United States.

Opportunities and Challenges in Community Colleges

One of the fastest-growing areas of U.S. higher education today is the community college; however, the history of two-year colleges goes back more than a century. The nation's first community college was Joliet Junior College in Illinois. Like other community colleges, Joliet offers pre-baccalaureate programs for students planning to transfer to a four-year university, occupational education leading directly to employment, adult education and literacy programs, workforce and workplace development services, and support services to help students

- **Extra Examples:** "I learned three important things in college—to use a library, to memorize quickly and visually, to drop asleep at any time given a horizontal surface and fifteen minutes" (Agnes DeMille). Share with your class the three most important things you learned in college.

- **Research:** A 2007 report released by Gov. Rick Perry's Commission for a College Ready Texas found that half of all Texas college freshmen had to take remedial courses, compared with 28 percent of students nationwide. Have students research the remedial enrollment rates in their college or university and the state as a whole.

succeed (Joliet Junior College, 2005). Following World War II, the GI Bill of Rights provided the opportunity for more people to attend college, and in 1948 a presidential commission report called for the establishment of a network of public community colleges that would charge little or no tuition, serve as cultural centers, be comprehensive in their program offerings, and serve the area in which they were located (Vaughan, 2000).

▼ Joliet Junior College (Illinois) is the oldest two-year college in the United States, having opened its doors in 1901. The bottom photo shows a scene from graduation day at the nation's largest two-year school, Miami Dade College (Florida), which recently expanded into offering four-year degrees, part of a national trend among two-year colleges. Today, Joliet, Miami Dade, and other schools like them fulfill many needs in the competitive world of higher education.

© Joliet Junior College

Image not available due to copyright restrictions

Hundreds of community colleges were opened across the nation during the 1960s, and the number of such institutions has steadily increased since that time as community colleges have responded to the needs of their students and local communities. Community colleges offer a variety of courses, some of which are referred to as "transfer courses," in which students earn credits that are fully transferable to a four-year college or university. Other courses are in technical/occupational programs, which provide formal instruction in fields such as nursing, emergency medical technology, plumbing, carpentry, and computer information technology. Many community colleges are now also offering four-year degrees.

Did you know that community colleges educate about half of the nation's undergraduates? According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2009), there are a total of 1,177 community colleges (including public, private and tribal colleges) in the United States, and these institutions enroll almost 12 million students in credit and noncredit courses. Community college enrollment accounts for nearly 50 percent of all U.S. undergraduates (American Association of Community Colleges, 2009). Nearly one in five Americans (20 percent) who earned a Ph.D. degree in 2008 had attended a community college at some point in time. Among Native Americans, the percentage was even higher: 39 percent of Native American Ph.D. recipients had attended a community college (*Chronicle of Higher Education,* 2010).

Who benefits most from community colleges? Community colleges provide significant educational opportunities to students across lines of income, gender, and race/ethnicity. Because community colleges are more affordable, with an average of about one-half the tuition and fees of the typical four-year college, more students are able to take advantage of the educational

opportunities provided in their community. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2009), most students receive financial aid to help meet the $2,402 average annual tuition for public community colleges. Women make up a slight majority (58 percent) of community college students, and for working women and mothers of young children, these schools provide a unique opportunity to attend classes on a part-time basis as their schedule permits. Men also benefit from flexible scheduling because they can work part time or full time while enrolled in school. About 60 percent of all community college students are enrolled part time, while 40 percent are full-time students (taking 12 or more credit hours each semester).

One of the greatest challenges facing community colleges today is money. Across the nation, state and local governments struggling to balance their budgets have slashed funding for community colleges. Many people are hopeful that the Obama administration's American Graduation Initiative will strengthen community colleges and offer greater opportunities for students to achieve their educational goals. Of course, limited resources are a problem not only for community colleges but also for many four-year colleges and universities.

Opportunities and Challenges in Four-Year Colleges and Universities

More than ten million students attend public or private four-year colleges or universities in the United States. Whereas community colleges award certificates and associate degrees, four-year institutions offer a variety of degrees, including the bachelor's degree, master's degree, and the doctorate, the highest degree awarded. Some also award professional degrees in fields such as law or medicine. According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, providing a liberal education is the goal of many institutions of higher education. Liberal education is a philosophy of education that aims to empower individuals, liberate the mind from ignorance, and cultivate social responsibility. For this reason, four-year schools typically offer a general education curriculum that gives students exposure to multiple disciplines and ways of knowing, along with more in-depth study (known as a "major") in at least one area of concentration.

Having a liberal education provides opportunities for students in that it offers them a diversity of ideas and experiences that will help them not only in a career but also in their interpersonal relationships and civic engagements. Today, it is increasingly important for people to acquire education beyond the high school level because the demand for college-educated workers has risen faster than the supply. Average earnings of college graduates are much higher than those of persons with only a high school diploma. However, many challenges are faced by four-year institutions, including the cost of higher education, problems with students completing a degree program in a reasonable time frame, racial and ethnic differences in enrollment, and lack of faculty diversity. We now turn to the key challenges in higher education.

The High Cost of a College Education

What does a college education cost? According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2009), the average tuition and fees per year at a public four-year institution are $5,950, as compared to $21,588 at a private four-year institution. Average tuition and fees per year at a public two-year institution are $2,063. Although public institutions such as community colleges and state colleges and universities typically have lower tuition and overall costs—because they are funded primarily by tax dollars—than private colleges have, the cost of attending public institutions has increased over the past decade. According to some social analysts, a college education is a bargain. However, other analysts believe that the high cost of a college education reproduces the existing class system: Students who lack money may be denied access to higher education, and those who are able to attend college tend to receive different types of education based on their ability to pay. For example, a community college student who receives an associate's degree or completes a certificate program may be prepared for a position in the middle of the occupational status range, such as a dental assistant, computer programmer, or auto mechanic (Gilbert, 2008). In contrast, university graduates with four-year degrees are more likely to find initial employment with firms where they stand a chance of being promoted to high-level management and executive positions.

- **Research:** "Faced with rising costs, decreased funding and laws in many states designed to keep public universities from hiking up tuition, many state school systems are making up for budget shortfalls by tacking on fees for everything from 'technology' to 'energy.' In some cases, these fees amount to several times a school's base tuition. Meanwhile, the average cost to attend a public school increased 47% between 2000 and 2007 (adjusted for inflation) according to the College Board" (*Time,* 9/2008). Have students discuss the fee situation at your college or university.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

▲ Soaring costs of both public and private institutions of higher education are a pressing problem for today's college students and their parents. What factors have contributed to the higher overall costs of obtaining a college degree?

Although higher education may be a source of upward mobility for talented young people from poor families, the U.S. system of higher education is sufficiently stratified that it may also reproduce the existing class structure (Gilbert, 2008). However, with the twenty-first-century global economy and a rapidly changing U.S. job market, many analysts suggest that a college education is worth what it costs because educational attainment plays an important role in income: "The higher their education level, the more that adults' household incomes have risen over the past four decades; within each level, married adults have seen larger gains than unmarried adults" (Fry and Cohn, 2010: 3). In other words, higher educational attainment is associated with higher earnings on average. In 2007 high school graduates earned about $27,000, while those with a bachelor's degree earned about $47,000. Median earnings for a worker with a bachelor's degree were 74 percent higher than median earnings for a worker with a high school diploma alone. Median earnings for an advanced degree were 31 percent

higher than median earnings for a bachelor's degree (Crissey, 2009).

Given the necessity of higher education in the twenty-first century, is any financial assistance on the way? In 2010 the Obama administration passed a student-loan bill to aid colleges and students. The legislation is designed to "cut out the middle person" by ending the bank-based system of distributing federally subsidized student loans and instead have the Department of Education give loan money directly to colleges and their students. With the savings from this approach, more money is to be put into the Pell Grant program. Unlike a loan, a federal Pell Grant does not have to be repaid. The maximum award for 2010–2011 was $5,500, but not all students were eligible for this amount. The new legislation also provides for additional assistance to historically black colleges in an effort to help more low-income students enroll and succeed in college (Basken, 2010). Since the student-loan bill was largely overshadowed by the passage of a new health care bill, many questions remain about the timeline for implementing changes in student loans and about the possible long-term effects of this bill on students and the colleges they attend.

Racial and Ethnic Differences in Enrollment

How does college enrollment differ by race and ethnicity? People of color (who are more likely than the average white student to be from lower-income families) are underrepresented in higher education. However, increases in minority enrollment have occurred over the past three decades. Latina/o enrollment as a percentage of total college enrollment increased from about 7.7 percent to 14.1 percent between 1995 and 2008 (*Chronicle of Higher Education,* 2009: 8). Even so, Latinos/as are underrepresented in higher education: Today, persons who self-identify as Hispanic or Latino/a account for 15.4 percent of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

African Americans accounted for 14 percent of undergraduate college student enrollment in 2008, but gender differences are evident in enrollment: African American women accounted for 15.5 percent of all college students in 2008 while African American men made up only 12 percent

• **U.S. Census:** There has been an increase in high school graduation rates for blacks in the past twenty years, but there has been no change for whites. At the same time, there has been an increase in college enrollment of high school graduates for blacks and whites, but significant differences remain. Have students conduct more research on college enrollment at **census.gov.**

• **Research:** "For a second straight year, SAT scores for the most recent high school graduating class remained at the lowest level in nearly a decade, a trend attributed to a record number of students now taking the test. Minority students accounted for 40% of test-takers, and 36% were the first in their families to attend college. Nearly one in seven had a low enough family income to take the test for free" (*Time,* 8/2008).

(*Chronicle of Higher Education,* 2009). Native American enrollment rates have remained stagnant at about 0.8 percent from the 1970s to 2009; however, two-year community colleges—known as tribal colleges—on reservations have grown in number and experienced an increase in student enrollment. Founded to overcome racism experienced by Native American students in traditional four-year colleges and to shrink the high dropout rate among Native American college students, there are now 31 colleges chartered and run by the Native American nations (American Association of Community Colleges, 2009). Unlike other community colleges, however, the tribal colleges receive no funding from state and local governments and, as a result, are often short of funds to fulfill their academic mission. But for most Native Americans residing on reservations, these schools provide the best hope for attaining a higher education.

The proportionately low number of people of color enrolled in colleges and universities is reflected in the educational achievement of people age 25 and over, as shown in the "Census Profiles" feature. If we focus on persons who receive doctorate degrees, the underrepresentation of persons of color is even more striking. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2009: 16), of the 60,616 doctoral degrees conferred in the 2006–2007 academic year, African Americans earned slightly less than 6 percent (3,452 degrees), Hispanics earned 3 percent (1,872), and Native Americans/American Indians earned .004 percent (232). White (non-Hispanics) earned 31,355 Ph.D. degrees, or 52 percent of the total number of degrees awarded.

At all levels of formal education in the United States, some schools are operated by the government (primarily by state and local governments), and others are run by various types of nongovernmental entities. In the private sector, some of the schools either were founded by or are operated by religious organizations. By way of example, some of the best-known private universities in this country were initially run by religious groups that sought to integrate the principles of education with the teaching of the religious and moral beliefs of their group. Consequently, there is an overlap between education and religion in a variety of academic institutions at all levels. To gain a better understanding of how sociologists systematically examine religion in

census profiles

Educational Achievement of Persons Age 25 and Over

The Census Bureau asks people 25 years old and over to indicate the highest degree or level of schooling they have completed. Sixteen categories, ranging from "no schooling completed" to "doctorate degree," are set forth as responses on the form that is used; however, we are looking only at the categories of high school graduate and above. As shown below, census data reflect that the highest levels of educational attainment are held by Asian Americans, followed by non-Hispanic white respondents. For these statistics to change significantly, greater educational opportunities and more-affordable higher education would need to be readily available to African Americans and Latinos/as, who historically have experienced racial discrimination and inadequately funded public schools with high dropout rates and low high school graduation rates.

	White	African American	Asian American	Latino/a
High school graduate	31.8%	35.6%	16.7%	28.4%
Some college but no degree	16.9%	19.0%	12.6%	12.7%
Associate degree	9.0%	7.7%	7.1%	5.9%
Bachelor's degree	18.6%	12.6%	29.2%	8.8%
Advanced degree	9.8%	5.8%	19.8%	3.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

society, let's first look at religion from a historical perspective.

Religion in Historical Perspective

Religion is a social institution composed of a unified system of beliefs, symbols, and rituals—based on some sacred or supernatural realm—that guides human behavior, gives meaning to life, and unites believers into a community. For many people, religious beliefs provide the answers for seemingly unanswerable questions about the meaning of life and death.

Religion and the Meaning of Life

Religion seeks to answer important questions such as why we exist, why people suffer and die, and what happens when we die. Whereas science and medicine typically rely on existing scientific evidence to respond to these questions, religion seeks to explain suffering, death, and injustice in the realm of the sacred. According to Emile Durkheim, **sacred refers to those aspects of life that are extraordinary or supernatural**—in other words, those things that are set apart as "holy." People feel a sense of awe, reverence, deep respect, or fear for that which is considered sacred. Across cultures and in different eras, many things have been considered sacred, including invisible gods, spirits, specific animals or trees, altars, crosses, holy books, and special words or songs that only the initiated could speak or sing (Collins, 1982). Those things that people do not set apart as sacred are referred to as **profane—the everyday, secular or "worldly" aspects of life** (Collins, 1982). Thus, whereas sacred beliefs are rooted in the holy or supernatural, secular beliefs have their foundation in scientific knowledge or everyday explanations. In the debate between creationists and evolutionists, for example, advocates of creationism view it as a belief founded in sacred (Biblical) teachings, whereas advocates of evolutionism assert that their beliefs are based on provable scientific facts.

In addition to beliefs, religion also comprises symbols and rituals. According to the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1966), religion is a set of cultural symbols that establishes powerful and pervasive moods and motivations to help people interpret the meaning of life and establish a direction for their behavior. People often act out their religious beliefs in the form of *rituals—regularly repeated and carefully prescribed forms of behaviors that symbolize a cherished value or belief* (Kurtz, 1995). Rituals range from songs and prayers to offerings and sacrifices that worship or praise a supernatural being, an ideal, or a set of supernatural principles. For example, Muslims bow toward Mecca, the holy city of Islam, five times a day at fixed times to pray to God, whereas Christians participate in the celebration of communion (or the "Lord's Supper") to commemorate the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Rituals differ from everyday actions in that they involve very strictly determined behavior. The rituals involved in praying or in observing communion are carefully orchestrated and must be followed with precision. According to the sociologist Randall Collins (1982: 34), "In rituals, it is the forms that count. Saying prayers, singing a hymn, performing a primitive sacrifice or a dance, marching in a procession, kneeling before an idol or making the sign of the cross—in these, the action must be done the right way."

Categories of Religion Although it is difficult to establish exactly when religious rituals first began, anthropologists have concluded that all known groups over the past 100,000 years have had some form of religion (Haviland, 2002). Religions have been classified into four main categories based on their dominant belief: simple supernaturalism, animism, theism, and transcendent idealism. (▶ Map 12.2 shows the original locations of the world's major religions.) In very simple preindustrial societies, religion often takes the form of *simple supernaturalism—the belief that supernatural forces affect people's lives either positively or negatively.* This type of religion does not acknowledge specific gods or supernatural spirits but focuses instead on impersonal forces that may exist in people

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religion a system of beliefs, symbols, and rituals, based on some sacred or supernatural realm, that guides human behavior, gives meaning to life, and unites believers into a community.

sacred those aspects of life that are extraordinary or supernatural.

profane the everyday, secular, or "worldly" aspects of life.

- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to write in class for ten minutes answering these questions: What contemporary religious rituals can you describe? How do religious rituals differ from other rituals in our everyday activities?
- **Extra Examples:** Have students brainstorm some nonreligious rituals (getting dressed, eating meals, watching a sport, etc.) to contrast with religious ones.

- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss Durkheim's contribution to our knowledge about religion. How did his views on religion compare with his ideas about education? "A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them" (Emile Durkheim).

▲ One of the rituals in most religions is the identification of a holy place. For Jews, one such place is the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Buddhists might travel to the Mahaparinirvan Stupa, a shrine in India. For Muslims, an example of a holy place is the Blue Mosque in Turkey. Historical Native Americans believed in the ritual of creating burial mounds. And for Christians, Bethlehem is a historic pilgrimage.

or natural objects. By contrast, *animism* **is the belief that plants, animals, or other elements of the natural world are endowed with spirits or life forces having an impact on events in society.** Animism is identified with early hunting and gathering societies and with many Native American societies, in which everyday life was not separated from the elements of the natural world (Albanese, 2007).

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **IRM:** Internet Activities: A number of websites are provided that your students could use to learn more about the religion of Islam.
- **Global Perspective:** "The Japanese concept of the divinity of the Emperor is often misunderstood by Westerners. . . . When the Emperor gave up his divinity on the orders of the USA, in the

Imperial rescript of January 1, 1946, he in fact gave up nothing that he had ever had, but simply restated an earlier traditional set of beliefs about the Imperial family" (BBC). Have students research Shinto beliefs and practices.
- **Recent Events:** Have students discuss the following comments from former President George W. Bush on the teaching of
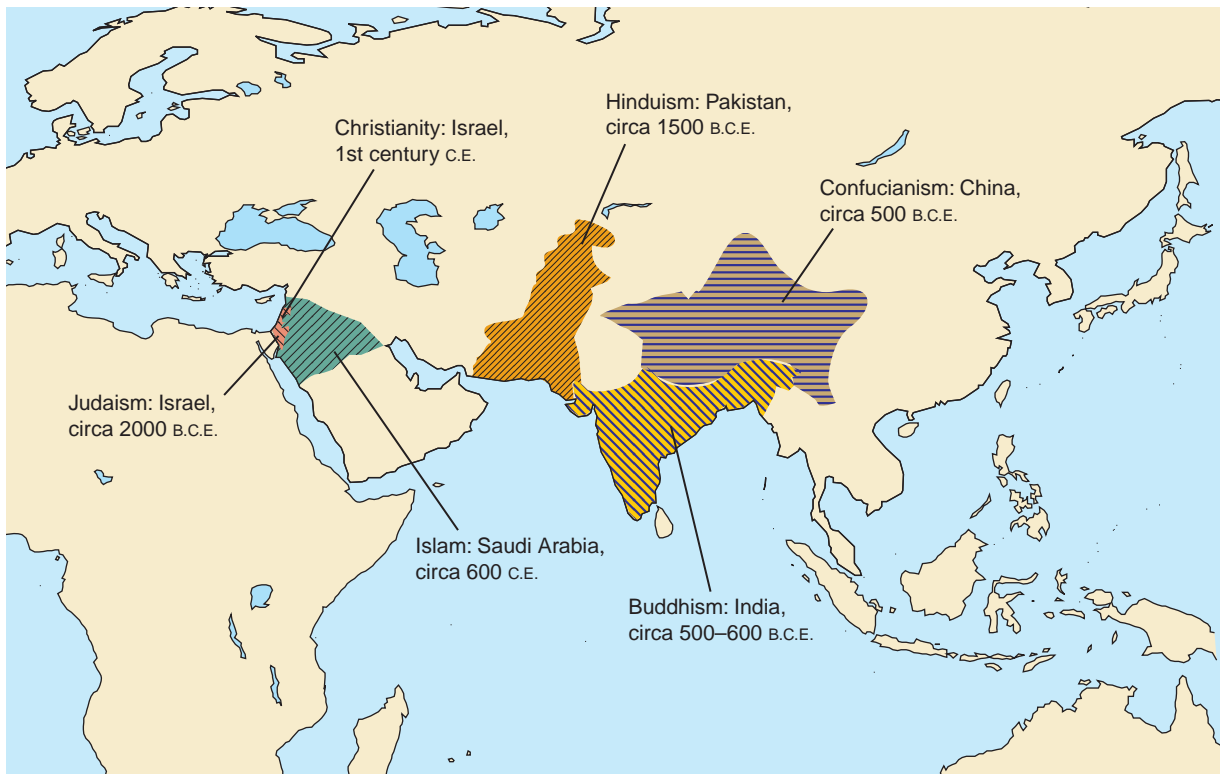
▲ **MAP 12.2** ORIGINAL LOCATIONS OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR RELIGIONS

The third category of religion is *theism*—a belief in a god or gods. Horticultural societies were among the first to practice *monotheism*—a belief in a single, supreme being or god who is responsible for significant events such as the creation of the world. Three of the major world religions—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—are monotheistic. By contrast, Shinto and a number of indigenous religions of Africa are forms of *polytheism*—a belief in more than one god (see ■ Table 12.2). The fourth category of religion, transcendent idealism, is *nontheistic* because it does not focus on worship of a god or gods. *Transcendent idealism* is a belief in sacred principles of thought and conduct. Principles such as truth, justice, affirmation of life, and tolerance for others are central tenets of transcendent idealists, who seek an elevated state of consciousness in which they can fulfill their true potential.

Religion and Scientific Explanations

During the Industrial Revolution, scientific explanations began to compete with religious views of life. Rapid growth in scientific and technological knowledge gave rise to the idea that science would ultimately answer questions that previously had been in the realm of religion. Science is the accumulated knowledge of the physical world that is systematically obtained through observation, experimentation, and other scientific methods. Many scholars believed that increases in scientific knowledge would result in *secularization—the process by which religious beliefs, practices, and institutions lose their significance in sectors of society and culture* (Berger, 1967). Secularization involves a decline of religion in everyday life and

animism the belief that plants, animals, or other elements of the natural world are endowed with spirits or life forces having an effect on events in society.

secularization the process by which religious beliefs, practices, and institutions lose their significance in sectors of society and culture.

intelligent design in schools: "Both sides ought to be properly taught . . . so people can understand what the debate is about," Bush said, according to an official transcript of the session. Bush added: "Part of education is to expose people to different schools of thought. . . . You're asking me whether or not people ought to be exposed to different ideas, and the answer is yes."

• **Historical Perspective:** "I think what I and most other sociologists of religion wrote in the 1960s about secularization was a mistake. Our underlying argument was that secularization and modernity go hand in hand. With more modernization comes more secularization. It wasn't a crazy theory. There was some evidence for it. But I think it's basically wrong. Most of the world today is certainly not secular. It's very religious" (Peter Berger, 1997).

table 12.2

Major World Religions

		Current Followers	Founder/Date	Beliefs
	Christianity	1.7 billion	Jesus—1st century C.E.	Jesus is the Son of God. Through good moral and religious behavior (and/or God's grace), people achieve eternal life with God.
	Islam	1 billion	Muhammad—ca. 600 C.E.	Muhammad received the Qur'an (scriptures) from God. On Judgment Day, believers who have submitted to God's will, as revealed in the Qur'an, will go to an eternal Garden of Eden.
	Hinduism	719 million	No specific founder —ca. 1500 B.C.E.	Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preserver), and Shiva (destroyer) are divine. Union with ultimate reality and escape from eternal reincarnation are achieved through yoga, adherence to scripture, and devotion.
	Buddhism	309 million	Siddhartha Gautama —500 to 600 B.C.E.	Through meditation and adherence to the Eight-Fold Path (correct thought and, behavior) people can free themselves from desire and suffering, escape the cycle of eternal rebirth, and achieve nirvana (enlightenment).
	Judaism	18 million	Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—ca. 2000 B.C.E.	God's nature and will are revealed in the Torah (Hebrew scripture) and in His intervention in history. God has established a covenant with the people of Israel, who are called to a life of holiness, justice, mercy, and fidelity to God's law.
	Confucianism	5.9 million	K'ung Fu-Tzu (Confucius) —ca. 500 B.C.E.	The sayings of Confucius (collected in the Analects) stress the role of virtue and order in the relationships among individuals, their families, and society.

a corresponding increase in organizations that are highly bureaucratized, fragmented, and impersonal (Chalfant, Beckley, and Palmer, 1994).

In the United States, some people argue that science and technology have overshadowed religion, but others point to the resurgence of religious beliefs and an unprecedented development of alternative religions in recent years (Kosmin and Lachman, 1993; Roof, 1993; Singer with Lalich, 1995). The issue of whether religion or scientific explanations best explain various aspects of social life (such as when a person becomes a "human being" or when a person dies) is not limited to the teachings of schools and religious organizations: Members of the contemporary media are also key players in the framing of religion and scientific debates, and journalists may influence how we view a number of key issues (see the Framing Religion in the Media box).

Sociological Perspectives on Religion

According to the sociologist Meredith B. McGuire (2002), religion as a social institution is a powerful, deeply felt, and influential force in human society. Sociologists study the social institution of religion because of the importance religion holds for many people; they also want to know more about the influence of religion on society, and vice versa (McGuire, 2002).

The major sociological perspectives have different outlooks on the relationship between religion and society. Functionalists typically emphasize the ways in which religious beliefs and rituals can bind people together. Conflict explanations suggest that religion can be a source of false consciousness in society. Symbolic interactionists focus on the meanings that people give to religion in their everyday life.

- **Table Note:** Ask your students if any of them would like to add to the information contained in the Major World Religions table.
- **For Discussion:** *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty,* by David Myers, points out that "We now have, as average Americans, doubled real incomes . . . we also have less happiness, more depression, and more fragile relationships. . . ." How well do

your students believe that the institution of religion is working in our culture?
- **Extra Examples:** Have students browse and discuss information on the Immanent Frame blog. This is a collective academic blog on secularism, religion, and the public sphere, and includes contributions from a number of leading scholars in the humanities and social sciences (**http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif**).

Functionalist Perspectives on Religion

Emile Durkheim was one of the first sociologists to emphasize that religion is essential to the maintenance of society. He suggested that religion is a cultural universal found in all societies because it meets basic human needs and serves important societal functions.

For Durkheim, the central feature of all religions is the presence of sacred beliefs and rituals that bind people together in a collectivity. In his studies of the religion of the Australian aborigines, for example, Durkheim found that each clan had established its own sacred totem, which included kangaroos, trees, rivers, rock formations, and other animals or natural creations. To clan members, their totem was sacred; it symbolized some unique quality of their clan. People developed a feeling of unity by performing ritual dances around their totem, which caused them to abandon individual self-interest. Durkheim suggested that the correct performance of the ritual gives rise to religious conviction. Religious beliefs and rituals are *collective representations*—group-held meanings that express something important about the group itself (McGuire, 2002). Because of the intertwining of group consciousness and society, functionalists suggest that religion has three important functions in any society:

1. *Meaning and purpose.* Religion offers meaning for the human experience. Some events create a profound sense of loss on both an individual basis (such as injustice, suffering, and the death of a loved one) and a group basis (such as famine, earthquake, economic depression, or subjugation by an enemy). Inequality may cause people to wonder why their own situation is no better than it is. Most religions offer explanations for these concerns. Explanations may differ from one religion to another, yet each tells the individual or group that life is part of a larger system of order in the universe (McGuire, 2002). Some (but not all) religions even offer hope of an afterlife for persons who follow the religion's tenets of morality in this life. Such beliefs help make injustices in this life easier to endure.

2. *Social cohesion and a sense of belonging.* Religious teachings and practices, by emphasizing shared symbolism, help promote social cohesion. An example is the Christian ritual of communion, which not only commemorates a historical event but also allows followers to participate in the unity ("communion") of themselves with other believers (McGuire, 2002). All religions have some form of shared experiences that rekindle the group's consciousness of its own unity.

3. *Social control and support for the government.* All societies attempt to maintain social control through systems of rewards and punishments. Sacred symbols and beliefs establish powerful, pervasive, long-lasting motivations based on the concept of a general order of existence. In other words, if individuals consider themselves to be part of a larger order that holds the ultimate meaning in life, they will feel bound to one another (and past and future generations) in a way that otherwise might not be possible (McGuire, 2002).

Religion also helps maintain social control in society by conferring supernatural legitimacy on the norms and laws of society. In some societies, social control occurs as a result of direct collusion between the dominant classes and the dominant religious organizations.

In the United States, the separation of church and state reduces religious legitimation of political power. Nevertheless, political leaders often use religion to justify their decisions, stating that they have prayed for guidance in deciding what to do (McGuire, 2002). This informal relationship between religion and the state has been referred to as *civil religion*—the set of beliefs, rituals, and symbols that makes sacred the values of the society and places the nation in the context of the ultimate system of meaning. Civil religion is not tied to any one denomination or religious group; it has an identity all its own. For example, many civil ceremonies in the United States have a marked religious quality. National values are celebrated on "high holy days" such as Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. Political inaugurations and courtroom trials both require people to place their hand on a Bible while

> **civil religion** the set of beliefs, rituals, and symbols that makes sacred the values of the society and places the nation in the context of the ultimate system of meaning.

- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss the following: "Religion is dangerous, it breeds hatred and idiocy. It is our job to advance humanity's knowledge by winnowing out the errors of past generations and finding deeper understanding of reality. There is no wisdom in our dogmas just self-satisfied ignorance. We find truth only in science, looking at the world with fresh eyes and a questioning mind" (P. Z. Myers, a biologist at the University of Minnesota at Morris and a columnist for *Seed* magazine).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Historical Perspective:** According to an August 2007 poll by the Pew Forum and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, the vast majority (69 percent) of Americans agree that it is

framing religion in the media

Shaping the Intersections of Science and Religion

> After religious teachers accomplish the refining process indicated, they will surely recognize with joy that true religion has been ennobled and made more profound by scientific knowledge.
>> —Albert Einstein, a theoretical physicist known for formulating the theory of relativity (qtd. in religioustolerance.org, 2005)

> Science is almost totally incompatible with religion.
>> —Peter Atkins, a chemist at the University of Oxford (qtd. in religioustolerance.org, 2005)

As the statements by these two well-known scientists show, a lack of consensus exists regarding the relationship between science and religion. However, members of the media are often called upon to write about situations in which science and religion apparently intersect in societies. When these events occur, many print and electronic journalists use specific types of framing to shape their discussion of the intersections of science and religion. Theology professor Jame Schaefer (2005) has identified several ways that the media might approach this topic, and the following discussion is a modification of three of those approaches.

Conflict Framing

According to Schaefer (2005), "The image of conflict between science and religion is conventional in the media today. Coverage of a story is more dramatic when extreme views are highlighted while more subtle positions go unreported." When this type of framing is used by the media, experts are often carefully chosen from widely divergent viewpoints so that extreme viewpoints will be highlighted for readers and viewers. The result is often a form of framing that emphasizes hostility toward religion or toward science and technology. An example of conflict framing is stories about schools teaching evolution versus teaching creationism.

Conflation Framing

When conflation framing is employed by the media, it becomes difficult to distinguish between religion and science as distinct human endeavors (Schaefer, 2005). Conflation exists when two things are combined into one. An example that Schaefer (2005: 220) provides for this type of framing is the "practice of attributing to God's activity natural phenomena that cannot be explained scientifically." In other words, if there is not a ready scientific explanation for a natural or social phenomenon that occurs, it may be described as supernatural or within the realm of God's doing, not that of human beings. When the media rush to a Catholic church to describe people who are watching a portrait of the Virgin Mary that appears to be weeping or bleeding, some journalists explain this phenomenon with a combination of religious and scientific explanations. For example, the occurrence may be described by onlookers as an act of God, but the weeping or bleeding may also be attributed to environmental factors such as stains on the artwork or the way in which light and shadows at different times of the year affect paintings in the church. Journalists who combine religious and scientific explanations of phenomenon such as the "bleeding Virgin" tend to conflate religion and science for media audiences.

Contrast Framing

Although media framing based on conflict and media framing based on conflation both suggest that religion and science

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swearing to do their duty or tell the truth, as the case may be. The U.S. flag is the primary sacred object of our civil religion, and the pledge of allegiance has included the phrase "one nation under God" for many years now. U.S. currency bears the inscription "In God We Trust."

Some critics have attempted to eliminate all vestiges of civil religion from public life. However, sociologist Robert Bellah (1967), who has studied civil religion extensively, argues that civil religion is not the same thing as Christianity; rather, it is limited to affirmations that members of any denomination can accept. As McGuire (2002: 203) explains,

> Civil religion is appropriate to actions in the official public sphere, and Christianity (and other religions) are granted full liberty in the sphere of personal piety and voluntary social action. This division of spheres of relevance is particularly important for countries such as the United States, where religious pluralism is both a valued feature of sociological life and a barrier to achieving a unified perspective for decision making.

important for a President to have strong religious beliefs. However, a sizable majority (63 percent) opposes churches endorsing candidates during election campaigns.

- **Box Note:** Use the "Reflect & Analyze" question as a warm-up. Ask students to write down their answer to this question and then share it with others.

▲ The face on this statue of the Virgin Mary, in Caracas, Venezuela, appears to be bleeding. How journalists report on such a phenomenon is determined by which type of framing that they decide to use.

are interrelated, contrast framing is just the opposite. In the words of Schaefer (2005: 221), the contrast approach views religion and science as "totally independent and autonomous ways of knowing. Each is valid only within its clearly defined sphere of inquiry." Contrast framing in the media is based on the assumption that science and religion are too different to be interrelated:

1. Religion and science deal with different types of questions.
2. Religion and science use different languages to explain *reality*.
3. Religion and science tackle different tasks.
4. Religion and science follow different authorities (see also Gilkey, 1993).

According to Schaefer (2005: 221), "Science examines the natural world empirically, while religion addresses the ultimate reality that transcends the empirically known world" (see also Haught, 1995). Today, some people view religion and science as conflicting world views, whereas other individuals view religion and science as indistinguishable.

Does it make a difference how the media frame stories about the intersection of religion and science? How the media frame stories about the intersection of these institutions may influence our views on a number of topics, ranging from the origins of the Earth and human beings to how and when life on Earth might end. Media stories about religion and science may also influence our thinking about moral issues such as what constitutes "right" and "wrong" in our society and who should be allowed to determine policies on key social issues such as abortion, the death penalty, and end-of-life decisions for individuals with a critical illness.

reflect & analyze

Do the media affect your views on these issues? If so, how? If not, why not?

However, Bellah's assertion does not resolve the problem for those who do not believe in the existence of God or for those who believe that *true* religion is trivialized by civil religion.

Conflict Perspectives on Religion

Many functionalists view religion, including civil religion, as serving positive functions in society, but some conflict theorists view religion negatively.

Karl Marx on Religion For Marx, *ideologies*—systematic views of the way the world ought to be—are embodied in religious doctrines and political values (Turner, Beeghley, and Powers, 2002). These ideologies also serve to justify the status quo and retard social change. The capitalist class uses religious ideology as a tool of domination to mislead the workers about their true interests. For this reason, Marx wrote his now famous statement that religion is the "opiate of the masses." People become complacent because they have been taught to believe

• **For Discussion:** Present students with the original context for Karl Marx's statement that religion is the "opiate of the masses." Have them compare the entire statement with common uses of the phrase.

• **Extra Examples:** "Jean-Jacques Rousseau coined the term civil religion to describe what he regarded as the moral and spiritual foundation essential for any modern society. For Rousseau, civil religion was intended simply as a form of social cement, helping to unify the state by providing it with sacred authority" (Answers.com).

© AP Images

▲ Separation of church and state is a constitutional requirement that is often contested by people who believe that religion should be a part of public life. These workers are complying with a federal court order to remove a monument bearing the Ten Commandments from the rotunda of the Alabama State Judicial Building.

in an afterlife in which they will be rewarded for their suffering and misery in this life. Although these religious teachings soothe the masses' distress, any relief is illusory. Religion unites people under a "false consciousness" that they share common interests with members of the dominant class (Roberts, 2004).

Max Weber on Religion   Whereas Marx believed that religion retarded social change, Weber argued just the opposite. For Weber, religion could be a catalyst to produce social change. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1976/1904–1905), Weber asserted that the religious teachings of John Calvin were directly related to the rise of capitalism. Calvin emphasized the doctrine of *predestination*—the belief that, even before they are born, all people are divided into two groups, the saved and the damned, and only God knows who will go to heaven (the elect) and who will go to hell. Because people cannot know whether they will be saved, they tend to look for earthly signs that they are among the elect. According to the Protestant ethic, those who have faith, perform good works, and achieve economic success are more likely to be among the chosen of God. As a result, people work hard, save their money, and do not spend it on worldly frivolity; instead, they reinvest it in their land, equipment, and labor (Chalfant, Beckley, and Palmer, 1994).

The spirit of capitalism grew in the fertile soil of the Protestant ethic. Even as people worked ever harder to prove their religious piety, structural conditions in Europe led to the Industrial Revolution, free markets, and the commercialization of the economy—developments that worked hand in hand with Calvinist religious teachings. From this viewpoint, wealth was an unintended consequence of religious piety and hard work. With the contemporary secularizing influence of wealth, people often think of wealth and material possessions as the major (or only) reason to work. Although it is no longer referred to as the "Protestant ethic," many people still refer to the "work ethic" in somewhat the same manner that Weber did. For example, political and business leaders in the United States often claim that "the work ethic is dead."

Like Marx, Weber was acutely aware that religion could reinforce existing social arrangements, especially the stratification system. The wealthy can use religion to justify their power and privilege: It is a sign of God's approval of their hard work and morality (McGuire, 2002). As for the poor, if they work hard and live a moral life, they will be richly rewarded in another life.

From a conflict perspective, religion tends to promote conflict between groups and societies. According to conflict theorists, conflict may be *between* religious groups (for example, anti-Semitism), *within* a religious group (for example, when a splinter group leaves an existing denomination), or between a religious group and the *larger society* (for example, the conflict over religion in the classroom). Conflict theorists assert that in attempting to provide meaning and purpose in life while at the same time promoting the status quo, religion is used by the dominant classes to impose their own control over society and its resources (McGuire, 2002). Many feminists object to the patriarchal nature of most religions; some advocate a break from traditional religions, whereas others seek to reform

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- **Extra Examples:** According to Weber, Protestantism contributed to the growth of capitalism in significant ways. Outline the basics of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* for your students, helping them to see the interactive effect that religion and economy have on each other.
- **Historical Perspective:** "The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the disenchantment of the world. Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations. It is not accidental that our greatest art is intimate and not monumental" (Max Weber).

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▲ According to Marx and Weber, religion serves to reinforce social stratification in a society. For example, according to Hindu belief, a person's social position in his or her current life is a result of behavior in a former life.

religious language, symbols, and rituals to eliminate the elements of patriarchy.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives on Religion

Thus far, we have been looking at religion primarily from a macrolevel perspective. Symbolic interactionists focus their attention on a microlevel analysis that examines the meanings that people give to religion in their everyday life.

Religion as a Reference Group   For many people, religion serves as a reference group to help them define themselves. For example, religious symbols have meaning for large bodies of people. The Star of David holds special significance for Jews, just as the crescent moon and star do for Muslims and the cross does for Christians. For individuals as well, a symbol may have a certain meaning beyond that shared by the group. For instance, a symbol given to a child may have special meaning when he or she grows up

and faces war or other crises. It may not only remind the adult of a religious belief but also create a feeling of closeness with a relative who is now deceased. It has been said that the symbolism of religion is so very powerful because it "expresses the essential facts of our human existence" (Collins, 1982: 37).

Her Religion and His Religion   Early feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1976/1923) believed that "men's religion" taught people to submit and obey rather than to think about and realistically confront situations. Consequently, she asserted, the monopolization of religious thoughts and doctrines by men contributed to intolerance and the subordination of women. Along with other feminist thinkers, Gilman concluded that "God the Mother" images could be useful as a means of encouraging people to be more cooperative and compassionate, rather than competitive and violent.

Not all people interpret religion in the same way. In virtually all religions, women have much less influence in establishing social definitions of

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Active Learning:** "[F]or limited purposes only, let me define religion as a set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence" (R. N. Bellah). Have students rephrase this statement in their own words.

appropriate gender roles both within the religious community and in the larger community. Therefore, women and men may belong to the same religious group, but their individual religion will not necessarily be a carbon copy of the group's entire system of beliefs. In fact, according to McGuire (2002), women's versions of a certain religion probably differ markedly from men's versions.

Religious symbolism and language typically create a social definition of the roles of men and women. For example, religious symbolism may depict the higher deities as male and the lower deities as female. Sometimes, females are depicted as negative, or evil, spiritual forces. For instance, the Hindu goddess Kali represents men's eternal battle against the evils of materialism (Daly, 1973). Historically, language has defined women as being nonexistent in the world's major religions. Phrases such as "for all men" in Catholic and Episcopal services gradually have been changed to "for all"; however, some churches retain the traditional liturgy. Although there has been resistance, especially by women, to some of the terms, inclusive language is less common than older male terms for God.

The Concept Quick Review summarizes the major sociological perspectives on education and religion.

Types of Religious Organization

Religious groups vary widely in their organizational structure. Although some groups are large and somewhat bureaucratically organized, others are small and have a relatively informal authority structure. Some require total commitment from their members; others expect members to have only a partial commitment. Sociologists have developed typologies or ideal types of religious organization to enable them to study a wide variety of religious groups. The most common categorization includes four types: ecclesia, church, sect, and cult.

Ecclesia

Ecclesia is a religious organization that is so integrated into the dominant culture that it claims as its membership all members of a society. Membership in the ecclesia occurs as a result of being born into the society rather than by any conscious decision on the part of individual members. The linkages between the social institutions of religion and government are often very strong in such societies. Although no true ecclesia exists in the contemporary world, the Anglican church (the official church of England), the Lutheran church in Sweden and Denmark, the Catholic church in Spain, and Islam in Iran and Pakistan come fairly close.

The Church–Sect Typology

To help explain the different types of religious organizations found in societies, Ernst Troeltsch (1960/1931) and his teacher, Max Weber (1963/1922), developed a typology that distinguishes between the characteristics of churches and sects (see ■ Table 12.3).

[concept quick review 12.1]

Sociological Perspectives on Education and Religion

	Education	Religion
Functionalist Perspective	One of the most important components of society: Schools teach students not only content but also to put group needs ahead of the individual's.	Sacred beliefs and rituals bind people together and help maintain social control.
Conflict Perspective	Schools perpetuate class, racial–ethnic, and gender inequalities through what they teach to whom.	Religion may be used to justify the status quo (Marx) or to promote social change (Weber).
Symbolic Interactionist Perspective	Labeling and the self-fulfilling prophecy are an example of how students and teachers affect each other as they interpret their interactions.	Religion may serve as a reference group for many people, but because of race, class, and gender, people may experience it differently.

- **For Discussion:** Have the class discuss this question: How does religion contribute to social cohesion and a sense of belonging among people?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** Have students brainstorm about the most striking similarities between religion and education as social institutions. What are the most significant differences?

- **Table Note:** Use the Concept Quick Review to compare and contrast these two important social institutions. Ask students to work in teams to come up with examples for each component.
- **Research:** Many Americans decide to change their religious affiliation at least once in their lives. Indeed, according to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life survey conducted in mid-2007, more than a quarter of U.S. adults have left the faith in which they

table 12.3

Characteristics of Churches and Sects

Characteristic	Church	Sect
Organization	Large, bureaucratic organization, led by a professional clergy	Small, faithful group, with high degree of lay participation
Membership	Open to all; members usually from upper and middle classes	Closely guarded membership, usually from lower classes
Type of Worship	Formal, orderly	Informal, spontaneous
Salvation	Granted by God, as administered by the church	Achieved by moral purity
Attitude Toward Other Institutions and Religions	Tolerant	Intolerant

Unlike an ecclesia, a church is not considered to be a state religion; however, it may still have a powerful influence on political and economic arrangements in society. A **church** **is a large, bureaucratically organized religious organization that tends to seek accommodation with the larger society in order to maintain some degree of control over it.** Church membership is largely based on birth; children of church members are typically baptized as infants and become lifelong members of the church. Older children and adults may choose to join the church, but they are required to go through an extensive training program that culminates in a ceremony similar to the one that infants go through. Leadership is hierarchically arranged, and clergy generally have many years of formal education. Churches have very restrained services that appeal to the intellect rather than the emotions. Religious services are highly ritualized; they are led by clergy who wear robes, enter and exit in a formal processional, administer sacraments, and read services from a prayer book or other standardized liturgical format.

Midway between the church and the sect is a **denomination—a large organized religion characterized by accommodation to society but frequently lacking in the ability or intention to dominate society** (Niebuhr, 1929). Denominations have a trained ministry, and although involvement by lay members is encouraged more than in the church, their participation is usually limited to particular activities, such as readings or prayers. Denominations tend to be more tolerant and less likely than churches to expel or excommunicate members. This form of organization is most likely to thrive in societies characterized by *religious pluralism*—a situation in which many religious groups exist because they have a special appeal to specific segments of the population. Perhaps because of its diversity, the United States has more denominations than any other country. ■ Table 12.4 shows this diversity.

A **sect is a relatively small religious group that has broken away from another religious organization to renew what it views as the original version of the faith.** Unlike churches, sects offer members a more personal religion and an intimate relationship with a supreme being, depicted as taking an active interest in the individual's everyday life. Whereas churches use formalized prayers, often from a prayer book, sects have informal prayers composed at the time they are given. Typically, religious sects appeal to those who might be characterized as lower class, whereas denominations primarily appeal to the middle and

ecclesia a religious organization that is so integrated into the dominant culture that it claims as its membership all members of a society.

church a large, bureaucratically organized religious organization that tends to seek accommodation with the larger society in order to maintain some degree of control over it.

denomination a large, organized religion characterized by accommodation to society but frequently lacking in ability or intention to dominate society.

sect a relatively small religious group that has broken away from another religious organization to renew what it views as the original version of the faith.

table 12.4

Major U.S. Denominations That Self-Identify as Christian

Religious Body	Members	Churches
Roman Catholic Church	69,135,000	18,992
Southern Baptist Convention	16,270,000	43,669
United Methodist Church	8,075,000	34,660
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	5,691,000	12,753
Church of God in Christ[a]	5,500,000	15,300
National Baptist Convention, U.S.A.[a]	5,000,000	9,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	4,851,000	10,519
National Baptist Convention of America[a]	3,500,000	(N/A)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	3,099,000	10,960
Assemblies of God	2,831,000	12,298
African Methodist Episcopal Church[a]	2,500,000	4,174
National Missionary Baptist Convention of America[a]	2,500,000	(N/A)
Progressive National Baptist Convention[a]	2,500,000	2,000
Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod	2,441,000	6,144
Episcopal Church	2,248,000	7,200
Churches of Christ[a]	1,639,000	15,000
Greek Orthodox Church	1,500,000	566
Pentecostal Assemblies of the World[a]	1,500,000	1,750
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	1,440,000	3,260
American Baptist Churches in U.S.A.	1,397,000	5,740
United Church of Christ	1,244,000	5,567
Baptist Bible Fellowship, International[a]	1,200,000	4,500
Christian Churches and Churches of Christ[a]	1,072,000	5,579
Jehovah's Witnesses	1,046,000	12,384

[a]Current data not available/prior data used may no longer be comparable.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

upper-middle classes, and churches focus on the upper classes.

According to the church–sect typology, as members of a sect become more successful economically and socially, their religious organization is also likely to focus more on this world and less on the next. If some members of the sect do not achieve financial success, they may feel left behind as other members and the ministers shift their priorities. Eventually, this process will weaken some organizations, and people will split off to create new, less worldly versions of the group that will be more committed to "keeping the faith." Those who defect to form a new religious organization may start another sect or form a cult (Stark and Bainbridge, 1981).

Cults

A *cult* is a religious group with practices and teachings outside the dominant cultural and religious

- **Discussion Topic:** Have students restate and then evaluate the following observation, drawing on contemporary examples: "The less reasonable a cult is, the more men seek to establish it by force" (Jean-Jacques Rousseau).

- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students make a list of the leadership traits most common among cult leaders. They should provide examples from recent history.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

traditions of a society. Although many people view cults negatively, some major religions (including Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) and some denominations (such as the Mormons) started as cults. Cult leadership is based on charismatic characteristics of the individual, including an unusual ability to form attachments with other people. An example is the religious movement started by Reverend Sun Myung Moon, a Korean electrical engineer who believed that God had revealed to him that Judgment Day was rapidly approaching. Out of this movement, the Unification church, or "Moonies," grew and flourished, recruiting new members through their personal attachments to present members.

Trends in Religion in the United States

As we have seen throughout this chapter, religion in the United States is very diverse. Pluralism and religious freedom are among the cultural values most widely espoused, and no state church or single denomination predominates. As shown in ■ Table 12.5, Protestants constitute the largest religious body in the United States, followed by Roman Catholics, Jews, Eastern Churches, and others.

table 12.5
U.S. Religious Traditions' Membership

Religious Tradition	Percentage of All U.S. Adults
Protestants	51.3
Roman Catholics	23.9
Mormons	1.7
Jews	1.7
Jehovah's Witnesses	0.7
Buddhists	0.7
Orthodox Christians	0.6
Muslims	0.6
Hindus	0.4
Other faiths	1.5
Unaffiliated	16.1
Don't know/no answer	0.6

Source: Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2008.

The rise of a new fundamentalism has occurred at the same time that a number of mainline denominations have been losing membership. Whereas "old" fundamentalism usually appealed to people from lower-income, rural, southern backgrounds, the "new" fundamentalism appears to have a much wider following among persons from all socioeconomic levels, geographical areas, and occupations. Some member of the political elite in Washington have vowed to bring religion "back" into schools and public life. "New-right" fundamentalists have been especially critical of *secular humanism*—a belief in the perfectibility of human beings through their own efforts rather than through a belief in God and a religious conversion. According to fundamentalists, "creeping" secular humanism has been most visible in the public schools, which, instead of offering children a fair and balanced picture, are teaching things that seem to children to prove that their parents' lifestyle and religion are inferior and perhaps irrational (Carter, 1994). The new-right fundamentalists claim that banning the teaching of Christian beliefs in the classroom while teaching things that are contrary to their faith is an infringement on their freedom of religion. Worse yet, they argue, it is the equivalent of establishing an unconstitutional state religion—a secular religion that does not recognize God.

But how might students and teachers who come from very diverse religious and cultural backgrounds feel about religious instruction or organized prayer in public schools? Rick Nelson, a teacher in the Fairfax County, Virginia, public school system, explains his concern about the potential impact of group prayer on students in his classroom:

> I think it really trivializes religion when you try to take such a serious topic with so many different viewpoints and cover it in the public schools. At my school we have teachers and students who are Hindu. They are really devout, but they are not monotheistic. . . . I am not opposed to individual prayer by students. I expect students to pray when I give them a test. They need to do that for my tests. . . . But when there is group prayer . . . who's going to lead the group?

cult a religious group with practices and teachings outside the dominant cultural and religious traditions of a society.

- **Research:** "Protestant Christianity's dominance in the United States has waned in recent years. In fact, a recent public opinion survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life finds that the United States is on the verge of becoming a minority Protestant country for the first time in its history. The number of Americans who report that they are members of Protestant denominations now stands at barely 51%, down from more than 60% in the 1970s and 1980s" (http://religions.pewforum.org/reports).
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss why religious instruction and organized prayer in public schools might be perceived as a threat by various groups, religious and nonreligious, in our society.
- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students rephrase and write an assessment of the following viewpoint: "Humanism was not wrong in thinking that truth, beauty, liberty, and equality are of infinite value, but in thinking that man can get them for himself without grace" (Simone Weil).

And if I had my Hindu students lead the prayer, I will tell you it will disrupt many of my students and their parents. It will disrupt the mission of my school, unfortunately . . . if my students are caused to participate in a group Hindu prayer. (qtd. in CNN, 1994)

As we have seen in this chapter, the debate continues over what should be taught and what practices (such as Bible reading and prayer) should be permitted in public schools.

Education and Religion in the Future

Education and religion are powerful and influential forces because these social institutions instill in

▲ Should prayer be permitted in the classroom? On the school grounds? At school athletic events? Given the diversity of beliefs that U.S. people hold, arguments and court cases over activities such as prayer around the school flagpole will no doubt continue in the future.

individuals the values, beliefs, and knowledge that many people believe are essential for the survival of individuals and entire cultures. Because education and religion are both socializing institutions, children and young people are particularly affected by the ideas that teachers and religious leaders impart to them. Through formal education or schooling, people learn about some aspects of the society in which they live and the dominant culture of which they are a part. In religious groups, individuals of all ages learn about the institutionalized beliefs and rituals of specific organizations that have been established to serve people's religious needs and other purposes.

What will be the future of education in the United States? The answer to this question, particularly in regard to public elementary and secondary schools in this country, is linked to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The purpose of this act is to close the achievement gap between rich and poor students. No Child Left Behind represents the most far-reaching educational reform to be implemented since compulsory education laws were passed early in the twentieth century. Under this law, schools are to be held accountable for students' learning, and specific steps are set forth toward producing a more accountable education system. The law requires states to test every student's progress toward meeting specific standards that were established for the end of each grade. School districts must report students' results to demonstrate that they are making progress toward meeting these standards. Schools that close the education gap will receive additional federal dollars, but schools and districts that do not show adequate progress may lose funding and pupils: Parents may be allowed to move their children from low-performing schools to other schools that meet or exceed their district's educational standards.

In 2007, on the sixth anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act, President George W. Bush and Education Secretary Margaret Spellings issued a statement indicating that across-the-board improvements had occurred in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math scores nationwide. The report concluded that African American and Hispanic students had made significant gains in closing the achievement gap in areas such as reading and mathematics. However, the Bush administration

- **Active Learning:** Divide your class into small groups, and have them discuss these questions: What will be the most significant changes in education in the twenty-first century? What about religion? Make a prediction about future trends—will religion and education become more connected, or will they grow further apart? Next, ask each group to search through the news media for stories that might support their answers.

- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disc also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.

acknowledged that No Child Left Behind had also produced a series of unanticipated problems and that much remained to be done to improve education in this country. More than seventy-five specific suggestions on how to improve teaching, learning, and student performance were made in the report (*New York Times,* 2007a). Among the needed changes were the development of rigorous, voluntary national standards that might more effectively prepare students for success in college and the workplace (whitehouse.gov, 2008). Current problems also exist regarding how states collect data and assess both student and school performance. Other problems are related to the quality of teachers and how effectively they instruct their students. For schools to be able to attract outstanding teachers, the best teachers will need to be more adequately rewarded, and incentives must be offered to encourage good instructors to teach in underperforming schools.

At the bottom line, many critics believe that No Child Left Behind has fundamentally misdefined the problems facing education in this country. They state that schools need more money and more incentives, not more testing of students or teachers. One major criticism of this law is that it does not adequately address the profound educational inequalities that are so prevalent in the United States, particularly with high-spending schools outspending low-spending schools by at least three to one in most states (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

Similarly, colleges and universities face many challenges today, particularly given the major financial constraints that are affecting many institutions. President Obama's American Graduation Initiative, discussed earlier in this chapter, was established to create a community-college challenge fund because these colleges are often underfunded and lack the basic resources they need to improve instruction, build ties with businesses, and adopt other reforms. Under the President's plan, community colleges will receive new competitive grants that will help them develop partnerships with businesses and create career pathways for workers. It will also help schools expand course offerings, provide dual enrollment at high schools and universities, and improve remedial and adult education programs (whitehouse.gov, 2009a). If these measures are implemented, many

more people will have an opportunity to acquire a two-year degree, complete a certificate program lasting six months to a year that provides specific credentials for middle-skill jobs that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree, or acquire sufficient college credits to transfer to a four-year college or university. Making college more affordable and significantly increasing the number of students enrolled in community colleges by 2020 are commendable goals for enhancing education in the United States. What is crucial is the approximately $12-billion price tag, which the President suggests it will cost, to bring about necessary changes in the current system.

At the university level, institutions continue to expand their focus while undergoing strenuous budget cuts coupled with increasing demands to meet the needs of widely diverse student populations. In recent years, budget cuts for higher education were especially harsh in the South and West; however, colleges and universities in the Northeast were not immune to the effects of the nation's economic downturn and the resulting drop in the state tax revenues that fund public higher education (*Chronicle of Higher Education,* 2008). Florida is among the states that have been hardest hit in regard to funding for higher education: Explosive population growth, limited tax revenues, a struggling housing industry, and other types of financial woes have contributed to layoffs and hiring freezes at public institutions. Similarly, California has been undergoing financial turmoil, rapid growth, and demands that colleges and universities strenuously curb hiring and spending.

The tightening of the financial resources available to colleges and universities will lead to even more schools seeking alternative ways to fund their operations. Some will further increase tuition paid by students; others will seek different sources of funding. Some will move beyond the United States to find ways in which they can expand their base of operation. For example, some U.S. universities are expanding their educational operations to emerging nations where demand is high for certain kinds of curricula, such as advanced business and petroleum engineering courses in Qatar and other Middle Eastern countries. One of the major problems, present and future, in colleges and universities is the increasing cost of education for students and the

you can make a difference

Understanding and Tolerating Religious and Cultural Differences

[The small strip of kente cloth that hangs on the marble altar and the flags of a dozen West Indies nations, including Trinidad, Jamaica, and Barbados,] represent all of the people in this parish. It's an opportunity for us to celebrate everyone's culture. You won't find your typical Episcopal church looking like that.

> —Rev. Cannon Peter P. Q. Golden, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, New York (qtd. in Pierre-Pierre, 1997: A11)

One part of the history of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Flatbush, Brooklyn, is etched into its huge stained-glass windows, which tell the story of the prominent descendants of English and Dutch settlers who founded the church. However, the church's more recent history is told in the faces of its parishioners—most of whom are Caribbean immigrants from the West Indies who labor as New York City's taxi drivers, factory workers, accountants, and medical professionals (Pierre-Pierre, 1997).

Traveling only a short distance, we find a growing enclave of Muslims in Brooklyn. It is their wish that people will recognize that Islam shares a great deal with Christianity and Judaism, including the fact that all three believe in one God, are rooted in the same part of the world, and share some holy sites (Sengupta, 1997). Some Muslim adherents also hope that more people in this country will learn greater tolerance toward those who have a different religion and celebrate different holidays. For example, in some years the Islamic holy season, Ramadan, falls at about the same time as Christmas and Hanukkah, but many Muslim children and adults are disparaged by their neighbors because they do not celebrate the same holidays as others. As one person observed, "As Muslims, we have to respect all religions" (Sengupta, 1997: A12). Left unsaid was the belief that other people should do likewise. How can each of us—regardless of our race, color, creed, or national origin—help to bring about greater tolerance of religious diversity in this country? Here is one response to this question, from Huston Smith (1991: 389–390), a historian of religion:

Whether religion is, for us, a good word or bad; whether (if on balance it is a good word) we side with a single religious tradition or to some degree open our arms to all: How do we comport ourselves in a pluralistic world that is riven by ideologies, some sacred, some profane? . . . We listen. . . . If one of the [world's religions] claims us, we begin by listening to it. Not uncritically, for new occasions teach new duties and everything finite is flawed in some respects. Still, we listen to it expectantly, knowing that it houses more truth than can be encompassed in a single lifetime.

But we also listen to the faith of others, including the secularists. We listen first because . . . our times require it. The community today can be no single tradition; it is the planet. Daily, the world grows smaller, leaving understanding the only place where peace can find a home. . . . Those who listen work for peace, a peace built not on ecclesiastical or political hegemonies but on understanding and mutual concern.

Perhaps this is how each of us can make a difference—by *learning* more about our own beliefs and about the diverse denominations and world religions represented in the United States and around the globe, and *listening* to what other people have to say about their own beliefs and religious experiences.

Will religious tolerance increase in the United States? In the world? What steps can you take to help make a difference? Below are a few websites that provide more information about the world's religions:

- The Big Religion Chart
  www.religionfacts.com/big_religion_chart.htm
- BBC's Religion and Ethics pages
  www.bbc.co.uk/religion
- Sacred Destinations
  www.sacred-destinations.com

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part that higher education plays in maintaining and perpetuating social inequality in the larger society.

As we shift our focus to religion, we ask this: What significance will religion have in the future? Religion will continue to be important in the lives of many people. On the one hand, religion may unify people; on the other, it may result in tensions and confrontations among individuals and

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• **Box Note:** Students can use the Big Religion Chart website to compare a religion they are most familiar with to one with which they are less familiar. This can form the basis of a productive writing assignment.

groups. However, one thing appears certain: With the influx of recent immigrants and increasing cultural diversity, religious congregations in the United States in the future will be much more diverse and hold a wider variety of beliefs than did the traditional mainline denominations of the past. In the final analysis, the influence of religion may be felt even by those who claim no religious beliefs of their own. As a result, the debate will continue over what religion is, what it should do, and what its relationship to other social institutions (such as education) should be. All of us should work to gain a better understanding of the wide variety of religions found around the world and the many religious organizations within the United States so that we can have a better understanding of the diverse people who make up our nation and world (see the You Can Make a Difference box).

To conclude with the ideas of the sociologist Lester Kurtz (1995), the task of religious institutions is to tend to spiritual and ethical issues. However, it is difficult to contain the ideas and actions of one social institution within its own domain so that they do not spread into other social institutions. According to Kurtz (1995: 167), "Religion intrudes on all other spheres . . . because its ethics generally apply to all areas of life. A modern society compartmentalizes institutions, but we cannot compartmentalize people." And so it is in the realm of education and religion: Each of these social institutions serves a specific purpose and has its own functions; however, individuals carry their beliefs, values, and attitudes with them as they move from one social institution to another, and this brings about some of the patterns of cooperation and conflict we have examined in this chapter.

chapter review

● **How are the social institutions of education and religion similar?**

Education and religion are powerful and influential forces in society. Both institutions impart values, beliefs, and knowledge considered essential to the social reproduction of individual personalities and entire cultures.

● **What is the primary function of education?**

Education is the social institution responsible for the systematic transmission of knowledge, skills, and cultural values within a formally organized structure.

● **What is the functionalist perspective on education?**

According to functionalists, education has both manifest functions (socialization, transmission of culture, social control, social placement, and change and innovation) and latent functions (keeping young people off the streets and out of the job market, matchmaking and producing social networks, and creating a generation gap).

● **What is the conflict perspective on education?**

From a conflict perspective, education is used to perpetuate class, racial–ethnic, and gender inequalities through tracking, ability grouping, and a hidden curriculum that teaches subordinate groups conformity and obedience.

● **What is the symbolic interactionist perspective on education?**

According to symbolic interactionists, education may be a self-fulfilling prophecy for some students, such that these students come to perform up—or down—to the expectations held for them by teachers.

● **What is religion?**

Religion is a social institution composed of a unified system of beliefs, symbols, and rituals, based on some sacred or supernatural realm, that guides human behavior, gives meaning to life, and unites believers into a community.

● **What is the functionalist perspective on religion?**

According to functionalists, religion has three important functions in any society: (1) providing meaning and purpose to life, (2) promoting social cohesion and a sense of belonging, and (3) providing social control and support for the government.

● **What is the conflict perspective on religion?**

From a conflict perspective, religion can have negative consequences in that the capitalist class uses religion as a tool of domination to mislead workers about their true interests. However, Max Weber believed that religion could be a catalyst for social change.

● **What is the symbolic interactionist perspective on religion?**

Symbolic interactionists examine the meanings that people give to religion and the meanings that they attach to religious symbols in their everyday life.

● **What are the different types of religious organizations?**

Religious organizations can be categorized as ecclesia, churches, denominations, sects, and cults. Some of the world's major religions started off as cults built around a charismatic leader and developed into sects, denominations, and churches. No true ecclesia, or government-sponsored religion, exists in the contemporary world.

key terms

animism 402

church 411

civil religion 405

credentialism 390

cult 412

cultural capital 387

denomination 411

ecclesia 410

education 382

hidden curriculum 389

profane 401

religion 401

sacred 401

sect 411

secularization 403

tracking 388

questions for critical thinking

1. Why does so much controversy exist over what should be taught in U.S. public schools?
2. How are the values and attitudes you learned from your family reflected in your beliefs about education and religion?
3. How would you design a research project to study the effects of civil religion on everyday life? What kind of data would be most accessible?
4. If Durkheim, Marx, and Weber were engaged in a discussion about education and religion, on what topics might they agree? On what topics would they disagree?

turning to video

Watch the CBS video *Teacher Shortage* (running time 1:46), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video explores the effects of teacher layoffs and increases in class sizes that are happening across the country and the $100 billion dollars in federal stimulus funds aimed at education. As you watch the video, think about the changes possibly taking place in the kindergarten through twelfth-grade schools in your area. After you watch the video, consider this question: To what degree do you think the stimulus funds have helped to save teachers' jobs? Explain.

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- Alternatively, you may search by this book's title to locate its complimentary resources.

Politics and the Economy in Global Perspective

Do you think that mainstream TV news is boring? Does the idea of sitting down to watch *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* make you yawn . . . just thinking about it? If so, you're not alone—in fact, this is now the norm among the college-aged demographic. A recent article [notes] that many young adults eschew traditional nightly news for [Jon Stewart's] *The Daily Show,* . . . which proudly bills itself as "the most trusted name in fake news."

Wow. While I'm a huge fan of Comedy Central, I usually tune in to watch something with an inherently comedic purpose—like South Park, Mencia, or the Colbert Report. While Colbert is billed as a blatant mockery of conservative TV pundits, the lines are more blurred when it comes to *The Daily Show*. Yes, it is largely satirical, but I can understand why many might watch the show as a main source of news. While it is based on real news, it is also written by comedy writers, and has ratings in mind—not necessarily the best interests of the American public or young people. . . . Yes, *The Daily Show* is funny. Yes, Jon Stewart is right on the nail with his ironic insight and sarcastic humor. However, it isn't a real news show. . . .

—Katie Stapleton-Paff (2007), a writer for the *Daily of the University of Washington,* describing her concerns about the fact that many people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five use "comedy" news programs as a prime source of information

© AP Photo/Jason DeCrow

▲ **Jon Stewart, host of the extremely popular Comedy Central production *The Daily Show,* parodies mainstream news programming. Many people now watch Stewart's reports instead of watching network news programs. How might comedy news shows affect our perceptions of politics?**

I love the mock interviews, but I never go into the show thinking I'm watching real news. What I see is what I get and in the case of *The Daily Show* I see a funny show that

makes fun of the day's news, much like Jay Leno [of NBC's *Tonight Show*] does in his monologue every night. . . . Fair and balanced news is extremely hard to come by these days and if students can't get fair and balanced as well as entertaining, they'll just stick with what's entertaining.

—Allen, a blogger, responding to the article by Stapleton-Paff

However comedic the show might be, it is important to understand that fiction and comedy have largely been a critique of mainstream society. Just take a look at George Orwell's *Animal Farm.* It's clearly fiction and somewhat comedic but it does raise valid points in the critique of society. *The Daily Show* has managed to do the same in a different manner.

—Jeff, another blogger, stating his point of view regarding the article

There are days when I watch *The Daily Show,* and I kind of chuckle. There are days when I laugh out loud. There are days when I stand up and point to the TV and say, "You're damn right!" . . . The stock-in-trade of *The Daily Show* is hypocrisy, exposing hypocrisy. And nobody else has the guts to do it. They really know how to crystallize an issue on all sides, see the silliness everywhere.

—Hub Brown, chair of the Communications Department at the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and associate professor of journalism at Syracuse University, now refers to himself as a *The Daily Show* "convert" after he began watching the show in response to his students' comments that they greatly preferred it to mainstream news programs (qtd. in Smolkin, 2007).

Chapter Focus Question

What effect do the media have on the perception of people in the United States and other nations regarding politics and the economy?

Even as a major recession continues throughout the world and major changes continue to occur in politics and the economy in the United States, media audiences are drawn to pseudo-news programs and political comedy on television (rather than mainstream media) to learn about current events. And these media audiences are not alone. In recent years, more television viewers have channel-checked away from network news broadcasts and late-night entertainment such as *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *Late Night with David Letterman* to watch satirical shows such as Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report,* both of which are broadcast on cable television's Comedy Central. The shows hosted by Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert have more viewers among men ages eighteen to thirty-four than do any of the network television shows (Carter, 2010). For many individuals, these satirical programs have become an important source of news, as well as entertainment. Interestingly, studies conducted at Indiana University and elsewhere have concluded that these programs are typically as substantive in their political coverage as the broadcast television networks' nightly newscasts are (see Fox, Koloen, and Sahin, 2007). The extent to which television entertainment and "hard news" have become blurred is related to the extent to which our major social institutions of politics and the economy are both reflective of and influenced by a mass media that constitute yet another powerful social institution in our society and around the world.

In twenty-first-century America, the subject of this chapter—the issue of politics and the global economy—is a hot topic for concerned people because we live in an age of discord regarding many decisions that have been made by our country's political and business leaders. Sociologists are concerned about how the social institutions of politics and the economy operate and how the decisions made in these social arenas affect people's everyday lives. In this chapter, we discuss the intertwining nature of contemporary politics, the economy, and the media. Before reading on, test your knowledge of the media by taking the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz.

Politics, Power, and Authority

Politics is the social institution through which power is acquired and exercised by some people and groups. In contemporary societies, the government is the primary political system. *Government* is the formal organization that has the legal and political authority to regulate the relationships among members of a society and between the society and those outside its borders. Some social analysts refer to the government as the *state—the political entity that possesses a legitimate monopoly over the use of force within its territory to achieve its goals.*

Whereas political science focuses primarily on power and its distribution in different types of political systems, *political sociology* is the area of sociology that examines politics and the government. Political sociology primarily focuses on the *social circumstances* of politics and explores how the political arena and its actors are intertwined with social institutions such as the economy, religion, education, and the media. According to the political analyst Michael Parenti (1998: 7–8), many people underrate the significance of politics in daily life:

> Politics is something more than what politicians do when they run for office. Politics is concerned with the struggles that shape social relations within societies and affairs between nations. The taxes and prices we pay and the jobs available to us, the chances that we will live in peace or perish in war, the costs of education and the availability of scholarships, the safety of the airliner or highway we travel on, the quality of the food we eat and the air we breathe, the availability of affordable housing and medical care, the legal protections against racial and sexual discrimination—all the things that directly affect the quality of our lives are influenced in some measure by politics. . . . To say you are not interested in politics, then, is like saying you are not interested in your own well-being.

Using a power–conflict framework for his analysis, Parenti (1998) suggests that the media often distort—either intentionally or unintentionally—the information they provide to citizens. According to Parenti, the media have the power to influence public opinion in a way that favors management over labor, corporations over their critics, affluent whites over subordinate-group members in central cities, political officials over protestors, and free-market capitalism over public-sector development. Parenti's assertion raises an interesting issue about

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- **Quote, Unquote:** "I've always said that in politics, your enemies can't hurt you, but your friends will kill you" (Ann Richards, governor of Texas, 1991–1995). As you introduce the topic of politics, ask your class to talk about what they think this statement means.

- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disc provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint® slides, videos, PowerPoint® and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About the Media?

True	False		
T	**F**	1.	The Internet has displaced newspapers as the number-one source of news in the United States.
T	**F**	2.	No media sources are publicly owned in the United States.
T	**F**	3.	Each person in this country spends, on average, about 3,500 hours per year using media.
T	**F**	4.	Websites are becoming increasingly profitable because visitors often click on ads and purchase products from website sponsors.
T	**F**	5.	Thirty-minute nightly news programs on the major television networks (NBC, CBS, and ABC) typically contain slightly less than 24 minutes of news, and the rest is commercials, promotional announcements, and other non-news items.
T	**F**	6.	Network and cable television channels have been very resistant to providing information through search engines such as Yahoo! News.
T	**F**	7.	Newspapers have been losing subscribers and daily readers over the past decade.
T	**F**	8.	Some analysts believe that "reality" TV shows blur the distinction between "news" and "entertainment."

Answers on page 424.

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the distribution of power in the United States and other high-income nations: Do the media distort information to suit their own interests?

Power and Authority

Power is the ability of persons or groups to achieve their goals despite opposition from others (Weber, 1968/1922). Through the use of persuasion, authority, or force, some people are able to get others to acquiesce to their demands. Consequently, power is a *social relationship* that involves both leaders and followers. Power is also a dimension in the structure of social stratification. Persons in positions of power control valuable resources of society—including wealth, status, comfort, and safety—and are able to direct the actions of others while protecting and enhancing the privileged social position of their class (Domhoff, 2002). For example, the sociologist G. William Domhoff (2002) argues that the media tend to reflect "the biases of those with access to them—corporate leaders, government officials, and policy experts." However, although Domhoff believes the media can amplify the message of powerful people and marginalize the concerns of others, he does not think the

media are as important as government officials and corporate leaders are in the U.S. power equation.

What about power on a global basis? Although the most basic form of power is physical violence or force, most political leaders do not want to base their power on force alone. Instead, they seek to legitimize their power by turning it into *authority—power that people accept as legitimate rather than coercive.*

> **politics** the social institution through which power is acquired and exercised by some people and groups.
>
> **government** the formal organization that has the legal and political authority to regulate the relationships among members of a society and between the society and those outside its borders.
>
> **state** the political entity that possesses a legitimate monopoly over the use of force within its territory to achieve its goals.
>
> **power** according to Max Weber, the ability of people or groups to achieve their goals despite opposition from others.
>
> **authority** power that people accept as legitimate rather than coercive.

- **Active Learning:** How much do your students know about the media? Ask them to partner up and answer the questions on the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz. The aim is to come to some sort of agreement on their response. This will get them engaged and talking.
- **For Discussion:** Have the class restate the following statement in their own words and discuss its contemporary relevance: "Men

in authority will always think that criticism of their policies is dangerous. They will always equate their policies with patriotism, and find criticism subversive" (Henry Steele Commager).
- **Active Learning:** Which Sociology and Everyday Life quiz answers (see next page) did your students miss? See if you can engage students in a discussion about why they answered the way they did. Just guessing or wrong information?

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on the Media

1. **False.** The Internet is the number-two source of news in the United States. Television remains the number-one source in 2010.

2. **False.** Although most media outlets are privately owned, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR) are funded by government support, grants from nonprofit foundations, and donations from viewers and listeners.

3. **True.** The hours per person spent using media increase annually, and current estimates suggest that an average of 3,500 hours per person per year will be spent using all forms of media, including television, radio, movies, print media, video games, and other types of entertainment.

4. **False.** Studies show that not as many website visitors are clicking on pop-up ads or purchasing products from website sponsors as originally had been projected by website producers who hoped to make a profit from providing information and entertainment online.

5. **False.** News programs such as *NBC Nightly News* typically have 19 minutes of news content and 11 minutes of commercials, promotional announcements, and other non-news items.

6. **False.** Although decision makers at network and cable television channels were initially resistant to providing free information through search engines such as Yahoo! News, their fear of losing viewers and sponsors led them to embrace the newer technologies in order to survive.

7. **True.** Subscription rates and daily paper purchases have decreased substantially over the past decade. Now many papers make their content available online for free.

8. **True.** Because TV "reality shows" seek to imitate real life, some viewers have difficulty keeping firmly in mind what has actually happened and what is staged or faked for viewers' entertainment.

Sources: Based on Gilson, 2009; Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2010; and U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

Ideal Types of Authority

Who is most likely to accept authority as legitimate and adhere to it? People have a greater tendency to accept authority as legitimate if they are economically or politically dependent on those who hold power. They may also accept authority more readily if it reflects their own beliefs and values (Turner, Beeghley, and Powers, 2007). Weber's outline of three *ideal types* of authority—traditional, charismatic, and rational–legal—shows how different bases of legitimacy are tied to a society's economy.

Traditional Authority According to Weber, *traditional authority* is power that is legitimized on the basis of long-standing custom. In preindustrial societies, the authority of traditional leaders, such as kings, queens, pharaohs, emperors, and religious dignitaries, is usually grounded in religious beliefs and custom. For example, British kings and queens have historically traced their authority from God. Members of subordinate classes obey a traditional leader's edicts out of economic and political dependency and sometimes personal loyalty. However, as societies industrialize, traditional authority is challenged by a more complex division of labor and by the wider diversity of people who now inhabit the area as a result of high immigration rates.

Gender, race, and class relations are closely intertwined with traditional authority. Political scientist Zillah R. Eisenstein (1994) suggests that *racialized patriarchy*—the continual interplay of race and gender—reinforces traditional structures of power in contemporary societies. According to Eisenstein (1994: 2), "Patriarchy differentiates women from men while privileging men. Racism simultaneously

- **Active Learning:** Ask your students to work in small groups and come up with contemporary examples for Weber's ideal authority types. Share these with the entire class.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **Extra Examples:** Talk about Weber's three types of authority, and emphasize the strengths and weaknesses of each. Use examples from current events in your presentation.

- **For Discussion:** Have students restate and respond to the following observation: "One can say that three pre-eminent qualities are decisive for the politician: passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion" (Max Weber).
- **For Discussion:** Ask students to consider why rational–legal authority is also called bureaucratic authority. Do they think it can exist outside of a bureaucratically organized system? Explain.

differentiates people of color from whites and privileges whiteness. These processes are distinct but intertwined."

Charismatic Authority

Charismatic authority **is power legitimized on the basis of a leader's exceptional personal qualities or the demonstration of extraordinary insight and accomplishment that inspire loyalty and obedience from followers.** Charismatic leaders may be politicians, soldiers, or entertainers, among others.

Charismatic authority tends to be temporary and relatively unstable; it derives primarily from individual leaders (who may change their minds, leave, or die) and from an administrative structure usually limited to a small number of faithful followers. For this reason, charismatic authority often becomes routinized. The *routinization of charisma* **occurs when charismatic authority is succeeded by a bureaucracy controlled by a rationally established authority or by a combination of traditional and bureaucratic authority** (Turner, Beeghley, and Powers, 2007). According to Weber (1968/1922: 1148), "It is the fate of charisma to recede . . . after it has entered the permanent structures of social action."

Rational–Legal Authority

According to Weber, *rational–legal authority* **is power legitimized by law or written rules and regulations.** Rational–legal authority—also known as *bureaucratic authority*—**is based on an organizational structure that includes a clearly defined division of labor, hierarchy of authority, formal rules, and impersonality.** Power is legitimized by procedures; if leaders obtain their positions in a

▲ Max Weber's three types of global authority are shown here in global perspective. Pope Benedict XVI is an example of traditional authority sanctioned by custom. Mother Teresa exemplifies charismatic authority, for her leadership was based on personal qualities. The U.S. Supreme Court represents rational–legal authority, which depends upon established rules and procedures.

traditional authority power that is legitimized on the basis of long-standing custom.

charismatic authority power legitimized on the basis of a leader's exceptional personal qualities or the demonstration of extraordinary insight and accomplishment that inspire loyalty and obedience from followers.

routinization of charisma the process by which charismatic authority is succeeded by a bureaucracy controlled by a rationally established authority or by a combination of traditional and bureaucratic authority.

rational–legal authority power legitimized by law or written rules and regulations.

procedurally correct manner (such as by election or appointment), they have the right to act.

Rational–legal authority is held by elected or appointed government officials and by officers in a formal organization. However, authority is invested in the *office,* not in the *person* who holds the office. For example, although the U.S. Constitution grants rational–legal authority to the office of the presidency, a President who fails to uphold the public trust may be removed from office. In contemporary society, the media may play an important role in bringing to light allegations about Presidents or other elected officials. Examples include the media blitzes surrounding the Watergate investigation of the 1970s that led to the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon and the late 1990s political firestorm over campaign fund-raising and the sex scandal involving President Bill Clinton.

In a rational–legal system, the governmental bureaucracy is the apparatus responsible for creating and enforcing rules in the public interest. Weber believed that rational–legal authority was the only means to attain efficient, flexible, and competent regulation under a rule of law (Turner, Beeghley, and Powers, 2007). Weber's three types of authority are summarized in the Concept Quick Review.

Political Systems in Global Perspective

Political systems as we know them today have evolved slowly. In the earliest societies, politics was not an entity separate from other aspects of life. Political institutions first emerged in agrarian societies as they acquired surpluses and developed greater social inequality. Elites took control of politics and used custom or traditional authority to justify their position. When cities developed circa 3500–3000 B.C.E., the *city-state*—a city whose power extended to adjacent areas—became the center of political power.

Nation-states as we know them began to develop in Europe between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries (see Tilly, 1975). A *nation-state* is a unit of political organization that has recognizable national boundaries and whose citizens possess specific legal rights and obligations. Nation-states emerge as countries develop specific geographic territories and acquire greater ability to defend their borders. Improvements in communication and transportation make it possible for people in a larger geographic area to share a common language and culture. As charismatic and traditional authority are

[concept quick review 13.1]

Weber's Three Types of Authority

	Description	Examples
Traditional	Legitimized by long-standing custom	Patrimony (authority resides in traditional leader supported by larger social structures, as in old British monarchy)
	Subject to erosion as traditions weaken	Patriarchy (rule by men occupying traditional positions of authority, as in the family)
Charismatic	Based on leader's personal qualities	Napoleon Adolf Hitler
	Temporary and unstable	Martin Luther King, Jr. César Chávez Mother Teresa
Rational–Legal	Legitimized by rationally established rules and procedures	Modern British Parliament
	Authority resides in the office, not the person	U.S. presidency, Congress, federal bureaucracy

- **Table Note:** Use the Concept Quick Review to help students use history to better understand Weber's theory. Assign each example to a different student or group, and ask for a synopsis.

superseded by rational–legal authority, legal standards come to prevail in all areas of life, and the nation-state claims a monopoly over the legitimate use of force (Kennedy, 1993).

Approximately 190 nation-states currently exist throughout the world; today, everyone is born, lives, and dies under the auspices of a nation-state (see Skocpol and Amenta, 1986). Four main types of political systems are found in nation-states: monarchy, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, and democracy.

Monarchy

Monarchy is a political system in which power resides in one person or family and is passed from generation to generation through lines of inheritance. Monarchies are most common in agrarian societies and are associated with traditional authority patterns. However, the relative power of monarchs has varied across nations, depending on religious, political, and economic conditions.

Absolute monarchs claim a hereditary right to rule (based on membership in a noble family) or a divine right to rule (a God-given right to rule that legitimizes the exercise of power). In limited monarchies, rulers depend on powerful members of the nobility to retain their thrones. Unlike absolute monarchs, *limited monarchs* are not considered to be above the law. In *constitutional monarchies,* the royalty serve as symbolic rulers or heads of state while actual authority is held by elected officials in national parliaments. In present-day monarchies such as the United Kingdom, Sweden, Spain, and the Netherlands, members of royal families primarily perform ceremonial functions. In the United Kingdom, for example, the media often focus large amounts of time and attention on the royal family, but concentrate on the personal lives of its members.

Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism is a political system controlled by rulers who deny popular participation in government. A few authoritarian regimes have been absolute monarchies whose rulers claimed a hereditary right to their position. Today, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are examples of authoritarian absolute monarchies. In *dictatorships,* power is gained and held by a single individual. Pure dictatorships are rare; all rulers need the support of the military and the backing of business elites to maintain their position. *Military juntas* result when military officers seize power from the government, as has happened in recent decades in Argentina, Chile, and Haiti. Today, authoritarian regimes exist in Cuba and in the People's Republic of China. Authoritarian regimes seek to control the media and to suppress coverage of any topics or information that does not reflect upon the regime in a favorable light.

Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism is a political system in which the state seeks to regulate all aspects of people's public and private lives. Totalitarianism relies on modern

▲ Through its many ups and downs, the British royal family has remained a symbol of Great Britain's monarchy, today headed by Queen Elizabeth. Monarchies typically pass power from generation to generation, and the two young men on the left, Princes William and Harry, represent the future of the royal family's rule.

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monarchy a political system in which power resides in one person or family and is passed from generation to generation through lines of inheritance.

authoritarianism a political system controlled by rulers who deny popular participation in government.

totalitarianism a political system in which the state seeks to regulate all aspects of people's public and private lives.

- **Popular Culture:** "What with all that job security, royals haven't typically made the most assiduous of scholars. But Prince William— bless his little polo-playing, heir-apparent heart—seems to have actually studied his way through college. The geography major, 23, graduated from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland with second highest honors, the best grades the British royal family has ever achieved" (*Time,* 6/2005).

- **Research:** Have students research and summarize Hannah Arendt's theory of totalitarianism. What are its distinctive features, according to Arendt? How does it differ from one-party dictatorships?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

framing politics in the media

Hero Framing and the Selling of an Agenda

You have to do more than just go and have a little press conference. So the spectacle, showmanship, selling, promoting, marketing, publicizing, all of these things are extremely important. . . . We did all of this to make the people pay attention. . . . You also have to think about how you can sell the policy, how can we get it so that everyone in California at home starts paying attention to it.

> —Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, whose term ended in 2011, explaining why he used the same media tactics to sell his political agenda that he once used to plug films that he starred in, such as *The Terminator* (qtd. in Murphy, 2005: ST1, ST2)

During his terms as governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger actively promoted his state and his political agenda in much the same way that he pitched himself and his films when he was an actor. For example, Schwarzenegger appeared in tourism ads for the state of California, and when he went on a trade mission to Japan, he hired a Terminator look-alike to ride through the crowd on a motorcycle throwing spectators promotional T-shirts while he stood in front of an oversize poster of himself that read, "See California. Buy California," and described for the audience the virtues of California beaches, wines, and almonds to encourage trade and tourism (Murphy, 2005). According to one journalist, "As in his Hollywood career Mr. Schwarzenegger relies on friendly media outlets, uses flamboyant public stunts to attract attention and self-deprecatingly jokes about his relentless selling in a way few career politicians would" (Murphy, 2005: ST2).

What at first glance might appear to be egregious self-promotion is actually Governor Schwarzenegger using media framing to develop a favorable response to his political initiatives. He was able to blend his star power with his governorship so that they appeared to be one and the same. It is easy for media audiences to believe that an action hero such as Schwarzenegger had the power to get things done that mere mortals (ordinary politicians) might never accomplish. This type of hero framing is aided by the fact that entertainment and reality are blurred in contemporary society (Murphy, 2005). However, critics believe that media framing which blends real people and important social issues with imaginary heroes may be bad for the general public because the blending of the real and the imaginary technology to monitor and control people; mass propaganda and electronic surveillance are widely used to influence people's thinking and control their actions. One example of a totalitarian regime was the National Socialist (Nazi) Party in Germany during World War II; military leaders there sought to control all aspects of national life, not just government operations. Other examples include the former Soviet Union and contemporary Iraq before the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime.

To keep people from rebelling, totalitarian governments enforce conformity. People are denied the right to assemble for political purposes, access to information is strictly controlled, and secret police enforce compliance, creating an environment of constant fear and suspicion.

Many nations do not recognize totalitarian regimes as being the legitimate government of a particular country. Afghanistan in the year 2001 was an example. As the war on terrorism began in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, many people developed a heightened awareness of the Taliban regime, which ruled most of Afghanistan and was engaged in fierce fighting to capture the rest of the country. The Taliban regime maintained absolute control over the Afghan people in most of that country. For example, it required that all Muslims take part in prayer five times each day and that men attend prayer at mosques, where women were forbidden (Marquis, 2001). Taliban leaders claimed that their actions were based on Muslim law and espoused a belief in never-ending *jihad*—a struggle against one's perceived enemies. Although the totalitarian nature of the Taliban regime was difficult for many people, it was particularly oppressive for women, who were viewed by this group as being "biologically, religiously and prophetically" inferior to men (McGeary, 2001: 41).

- **Extra Examples:** "The mission of the Log Cabin Republicans is to work within the Republican Party to advocate equal rights for all Americans, including gays and lesbians. Log Cabin's mission derives from our firm belief in the principles of limited government, individual liberty, individual responsibility, free markets and a strong national defense" (online.logcabin.org). Have students research the reaction of the wider Republican party to this organization, including that of Arnold Schwarzenegger.
- **Recent Events:** Provide your class with specific examples from current events for each of the four main functions of government.

▲ Arnold Schwarzenegger was not just the governor of California; he was also the state's primary salesperson. Would his efforts have been as effective had he not been a movie star in his former career?

Although Governor Schwarzenegger framed his story in such a manner as to make his policies appealing to media audiences, and particularly to California voters, this political leader is not alone in how he sold himself and framed his ideas in the most interesting light in the media. Many other political leaders have used media images (such as former President George W. Bush as the cowboy-boot-wearing Texan who is so down-home that he clears brush at his ranch himself) to further their political agendas.

may provide a smoke screen behind which a politician can hide what is really happening in his or her administration.

reflect & analyze

How can we become more aware of policies that are being proposed or promoted by our political leaders? Do we need to look behind the façade to see what is actually going on, or can we trust our leaders to provide us with valid information? What do you think?

Consequently, this regime made the veil obligatory and banned women from public life. U.S. government officials believed that the Taliban regime was protecting Osama bin Laden, the man thought to have been the mastermind behind numerous terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens and facilities, both on the mainland and abroad. As a totalitarian regime, the Taliban leadership was recognized by only three other governments despite controlling most of Afghanistan.

Once the military action commenced in Afghanistan, most of what U.S. residents knew about the Taliban and about the war on terrorism was based on media accounts and "expert opinions" that were voiced on television. According to the political analyst Michael Parenti (1998), the media play a significant role in framing the information we receive about the political systems of other countries. As you will recall, *framing* refers to how news is packaged, including the amount of exposure given to a story, the positive or negative tone of the story, the headlines and photographs, and the accompanying visual and auditory effects if the story is being broadcast. In politics and government, framing is not limited to information we receive about other countries; it can also be used to frame a political or personal agenda in this country (see the Framing Politics in the Media box).

Democracy

Democracy is a political system in which the people hold the ruling power either directly or through

> **democracy** a political system in which the people hold the ruling power either directly or through elected representatives.

- **For Discussion:** Ask students to identify the distinctive features of democracy. Why do they think direct democracy has never been attempted in most nations? What are its potential drawbacks? (You may want to discuss ballot-measure systems in some U.S. states.)
- **Historical Perspective:** "It is an enduring American principle that this duty obligates the government to anticipate and counter threats, using all elements of national power, before the threats can do grave damage" (from the *National Security Strategy of the United States,* 2006). This document outlined the use of preventive war to depose regimes that were deemed a threat to this nation. Have students examine the differences and similarities between this approach and the new Obama NSS (**whitehouse.gov**).
- **Sociological Imagination:** Students can write a brief essay on the topic of the distribution of power in the United States—be sure

elected representatives. The literal meaning of *democracy* is "rule by the people" (from the Greek words *demos,* meaning "the people," and *kratein,* meaning "to rule"). In an ideal-type democracy, people would actively and directly rule themselves. *Direct participatory democracy* requires that citizens be able to meet together regularly to debate and decide the issues of the day. Because there are more than 309 million people in the United States today, it would be impossible for everyone to come together in one place for a meeting because an area of more than eighty square miles would be necessary for the gathering.

In countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom, people have a voice in the government through *representative democracy,* whereby citizens elect representatives to serve as bridges between themselves and the government. The U.S. Constitution requires that each state have two senators and a minimum of one member in the House of Representatives. The current size of the House (435 seats) has not changed since the apportionment following the 1910 census. Therefore, based on Census 2000, those 435 seats were reapportioned based on the increase or decrease in a state's population between 1990 and 2000.

In a representative democracy, elected representatives are supposed to convey the concerns and interests of those they represent, and the government is expected to be responsive to the wishes of the people. Elected officials are held accountable to the people through elections. However, representative democracy is not always equally accessible to all people in a nation. Throughout U.S. history, members of subordinate racial–ethnic groups have been denied full participation in the democratic process. Gender and social class have also limited some people's democratic participation. For example, women have not always had the same rights as men. Full voting rights were not gained by women until ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.

Even representative democracies are not all alike. As compared to the winner-takes-all elections in the United States, which are usually decided by who wins the most votes, the majority of European elections are based on a system of proportional representation, meaning that each party is represented in the national legislature according to the proportion of votes that party received. For example, a party that won 40 percent of the vote would receive 40 seats in a 100-seat legislative body, and a party receiving 20 percent of the votes would receive 20 seats.

Perspectives on Power and Political Systems

Is political power in the United States concentrated in the hands of the few or distributed among the many? Sociologists and political scientists have suggested many different answers to this question; however, two prevalent models of power have emerged: pluralist and elite.

Functionalist Perspectives: The Pluralist Model

The pluralist model is rooted in a functionalist perspective which assumes that people share a consensus on central concerns, such as freedom and protection from harm, and that the government serves important functions no other institution can fulfill. According to Emile Durkheim (1933/1893), the purpose of government is to socialize people to be good citizens, to regulate the economy so that it operates effectively, and to provide necessary services for citizens. Contemporary functionalists state the four main functions as follows: (1) maintaining law and order, (2) planning and directing society, (3) meeting social needs, and (4) handling international relations, including warfare (see ▶ Figure 13.1).

But what happens when people do not agree on specific issues or concerns? Functionalists suggest that divergent viewpoints lead to a system of political pluralism, in which the government functions as an arbiter between competing interests and viewpoints. According to the *pluralist model,* power in political systems is widely dispersed throughout many competing interest groups (Dahl, 1961).

In the pluralist model, the diverse needs of women and men, people of all religions and racial–ethnic backgrounds, and the wealthy, middle class, and poor are met by political leaders who engage in a process of bargaining, accommodation, and compromise. Competition among leadership groups in government, business, labor, education, law, medicine, and consumer organizations, among others, helps prevent abuse of power by any one group. Everyday

▲ **FIGURE 13.1** **GOVERNMENT FROM A FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE**
From the functionalist perspective, government serves important functions no other institution can fulfill. Contemporary functionalists identify four main functions: (a) maintaining law and order, (b) planning and directing society, (c) meeting social needs, and (d) handling international relations, including warfare.

special interest groups help people advocate their own interests and further their causes. Broad categories of special interest groups include banking, business, education, energy, the environment, health, labor, persons with a disability, religious groups, retired persons, women, and those espousing a specific ideological viewpoint; obviously, many groups overlap in interests and membership. Special interest groups are also referred to as *pressure groups* (because they put pressure on political leaders) or *lobbies.* Lobbies are often referred to in terms of the organization they represent or the single issue on which they focus—for example, the "gun lobby" and the "dairy lobby." The people who are paid to influence legislation on behalf of specific clients are referred to as *lobbyists.*

Over the past four decades, special interest groups have become more involved in "single-issue politics," in which political candidates are often supported or rejected solely on the basis of their views on a specific issue—such as abortion, gun control, gay and lesbian rights, or the environment. Single-issue groups derive their strength from the intensity of their beliefs; leaders have little room to compromise on issues.

people can influence public policy by voting in elections, participating in existing special interest groups, or forming new ones to gain access to the political system. In sum, power is widely dispersed, and leadership groups that wield influence on some decisions are not the same groups that may be influential in other decisions (Dye and Zeigler, 2006).

Special Interest Groups

Special interest groups are political coalitions made up of individuals or groups that share a specific interest they wish to protect or advance with the help of the political system (Greenberg and Page, 2002). Examples of special interest groups include the AFL-CIO (representing the majority of labor unions) and public interest or citizens' groups such as the American Conservative Union and Zero Population Growth.

What purpose do special interest groups serve in the political process? According to some analysts,

Political Action Committees

Funding of lobbying efforts has become more complex in recent years. Reforms in campaign finance laws in the 1970s set limits on direct contributions to political

> **representative democracy** a form of democracy whereby citizens elect representatives to serve as bridges between themselves and the government.
>
> **pluralist model** an analysis of political systems that views power as widely dispersed throughout many competing interest groups.

sentiment in the contemporary United States. How has public opinion been successfully shaped by special interest groups and others?

• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis

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▲ Special interest groups help people advocate their interests and further their causes. Advocates may run for public office and gain a wider voice in the political process. An example is former U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado, a Cheyenne chief, who is shown here walking to the Senate floor after participating in a ground-breaking ceremony for the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

candidates and led to the creation of *political action committees* (PACs)—organizations of special interest groups that solicit contributions from donors and fund campaigns to help elect (or defeat) candidates based on their stances on specific issues.

As the cost of running for political office has skyrocketed, candidates have relied more on PACs for financial assistance. PACs contributed more than $348 million to candidates for the U.S. House and Senate between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2006 (Federal Election Commission, 2010). Advertising, staff, direct-mail operations, telephone banks, computers, consultants, travel expenses,

office rentals, and other expenses incurred in political campaigns make PAC money vital to candidates.

Some PACs represent the "public interest" and ideological interest groups such as gay rights or the National Rifle Association. Other PACs represent the capitalistic interests of large corporations. Realistically, members of the least-privileged sectors of society are not represented by PACs. As one senator pointed out, "There aren't any Poor PACs or Food Stamp PACs or Nutrition PACs or Medicare PACs" (qtd. in Greenberg and Page, 1993: 240). Critics of pluralism argue that "Big Business" wields such disproportionate power in U.S. politics that it undermines the democratic process (see Lindblom, 1977; Domhoff, 1978).

As an outgrowth of record-setting campaign spending in the 1996 national election, campaign financing abuses were alleged by both Republicans and Democrats in Washington. At the center of the controversy was the issue of "soft-money" contributions, which are made outside the limits imposed by federal election laws. In 2002 Congress passed the McCain–Feingold campaign finance law, prohibiting soft-money contributions in federal elections, and the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the soft-money provisions of that law in 2003. However, the McCain–Feingold law applies only to federal elections and does not bar soft-money contributions in state and local elections.

Conflict Perspectives: Elite Models

Although conflict theorists acknowledge that the government serves a number of important purposes in society, they assert that government exists for the benefit of wealthy or politically powerful elites who use the government to impose their will on the masses. According to the *elite model,* power in political systems is concentrated in the hands of a small group of elites, and the masses are relatively powerless. The pluralist model and the elite model are compared in ▶ Figure 13.2.

Contemporary elite models are based on the assumption that decisions are made by the elites, who agree on the basic values and goals of society. However, the needs and concerns of the masses are not often given full consideration by those in the elite. According to this approach, power is highly concentrated at the top of a pyramid-shaped social

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- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students write a brief essay that compares and contrasts Mills and Domhoff on the power elite and the ruling class.
- **For Discussion:** Ask this question: In what significant ways do you think race/ethnicity, gender, and class affect people's political attitudes, values, and beliefs?

- **Active Learning:** Organize the class into teams to debate the pros and cons of both the pluralist model and elite model of government.

PLURALIST MODEL

- Decisions are made on behalf of the people by leaders who engage in bargaining, accommodation, and compromise.

- Competition among leadership groups makes abuse of power by any one group difficult.

- Power is widely dispersed, and people can influence public policy by voting.

- Public policy reflects a balance among competing interest groups.

ELITE MODEL

- Decisions are made by a small group of elite people.

- Consensus exists among the elite on the basic values and goals of society.

- Power is highly concentrated at the top of a pyramid-shaped social hierachy.

- Public policy reflects the values and preferences of the elite.

▲ **FIGURE 13.2 PLURALIST AND ELITE MODELS**

hierarchy, and public policy reflects the values and preferences of the elite, not the preferences of the people (Dye and Zeigler, 2006).

C. Wright Mills and the Power Elite Who makes up the U.S. power elite? According to the sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959a), the *power elite* comprises leaders at the top of business, the executive branch of the federal government, and the military. Of these three, Mills speculated that the "corporate rich" (the highest-paid officers of the biggest corporations) are the most powerful because of their unique ability to parlay the vast economic resources at their disposal into political power (see "Sociology Works!"). At the middle level of the pyramid, Mills placed the legislative branch of government, special interest groups, and local opinion leaders. The bottom (and widest layer) of the pyramid is occupied by the unorganized masses, who are relatively powerless and are vulnerable to economic and political exploitation.

G. William Domhoff and the Ruling Class
Sociologist G. William Domhoff (2002) asserts that, in fact, this nation has a *ruling class*—the corporate rich, who make up less than 1 percent of the U.S. population. Domhoff uses the term *ruling class* to signify a relatively fixed group of privileged people who wield sufficient power to constrain political processes and serve underlying capitalist interests. Although the power elite controls the everyday operation of the political system, who *governs* is less important than who *rules*.

political action committees organizations of special interest groups that solicit contributions from donors and fund campaigns to help elect (or defeat) candidates based on their stances on specific issues.

elite model a view of society that sees power in political systems as being concentrated in the hands of a small group of elites whereas the masses are relatively powerless.

sociology works!

C. Wright Mills's Ideas About the Media: Ahead of His Time?

In a mass society the dominant type of communication is the formal media, and the [various audiences] become mere *media markets:* all those exposed to the contents of a given mass media.

> —In *The Power Elite,* the influential sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959a: 299) provided this early critique of the U.S. mass media and its effect on the general public.

During the mid-twentieth century, when Mills wrote these words, the press in the United States was often described as a "watchdog for the public." It was widely believed that journalists would reliably report what the public needed to know to stay informed, including any government and/or corporate dishonesty or ineptitude (Headley, 1985: 333). However, Mills rejected this notion because he believed the media industry lulled individuals into complacency and persuaded them to accept the status quo rather than encouraging the audience member to become a "public" person who formulates his or her own opinion on a given topic. As one contemporary scholar explained, "To recover Mills's 'public man' who is capable of formulating opinions, we would have to salvage whatever is left of him after he is stripped of MTV, CNN, and http://www., whose Italian translation, *ragnatele mondiale,* is

useful in conveying the sense 'spider-web' and therefore the suspicion that we may be flies" (Cinquemani, 1997: 89).

Do the contemporary media inform people or trap them in a "spiderweb"? Mills hoped that individuals would develop the capacity for critical judgment based on information they received from the media industry; however, he was doubtful that this would occur for two important sociological reasons: (1) media communication involves a limited number of people who communicate *to* a great number of others ("the masses"), and (2) audiences have no effective way of answering back, making mass communication a one-way process.

As part of his legacy for making sociology work in the real world, Mills made an important prediction. According to Mills (1956: 303–304), critical thinking is more likely to occur among individuals under the following circumstances: "[i]f public communications are so organized that there is a chance immediately and effectively to answer back any opinion expressed in public. Opinion formed by such discussion readily finds an outlet in effective action, even against—if necessary—the prevailing system of authority." If media audiences are able to respond immediately and provide their own opinions, media communications may become a two-way street. Technologies and methods of communication—including cell phones,

According to Domhoff (2002), the corporate rich influence the political process in three ways. First, they affect the candidate selection process by helping to finance campaigns and providing favors to political candidates. Second, through participation in the special interest process, the corporate rich are able to obtain favors, tax breaks, and favorable regulatory rulings. Finally, the corporate rich gain access to the policy-making process through their appointments to governmental advisory committees, presidential commissions, and other governmental positions. Power elite models call our attention to a central concern in contemporary U.S. society: the ability of democracy and its ideals to survive in the context of the increasingly concentrated power held by capitalist oligarchies such as the media giants we discuss in this chapter.

The U.S. Political System

The U.S. political system is made up of formal elements, such as the legislative process and the duties of the President, and informal elements, such as the role of political parties in the election process. We now turn to an examination of these informal elements, including political parties, political socialization, and voter participation.

Political Parties and Elections

A *political party* is an organization whose purpose is to gain and hold legitimate control of government; it is usually composed of people with similar attitudes, interests, and socioeconomic status. A political party (1) develops and articulates

- **For Discussion:** "The more you can increase fear of drugs and crime, welfare mothers, immigrants and aliens, the more you control all the people" (Noam Chomsky). Have students debate the merits of Chomsky's observation. Are there any counterexamples?
- **Box Note:** Ask your students for experiences they have had with interactive mass media, including situations where they have been able to respond to public opinion, as expressed in the media.

- **Active Learning:** "The first of a new kind of presidential debate is scheduled for tonight, one in which members of the general public pose questions to the candidates via homemade video. The debate is the latest front in the candidates' running battle to keep up with the fast-paced changes wrought by the Internet on politics" (*New York Times,* 7/2007). Have students come up with questions they would submit to a presidential debate.

▲ **C. Wright Mills believed that mass communication was a one-way street: The audience had no way to react to it and tended to become passive recipients of its content. However, today's digital technology allows people to respond quickly and, through developments such as blogs, to provide news content and opinions of their own. What are the benefits and drawbacks of interactive technologies?**

text messaging, e-mail, and websites—now provide us with opportunities for media interactivity through which we can respond to media discourse and make our thoughts known.

Sociology works today in Mills's ideas because he encourages us to think for ourselves and to express our ideas and opinions rather than being passive recipients of information from the media. Mills challenges us to think about the extent to which we rely on *mediated* experiences of others, such as the ideas presented by television commentators or online bloggers, as compared with becoming our own "public person" and responding with thoughts and judgments of our own.

reflect & analyze

How might we relate Mills's ideas to the contemporary role of the media industries in shaping political and economic "realities" around the world?

policy positions, (2) educates voters about issues and simplifies the choices for them, and (3) recruits candidates who agree with those policies, helps those candidates win office, and holds the candidates responsible for implementing the party's policy positions. In carrying out these functions, a party may try to modify the demands of special interests, build a consensus that could win majority support, and provide simple and identifiable choices for the voters on election day. Political parties create a *platform*, a formal statement of the party's political positions on various social and economic issues.

Since the Civil War, the Democratic and Republican parties have dominated the U.S. political system. Although one party may control the presidency for several terms, at some point the voters elect the other party's nominee, and control shifts.

How well do the parties measure up to the ideal-type characteristics of a political party? Although both parties have been successful in getting their candidates elected at various times, they generally do not meet the ideal characteristics for a political party because they do not offer voters clear policy alternatives. Moreover, the two parties are oligarchies, dominated by active elites who hold views that are further from the center of the political spectrum than are those of a majority of members of their party. As a result, voters in primary elections (in which the nominees of political parties for most offices other than President and Vice President are

political party an organization whose purpose is to gain and hold legitimate control of government.

• **For Discussion:** Introduce your students to Marshall McLuhan's observation that "The medium is the message." What do they think he meant by it? How does it apply in contemporary U.S. politics?

chosen) may select nominees whose views are closer to the center of the political spectrum and further away from the party's own platform. Likewise, party loyalties appear to be declining among voters, who may vote in one party's primary but then cast their ballot in general elections without total loyalty to that party, or cast a "split-ticket" ballot (voting for one party's candidate in one race and another party's candidate in the next one).

Discontent with Current Political Parties

Although most individuals identify themselves as Republicans or Democrats, a growing number of people have expressed discontent with the existing U.S. political parties that have dominated the political system. In 2009 the Tea Party movement emerged to support more constitutionally limited government and to oppose various stimulus and bailout programs that use federal monies. The protesters refer to themselves as the "Tea Party," based on the Boston Tea Party, a 1773 protest by American colonists against "taxation without representation" by the British government because the colonists were not represented in the British Parliament but were required to pay taxes to that government. According to a *New York Times*/CBS News poll, Tea Party supporters are "wealthier and more well-educated than the general public, and are no more or less afraid of falling into a lower socioeconomic class" (Zernike and Thee-Brenan, 2010: A1). A demographic analysis of the group shows that the typical Tea Party supporter is white, male, married, and over forty-five years of age. Most are registered Republicans, but they disagree with that party about current events. Although some movement members have been accused of being racist and homophobic, others have applauded the movement for opening up new arenas for political debate when few other options have existed in the U.S. two-party system. Clearly, the Tea Party movement is pessimistic about the direction that its members think the United States has taken under the Obama administration, and the group wants to do something about it (Zernike and Thee-Brenan, 2010). What will become of the Tea Party movement? Will it take a place alongside other, more established political parties, or will it disappear? At the time of this writing, the Tea Party movement does not have a formal organizational structure, and the majority of the group's participants surveyed in

the recent *New York Times*/CBS poll stated that they did not want a third party and would still vote Republican. Regardless of how formally organized the group becomes, it appears that participants will remain vocal on a number of issues, including protection of the Constitution, demand for a balanced budget and tax reform, an end to "runaway spending," and other measures that emphasize fiscal restraint and limited government and deemphasize putting government money into social issues (Becker, 2010). Those who participate in the Tea Party movement are engaged in a form of political activism; however, many people in the United States respond in a different manner to current political parties and social issues: They simply do not participate and contribute to high levels of voter apathy in many elections.

Political Participation and Voter Apathy

Why do some people vote and others not? How do people come to think of themselves as being conservative, moderate, or liberal? Key factors include individuals' political socialization and attitudes. *Political socialization* is the process by which people learn political attitudes, values, and behavior. For young children, the family is the primary agent of political socialization, and children tend to learn and hold many of the same opinions held by their parents.

© AP Photo/Ed Reinke

▲ Judson Phillips organized the 2010 Tea Party national convention, held in Nashville. A Tennessee attorney, he fits the mode of the typical Tea Party participant: wealthier and better educated than the general public.

- **Research:** The 1972 presidential election was the first time people as young as 18 could vote. That year, 52 percent of 18-to-24-year-old citizens cast ballots. But during the 2000 presidential election, that number had fallen to a low of 36 percent. During the 2008 election the youth vote increased dramatically, to 48.5 percent (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement).
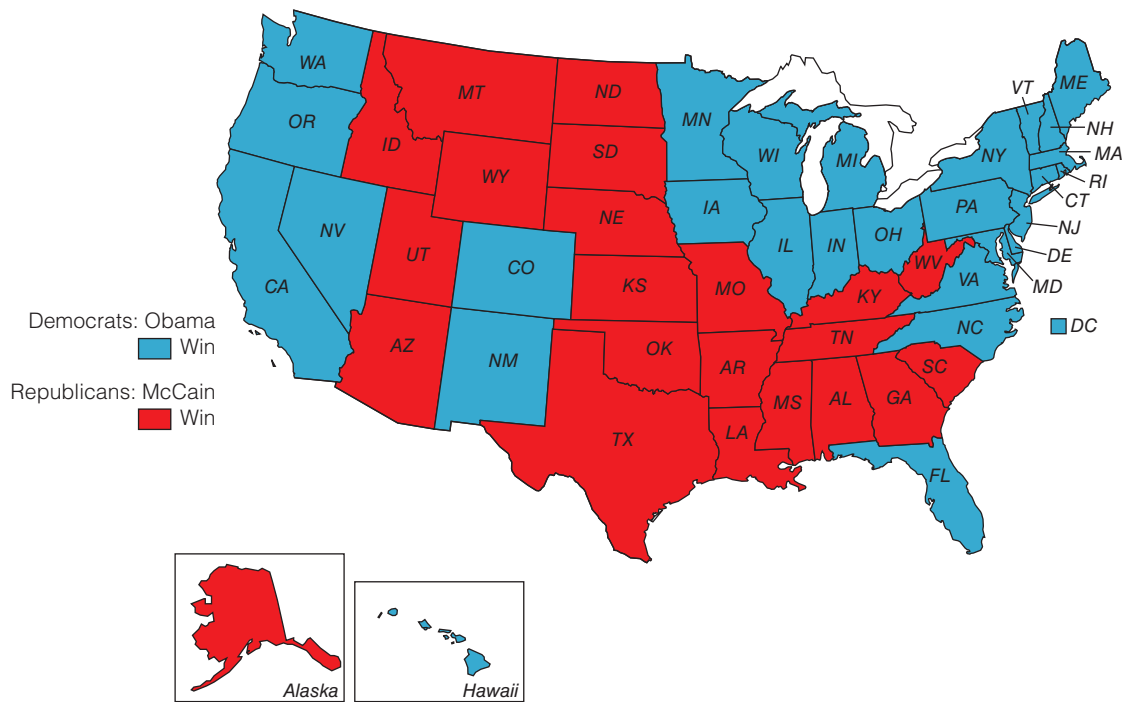
▲ MAP 13.1 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: STATE BY STATE

Source: *New York Times,* 2008.

By the time children reach school age, they typically identify with the political party (if any) of their parents (Burnham, 1983). As we grow older, other agents of socialization begin to affect our political beliefs, including our peers, teachers, and the media. Over time, these other agents may cause people's political attitudes and values to change.

In addition to the socialization process, people's socioeconomic status affects their political attitudes, values, and beliefs. For example, individuals who are very poor or are unable to find employment may believe that society has failed them and therefore tend to be indifferent toward the political system (Zipp, 1985; Pinderhughes, 1986). Believing that casting a ballot would make no difference to their circumstances, they do not vote.

Democracy in the United States has been defined as a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." Accordingly, it would stand to reason that "the people" would actively participate in their government at any or all of four levels: (1) voting, (2) attending and taking part in political meetings, (3) actively participating in political campaigns, and (4) running for and/or holding political office. At most, about 10 percent of the voting-age population

in this country participates at a level higher than simply voting, and over the past 40 years, less than half of the voting-age population has voted in nonpresidential elections. Even in presidential elections, voter turnout is often relatively low. In the 2008 presidential election, about 62 percent of the 208.3 million eligible voters cast ballots, compared with 60.6 percent in the 2004 presidential election. The number of ballots cast in 2008 was the highest in history because about 6.5 million more people were registered to vote in 2008. The larger turnout in 2008 was partly a result of significant increases in voting by younger people, Latinos/as, and African American voters. Women's votes were also a significant factor in the election of Barack Obama because women strongly preferred Obama (56 percent) to John McCain (43 percent), whereas men split their votes almost evenly between Obama (49 percent) and McCain (48 percent). State-by-state differences in voting preferences are also highly visible in what political analysts refer to as the "red states" and the "blue states." See ▶ Map 13.1.

political socialization the process by which people learn political attitudes, values, and behavior.

- **Map Note:** Ask your students to use the information contained in this map to construct a regional "profile" for a typical Democrat voter and typical Republican voter.
- **Research:** "The proportion of Americans who support traditional social values has edged downward since 1994, while the proportion of Americans expressing strong personal religious

commitment also has declined modestly" (Pew Research Center for People and the Press). Have students evaluate this finding through research and personal experience.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

Why is it that so many eligible voters in this country stay away from the polls? During any election, millions of voting-age persons do not go to the polls due to illness, disability, lack of transportation, non-registration, or absenteeism. However, these explanations do not account for why many other people do not vote. According to some conservative analysts, people may not vote because they are satisfied with the status quo or because they are apathetic and uninformed—they lack an understanding of both public issues and the basic processes of government.

By contrast, liberals argue that people stay away from the polls because they feel alienated from politics at all levels of government—federal, state, and local—due to political corruption and influence peddling by special interests and large corporations. Participation in politics is affected by gender, age, race/ethnicity, and, especially, socioeconomic status (SES). One explanation for the higher rates of political participation at higher SES levels is that advanced levels of education may give people a better understanding of government processes, a belief that they have more at stake in the political process, and greater economic resources to contribute to the process. Some studies suggest that during their college years, many people develop assumptions about political participation that continue throughout their lives.

Governmental Bureaucracy

When most people think of political power, they overlook one of its major sources—the governmental bureaucracy. Negative feelings about bureaucracy are perhaps strongest when people are describing the "faceless bureaucrats" and "red tape" with which they must deal in government. But who are these "faceless bureaucrats," and what do they do?

Bureaucratic power tends to take on a life of its own. During the nineteenth century, the government had a relatively limited role in everyday life. In the 1930s, however, the scope of government was extended greatly during the Great Depression to deal with

labor–management relations, public welfare, and the regulation of the securities markets. With dramatic increases in technology and increasing demands from the public that the government "do something" about problems facing society, the government has grown still more in recent decades. Today, even with slight reductions in size, the federal bureaucracy employs more than two million people in civilian positions.

Much of the actual functioning of the government is carried on by its bureaucracy. As strange as it may seem, even the President, the White House staff, and cabinet officials have difficulty establishing control over the bureaucracy (Dye and Zeigler, 2008). Many employees in the federal bureaucracy have seen a number of Presidents "come and go." For example, when President Clinton promised to make his administration "look like America," analysts watched to see who would be appointed to his cabinet but did not watch for changes in the *permanent*
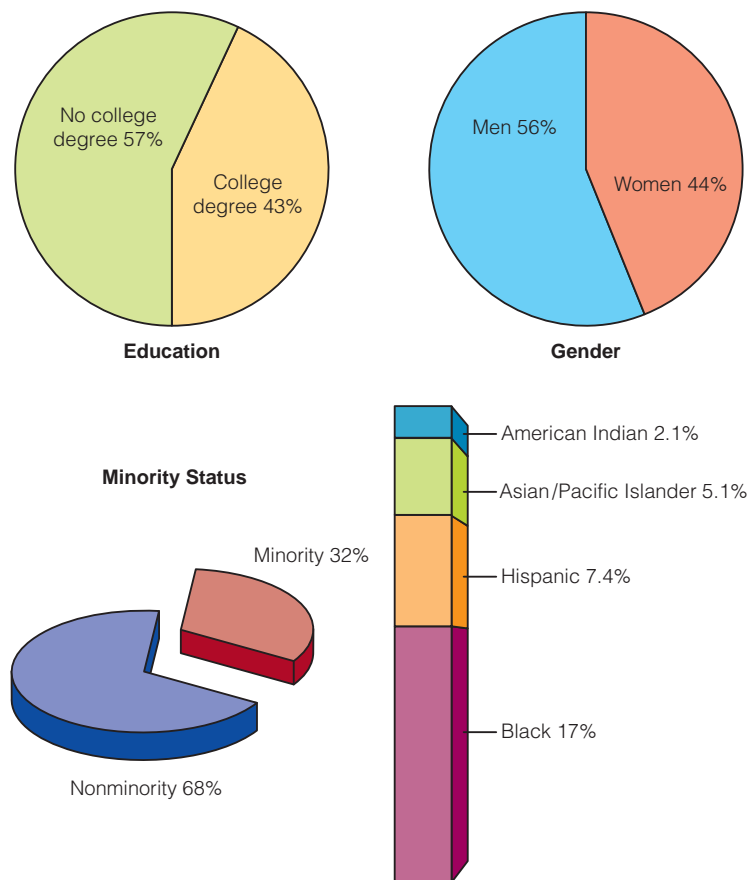
▲ FIGURE 13.3 THE "TYPICAL" FEDERAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE
Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2008.

- **Extra Examples:** "The Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror" (fema.gov).

- **For Discussion:** Ask students to consider what social structures would have to change in order for more women and minorities to move to the top of the federal bureaucracy.
- **Historical Perspective:** "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether

government in Washington, made up of top-tier civil service bureaucrats who have built a major power base. ▶ Figure 13.3 shows characteristics of the "typical" federal civilian employee.

The governmental bureaucracy has been able to perpetuate itself and expand because many of its employees have highly specialized knowledge and skills and cannot be replaced easily by "outsiders." In addition, as the United States has grown in size and complexity, public policy is increasingly made by bureaucrats rather than by elected officials. For example, offices and agencies have been established to create rules, policies, and procedures for dealing with complex issues such as nuclear power, environmental protection, and drug safety; bureaucracies announce an estimated twenty rules or regulations for every one law passed by Congress (Dye and Zeigler, 2008).

The federal budget is the central ingredient in the bureaucracy. Preparing the annual federal budget is a major undertaking for the President and the Office of Management and Budget, one of the most important agencies in Washington. Getting the budget approved by Congress is an even more monumental task; however, as Dye and Zeigler (2008) point out, even with the highly publicized wrangling over the budget by the President and Congress, the final congressional appropriations are usually within 2–3 percent of the budget originally proposed by the President.

In part, this is due to the *iron triangle of power*—a three-way arrangement in which a private interest group (usually a corporation), a congressional committee or subcommittee, and a bureaucratic agency make the final decision on a political issue that is to be decided by that agency. ▶ Figure 13.4 illustrates the alliance among the Defense Department (Pentagon), private military (or defense) contractors, and members of Congress. According to the sociologist Joe Feagin,

> The Iron Triangle has a revolving door of money, influence, and jobs among these three sets of actors, involving trillions of dollars. Military contractors who receive contracts from the Defense Department serve on the advisory committees that recommend what weapons they believe are needed. Many people move around the triangle from job to job, serving in the military, then in the Defense Department, then in military industries. (Feagin and Feagin, 1994: 405)

CONGRESS

Defense contractors contribute to PACs, lobby Congress.

Congress budgets funds for defense projects.

DEFENSE CONTRACTORS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Defense Department awards contracts to contractors; personnel move back and forth between employment by Defense Department and by defense contractors.
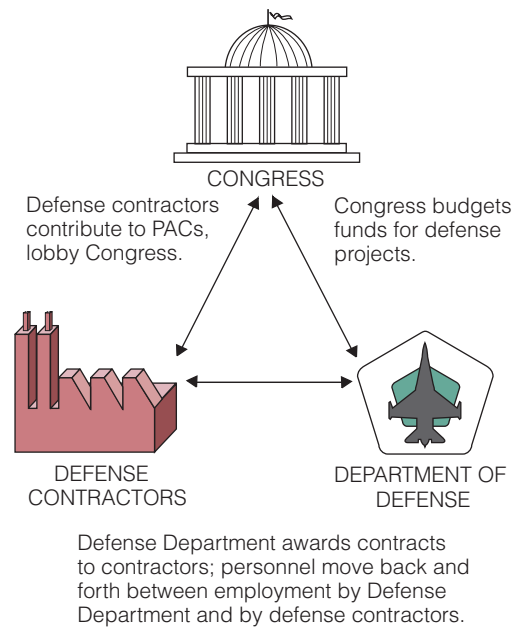
▲ **FIGURE 13.4** **EXAMPLE OF THE IRON TRIANGLE OF POWER**

The Iron Triangle is also referred to as the *military–industrial complex—the mutual interdependence of the military establishment and private military contractors.* According to the sociologist C. Wright Mills (1976), this alliance of economic, military, and political power amounts to a "permanent war economy" or "military economy." However, the economist John Kenneth Galbraith (1985) has argued that the threat of war is good for the economy because government money spent on military preparedness stimulates the private sector of the economy, creates jobs, and encourages consumer spending. For example, at the beginning of the war on terrorism, the Pentagon awarded what was expected to become the largest military contract in U.S. history to Lockheed Martin to build a new generation of supersonic stealth fighter jets. The contract was expected to be worth more than $200 billion, creating thousands of new jobs in an economy that was struggling at the time of the announcement (Dao, 2000). Issues regarding the military–industrial complex are intricately linked to problems in the economy, which we will examine now.

> **military–industrial complex** the mutual interdependence of the military establishment and private military contractors.

sought or unsought, by the military–industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist" (President Dwight D. Eisenhower). Ask the class to research the context for this famous warning.

Economic Systems in Global Perspective

The *economy* is the social institution that ensures the maintenance of society through the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. *Goods* are tangible objects that are necessary (such as food, clothing, and shelter) or desired (such as DVDs and electric toothbrushes). *Services* are intangible activities for which people are willing to pay (such as dry cleaning, a movie, or medical care).

Preindustrial, Industrial, and Postindustrial Economies

In all societies, the specific method of producing goods is related to the technoeconomic base of the society, as discussed in Chapter 10. In each society, people develop an economic system, ranging from simple to very complex, for the sake of survival.

Preindustrial economies include hunting and gathering, horticultural and pastoral, and agrarian societies. Most workers engage in *primary sector production—the extraction of raw materials and natural resources from the environment.* These materials and resources are typically consumed or used without much processing. The production units in hunting and gathering societies are small; most goods are produced by family members. The division of labor is by age and by gender (Hodson and Sullivan, 2008). The potential for producing surplus goods increases as people learn to domesticate animals and grow their own food. In horticultural and pastoral societies, the economy becomes distinct from family life. The distribution process becomes more complex with the accumulation of a *surplus* such that some people can engage in activities other than food production. In agrarian societies, production is related primarily to producing food. However, workers have a greater variety of specialized tasks, such as warlord or priest; for example, warriors are necessary to protect the surplus goods from plunder by outsiders (Hodson and Sullivan, 2008).

Industrial economies result from sweeping changes to the system of production and distribution of goods and services during industrialization. Drawing on new forms of energy (such as steam, gasoline, and electricity) and machine technology, factories proliferate as the primary means of producing goods. Most workers engage in *secondary sector production—the processing of raw materials (from the primary sector) into finished goods.* For example, steel workers process metal ore; auto workers then convert the ore into automobiles, trucks, and buses. In industrial economies, work becomes specialized and repetitive, activities become bureaucratically organized, and workers primarily work with machines instead of with one another. With the emergence of mass production, larger surpluses are generated, typically benefiting some people and organizations but not others.

A *postindustrial economy* is based on *tertiary sector production—the provision of services rather than goods—*as a primary source of livelihood for workers and profit for owners and corporate shareholders. Tertiary sector production includes a wide range of activities, such as fast-food service, transportation, communication, education, real estate, advertising, sports, and entertainment. As shown in "Census Profiles," a majority of U.S. jobs are in tertiary sector employment, as contrasted with primary or secondary sector employment.

Capitalism and socialism are the principal economic models in industrial and postindustrial countries. As we examine these two models, keep in mind that no society has a purely capitalist or socialist economy.

Capitalism

Capitalism is an economic system characterized by private ownership of the means of production, from which personal profits can be derived through market competition and without government intervention. Most of us think of ourselves as "owners" of private property because we own a car, a television, or other possessions. However, most of us are not capitalists; we *spend money* on the things we own rather than *make money* from them. Only a relatively few people own income-producing property from which a profit can be realized by producing and distributing goods and services; everyone else is a consumer. "Ideal" capitalism has four distinctive features: (1) private ownership of the means of production, (2) pursuit of personal profit, (3) competition, and (4) lack of government intervention.

- **Global Perspective:** "At a time when the global economic playing field is being flattened—enabling young Indians and Chinese to collaborate and compete with Americans more than ever before—this administration is off on an ideological jag. It is trying to take apart the New Deal by privatizing Social Security, when what we really need most today is a New New Deal to make more Americans employable in 21st-century jobs" (Thomas L. Friedman). Have students discuss this perspective.
- **Historical Perspective:** "In response to the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the U.S. Congress established the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) along with related regulatory agencies. Their job was to prevent the kind of wild financial speculation and greedy fraud that led to the Wall

census profiles

Civilian Occupations

Management, professional, and related occupations	38.6%
Service occupations	14.5%
Sales and office occupations	23.5%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	10.8%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	12.6%
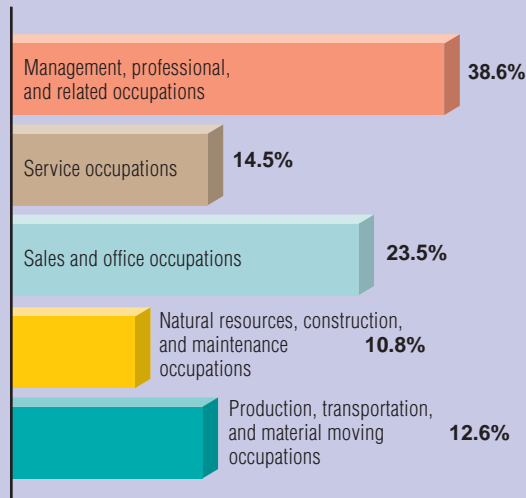
One of the questions the U.S. Census Bureau asked in the 2000 Census was about the occupations of people who were age 16 or over. The majority of people who were not full-time military employees responded that they held jobs in management, professional, service, and sale occupations, as contrasted with primary sector and secondary sector employment.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

Private Ownership of the Means of Production

Capitalist economies are based on the right of individuals to own income-producing property, such as land, water, mines, and factories, and the right to "buy" people's labor. However, under early monopoly capitalism (1890–1940), most ownership shifted from individuals to huge **corporations—organizations that have legal powers, such as the ability to enter into contracts and buy and sell property, separate from their individual owners.** In advanced monopoly capitalism (1940–present), ownership and control of major industrial and business sectors have become increasingly concentrated, and many corporations have become more global in scope. ***Transnational corporations*** **are large corporations that are headquartered in one country but sell and produce goods and services in many countries.** These corporations play a major role in the economies and governments of many nations. The magnitude of these corporations is shown in ■ Table 13.1, which compares the revenues of the world's twenty-five largest transnational corporations with the gross domestic product of entire countries.

Pursuit of Personal Profit

A tenet of capitalism is the belief that people are free to maximize their individual gain through personal profit; in the process, the entire society will benefit from their activities (Smith, 1976/1776). Economic development is assumed to benefit both capitalists and workers, and the general public also benefits from public expenditures (such as for roads, schools, and parks) made possible through an increase in business tax revenues. However, critics assert that specific individuals and families (not the general public) have been the primary recipients of profits.

economy the social institution that ensures the maintenance of society through the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

primary sector production the sector of the economy that extracts raw materials and natural resources from the environment.

secondary sector production the sector of the economy that processes raw materials (from the primary sector) into finished goods.

tertiary sector production the sector of the economy that is involved in the provision of services rather than goods.

capitalism an economic system characterized by private ownership of the means of production, from which personal profits can be derived through market competition and without government intervention.

corporations large-scale organizations that have legal powers, such as the ability to enter into contracts and buy and sell property, separate from their individual owners.

transnational corporations large corporations that are headquartered in one country but sell and produce goods and services in many countries.

table 13.1

Comparison of the Revenues of the World's 25 Largest Corporations with the GDP of Selected Countries (2007)

Company/Country	Revenues/GDP (in $ billions)
Greece	**360**
Wal-Mart Stores	351
Exxon Mobil	347
Royal Dutch Shell	319
Denmark	**308**
South Africa	**278**
BP	274
Argentina	**262**
General Motors	207
Hong Kong	**207**
Toyota Motor	205
Chevron	201
DaimlerChrysler	190
Malaysia	**181**
ConocoPhillips	172
Total	168
General Electric	168
Nigeria	**166**
Ford Motor	160
ING Group	158
Citigroup	147
Pakistan	**144**
AXA	140
Volkswagen	132
Sinopec	132
Crédit Agricole	128
Egypt	**128**
Allianz	125
Fortis	121
Bank of America Corp.	117
HSBC Holdings	115
American International Group	113
China National Petroleum	111
Peru	**109**
BNP Paribas	109

Source: Global Policy, 2009.

In early monopoly capitalism, stockholders in companies such as American Tobacco, Westinghouse, and Sears, Roebuck derived massive profits from companies that held near-monopolies on specific goods and services (Hodson and Sullivan, 2008). In advanced (late) monopoly capitalism, profits have become even more concentrated.

Competition In theory, competition acts as a balance to excessive profits. When producers vie with one another for customers, they must be able to offer innovative goods and services at competitive prices. However, from the time of early industrial capitalism, the trend has been toward less, rather than more, competition among companies. In early monopoly capitalism, competition was diminished by increasing concentration *within* a particular industry, a classic case being the virtual monopoly on oil held by John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company (Tarbell, 1925/1904; Lundberg, 1988). Today, Microsoft Corporation has been the subject of federal investigations and lawsuits because it so dominates certain areas of the computer software industry that it has virtually no competitors in those areas. In other situations, several companies may dominate certain industries. An *oligopoly* exists when several companies overwhelmingly control an entire industry. An example is the music industry, in which four giant companies are behind many of the labels and artists (see ■ Table 13.2). More specifically, a *shared monopoly* exists when four or fewer companies supply 50 percent or more of a particular market. Examples include U.S. automobile manufacturers (referred to as the "Big Three") and cereal companies (three of which control 77 percent of the market).

In advanced monopoly capitalism, mergers also occur *across* industries: Corporations gain near-monopoly control over all aspects of the production and distribution of a product by acquiring both the companies that supply the raw materials and the companies that are the outlets for the product. For example, an oil company may hold leases on the land where the oil is pumped out of the ground, own the plants that convert the oil into gasoline, and own the individual gasoline stations that sell the product to the public.

Corporations with control both within and across industries are often formed by a series of mergers and acquisitions across industries. These corporations are referred to as *conglomerates—combinations of businesses in different commercial areas, all of which are owned by one holding company.* Media ownership is a case in point; companies such as Time Warner have extensive holdings in radio and television stations, cable television companies, book publishing firms, and film production and distribution companies, to name only a few. Today, most of our news originates

table 13.2

The Music Industry's Big Four

Company	Country	Leading Artists
Universal Music Group (MCA, Polygram)	France	Lady Gaga Lil Wayne Eminem
Sony Music Entertainment (Columbia, RCA, Sony, Jive)	USA	Mariah Carey Pearl Jam Avril Lavigne
EMI Group (Capitol, EMI, Virgin)	United Kingdom	The Beatles Keith Urban Amy Winehouse Norah Jones
Warner Music Group (Atlantic, Elektra)	United States	Led Zeppelin Jewel Madonna Linkin Park

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▲ Rupert Murdoch, CEO of News Corporation, controls many newspapers, magazines, and television and radio stations, part of a recent trend in media consolidation. Murdoch has stated that "Monopoly is a terrible thing until you have it." Do you agree?

from ten massive conglomerates that dominate the global media market. According to media scholars, three factors triggered the rapid growth of the media conglomerates: (1) aggressive political and economic maneuvering by dominant media firms, (2) introduction of new technologies that increased the cost efficiency of global systems, and (3) policies of the U.S. government and organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization (McChesney, 1998). Rupert Murdoch, head of News Corporation—the conglomerate that owns more than a hundred newspapers worldwide, major movie studios, publishing interests, the Fox TV network, and cable channels—once stated, "Monopoly is a terrible thing until you have it" (qtd. in McChesney, 1998: 54). Concerned about the degree to which media conglomerates control the news that we receive about politics and the economy, media watchdog groups encourage each of us to keep an eye on the media (see the You Can Make a Difference box).

oligopoly a condition existing when several companies overwhelmingly control an entire industry.

shared monopoly a condition that exists when four or fewer companies supply 50 percent or more of a particular market.

conglomerate a combination of businesses in different commercial areas, all of which are owned by one holding company.

- **Recent Events:** "The record industry has been hammered in recent years by online piracy and a dearth of mega-hits, with sales sliding steadily since their peak of $14.6 billion in 1999. The new business model puts the Internet at the heart of the industry in an attempt to transform artist Web sites from promotional vehicles into money-making enterprises" (*BusinessWeek,* 9/2008).

- **Media Coverage:** "Investors are already being taxed by inflation and can rationally expect that tax rate (the inflation rate) to be raised going forward. Wages are not keeping up. Main Street is being taxed to fund Wall Street excess. Anyone who works, saves and invests is exposed to confiscation of his capital and earnings through inflation" (Gerald P. O'Driscoll, Jr., *Wall Street Journal,* 8/2008).

you can make a difference

Keeping an Eye on the Media

Do we get all of the news that we should about how our government operates and about the pressing social problems of our nation? Consider this list (shown by number) of the top five news stories that some media analysts believe were *not* adequately covered by the U.S. media in recent years:

1. "US Congress Sells Out to Wall Street": Lawmakers receive millions of dollars from Wall Street firms, such as Bear Stearns, Goldman Sachs, and Lehman Brothers, and then approve a financial bailout that benefits some of these financial giants.
2. "US Schools Are More Segregated Today Than in the 1950s": Millions of students of color are in "dropout factory" high schools while higher-income white students are attending schools that will provide them with a much better chance to graduate and find a good job. Two out of five Latinos/as and African American students attend intensely segregated schools today.
3. "Toxic Waste Behind Somali Pirates": The media are focusing on fisherman pirates but ignoring illegal, unreported fleets around the world that dump toxic waste in Somali waters.
4. "Nuclear Waste Pools in North Carolina": The Shearson Harris nuclear plant has the largest radioactive-waste storage pools in the United States, and this facility is also the repository for radioactive spent fuel rods from two other nuclear plants. The media fail to discuss what would happen if there were a fire and meltdown, creating major risks for cancer, contamination of land, and off-site property damage.
5. "Europe Blocks US Toxic Products": Europe has new regulations requiring companies that want to sell their products to eliminate toxic substances and to manufacture safer electronics, automobiles, toys, and cosmetics. Lobbyists have been ineffective at getting European leaders to be more lenient, but they have been successful in keeping similar regulations out of the United States. (Project Censored, 2010)

According to Project Censored, an organization of students and professors who produce the annual "Top 25 Censored Stories" list at Sonoma State University's Sociology Department, many important stories are either missing from the news altogether or do not receive the attention they deserve. (To view the entire list, visit Project Censored's website at **www.projectcensored.org.**)

What should be the role of the media in keeping us informed? The media are often referred to as the "Fourth Estate" or the "Fourth Branch of the Government" because they are supposed to provide people with relevant information on important topics regarding how the government operates in a democratic society. This information can then be used by citizens to decide how they will vote on candidates and issues presented for their approval or disapproval on the election ballot.

The first step in keeping an eye on the news is to become more analytical about the "news" that we do receive. How can we evaluate the information we receive from the media? In *How to Watch TV News,* the media analysts Neil Postman and Steve Powers (1992: 160–168) suggest the following:

1. We should keep in mind that television news shows are called "shows" for a reason. They are not a public service or a public utility.
2. We should never underestimate the power of commercials, which tell us much about our society.
3. We should learn about the economic and political interests of those who run television stations or own a controlling interest in a media conglomerate.
4. We should pay attention to the *language* of newscasts, not just the visual imagery. For example, a *question* may reveal as much about the *questioner* as the person answering the question.

Becoming aware of the media's role in influencing people's opinions about how our government is run is the first step toward becoming an informed participant in the democratic political process. The second step in keeping an eye on the news is becoming aware of national and international events that should receive more coverage than they do or that might not be reported in a fair and unbiased manner. With traditional media, these steps are somewhat easy to follow; however, with newer social media, we must look even closer to distinguish what may be presented as nothing more than individual opinions as opposed to concrete information and facts. How do you think that we might go about this endeavor?

- **Popular Culture:** "Keith Rupert Murdoch is finally, at 77, what he has long dreamed of being: the world's most influential newspaper publisher. He is also much more than that: his $29 billion (revenue) News Corp. churns out films, video news and entertainment, books and Web content galore. While people think of Murdoch as rough-hewn and self-made, which in many ways he is, his background is gilded: he studied at Oxford and inherited his first newspaper" (Paul Steiger, *Time,* 2008).
- **Historical Perspective:** "For two decades polls increasingly have indicated public dismay at the spin and fantasies of the press. In fact, a recent Gallup Poll says Americans rate the trustworthiness of journalists at about the level of politicians and as only slightly more
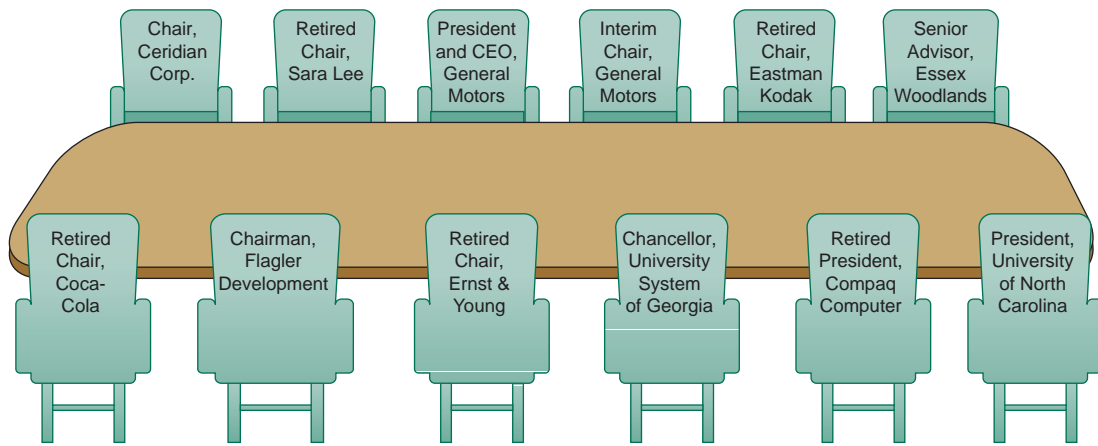
▲ **FIGURE 13.5 THE GENERAL MOTORS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
The 2009 General Motors Board of Directors shows the nature of interlocking directorates. On the chair representing each of the directors is the name of another entity each director is connected with, and his or her position with that entity.

Source: General Motors, 2009.

Competition is reduced over the long run by *interlocking corporate directorates*—**members of the board of directors of one corporation who also sit on the board(s) of other corporations.** Although the Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914 made it illegal for a person to sit simultaneously on the boards of directors of two corporations that are in *direct* competition with each other, a person may serve simultaneously on the board of a financial institution (a bank, for example) and the board of a commercial corporation (a computer manufacturing company or a furniture store chain, for example) that borrows money from the bank. Directors of competing corporations may also serve together on the board of a third corporation that is not in direct competition with the other two. In 1996 former Defense Secretary Frank C. Carlucci sat on the corporate boards of fourteen Fortune 1,000 companies; former Labor Secretary Ann D. McLaughlin sat on eleven; and former Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Joseph A. Califano, Jr., sat on nine (Dobrzynski, 1996). An example of interlocking directorates is depicted in ▶ Figure 13.5. Interlocking directorates diminish competition by producing interdependence. Individuals who serve on multiple boards are often able to forge cooperative arrangements that benefit their corporations but not necessarily the general public. When several corporations are controlled by the same financial interests, they are more likely to cooperate with one another than to compete (Mintz and Schwartz, 1985).

Lack of Government Intervention   Ideally, capitalism works best without government intervention in the marketplace. The policy of *laissez-faire* (les-ay-FARE, which means "leave alone") was advocated by the economist Adam Smith in his 1776 treatise *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.* Smith argued that when people pursue their own selfish interests, they are guided "as if by an invisible hand" to promote the best interests of society (see Smith, 1976/1776). Today, terms such as *market economy* and *free enterprise* are often used, but the underlying assumption is the same: Free market competition, not the government, should regulate prices and wages. However, the "ideal" of unregulated markets benefiting all citizens has seldom been realized. Individuals and companies in pursuit of higher profits have run roughshod over weaker competitors, and small businesses have grown into large, monopolistic corporations. Accordingly, government regulations were implemented in an effort to curb the excesses of the marketplace brought about by laissez-faire policies.

> **interlocking corporate directorates** members of the board of directors of one corporation who also sit on the board(s) of other corporations.

However, much of what is referred to as government intervention has been in the form of aid to business. Between 1850 and 1900, corporations received government assistance in the form of public subsidies and protection from competition by tariffs, patents, and trademarks. Government intervention in the 1990s included billions of dollars in subsidies to farmers, tax credits for corporations, and large subsidies or loan guarantees to automakers, aircraft companies, railroads, and others. Overall, most corporations have gained much more than they have lost as a result of government involvement in the economy.

Socialism

Socialism **is an economic system characterized by public ownership of the means of production, the pursuit of collective goals, and centralized decision making.** Like "pure" capitalism, "pure" socialism does not exist. Karl Marx described socialism as a temporary stage en route to an ideal communist society. Although the terms *socialism* and *communism* are associated with Marx and are often used interchangeably, they are not identical. Marx defined

▼ For almost three decades, the federal government tended to reduce the amount of regulation that industries, banks, and investment firms faced. However, the 2008 collapse of the U.S. real estate market and the resulting failure (or near-failure) of huge investment firms and banks have made more intense regulation a certainty. Here, Goldman Sachs executives were called before Congress in 2010 to account for their company's business practices in the years leading up to the meltdown.

© Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images

communism as an economic system characterized by common ownership of all economic resources. In the *Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital,* he predicted that the working class would become increasingly impoverished and alienated under capitalism. As a result, the workers would become aware of their own class interests, revolt against the capitalists, and overthrow the entire system (see Turner, Beeghley, and Powers, 2007). After the revolution, private property would be abolished, and capital would be controlled by collectives of workers who would own the means of production. The government (previously used to further the interests of the capitalists) would no longer be necessary. People would contribute according to their abilities and receive according to their needs (Marx and Engels, 1967/1848; Marx, 1967/1867). "Ideal" socialism has three distinctive features: (1) public ownership of the means of production, (2) pursuit of collective goals, and (3) centralized decision making.

Public Ownership of the Means of Production

In a truly socialist economy, the means of production are owned and controlled by a collectivity or the state, not by private individuals or corporations. For example, prior to the early 1990s, the state owned all the natural resources and almost all the capital in the Soviet Union. At least in theory, goods were produced to meet the needs of the people. Access to housing and medical care was considered to be a right.

Leaders of the Soviet Union and some Eastern European nations decided to abandon government ownership and control of the means of production because the system was unresponsive to the needs of the marketplace and offered no incentive for increased efficiency (Boyes and Melvin, 2002). Since the early 1990s, Russia and other states in the former Soviet Union have attempted to privatize ownership of production. China—previously the world's other major communist economy—announced in 1997 that it would privatize most state industries (Serrill, 1997). In *privatization,* resources are converted from state ownership to private ownership; the government takes an active role in developing, recognizing, and protecting private property rights (Boyes and Melvin, 2002). However, it appears that these measures may have failed in Russia: Shortages once again loom, and many people want to see a transformation to a more socialist form of economy.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis
- **For Discussion:** Have students summarize the difference between socialism and communism. Have them research and discuss reasons why state socialism in the former Soviet Union did not evolve into a fully communist economic system.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy

- **Extra Examples:** "President Bush signed a 10-year, $190 billion farm bill that promises to expand subsidies to growers. The bill guarantees a more stable income by raising subsidies for grain and cotton growers . . . by reviving subsidies for wool and honey, and by providing new payments for milk, peanuts, lentils and dry peas" (CNN, 5/2002). Have students research farm subsidies in the context of capitalism and socialism.
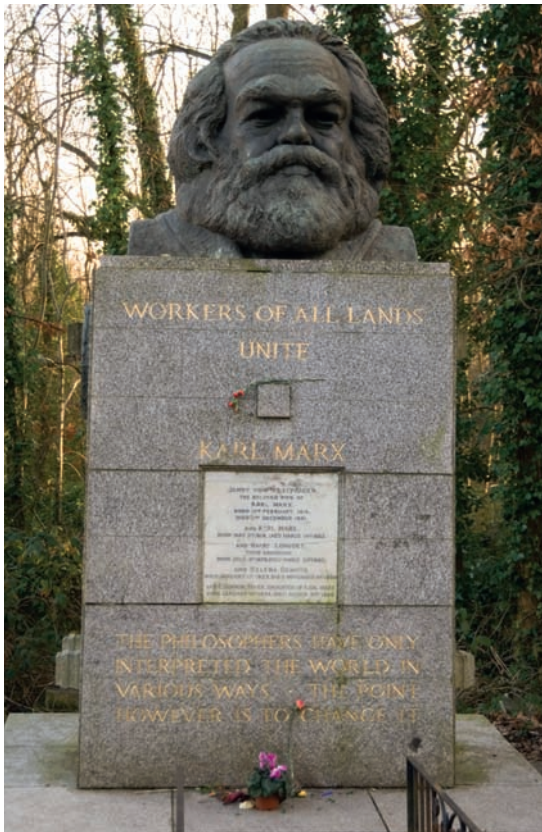
▲ Karl Marx's beliefs about capitalism, socialism, and communism are widely known today, although it has been more than 100 years since his famous proclamation—as emblazoned on his tombstone outside London—"Workers of all lands unite."

Pursuit of Collective Goals Socialism is based on the pursuit of collective goals, rather than on personal profits. Equality in decision making replaces hierarchical relationships (such as between owners and workers or between political leaders and citizens). Everyone shares in the goods and services of society—especially necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical care—based on need, not on ability to pay. In reality, however, few societies pursue purely collective goals.

Centralized Decision Making Another tenet of socialism is centralized decision making. In theory, economic decisions are based on the needs of society; the government is responsible for aiding the production and distribution of goods and services. Central planners set wages and prices to ensure that the production process works. When problems such

as shortages and unemployment arise, they can be dealt with quickly and effectively by the central government (Boyes and Melvin, 2002).

Mixed Economies

As we have seen, no economy is truly capitalist or socialist; most economies are mixtures of both. A *mixed economy* combines elements of a market economy (capitalism) with elements of a command economy (socialism). Sweden, Great Britain, and France have mixed economies, sometimes referred to as *democratic socialism—an economic and political system that combines private ownership of some of the means of production, governmental distribution of some essential goods and services, and free elections.* For example, government ownership in Sweden is limited primarily to railroads, mineral resources, a public bank, and liquor and tobacco operations (Feagin and Feagin, 1997). Compared with capitalist economies, however, the government in a mixed economy plays a larger role in setting rules, policies, and objectives.

The government is also heavily involved in providing services such as medical care, child care, and transportation. In Sweden, for example, all residents have health insurance, housing subsidies, child allowances, paid parental leave, and day-care subsidies. Recently, some analysts have suggested that the United States has assumed many of the characteristics of a *welfare state, a state in which there is extensive government action to provide support and services to the citizens,* as it has attempted to meet the basic needs of older persons, young

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socialism an economic system characterized by public ownership of the means of production, the pursuit of collective goals, and centralized decision making.

mixed economy an economic system that combines elements of a market economy (capitalism) with elements of a command economy (socialism).

democratic socialism an economic and political system that combines private ownership of some of the means of production, governmental distribution of some essential goods and services, and free elections.

welfare state a state in which there is extensive government action to provide support and services to the citizens.

- **Extra Examples:** "A fully free economy (true laissez-faire) never has existed, but governmental authority over economic activity has sharply increased since the eighteenth century, and especially since the Great Depression. Today the United States, once the citadel of capitalism, is a 'mixed economy' in which government bestows favors and imposes restrictions with no clear or consistent principle in mind" (Robert Hessen).

children, unemployed people, and persons with a disability (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Work in the Contemporary United States

The economy in the United States and other contemporary societies is partially based on the work (purposeful activity, labor, or toil) that people perform. However, work in high-income nations is highly differentiated and often fragmented because people have many kinds of occupations. Some occupations are referred to as professions.

Professions

Although sociologists do not always agree on exactly which occupations are professions, most of them agree that the term *professionals* includes most doctors, natural scientists, engineers, computer scientists, certified public accountants, economists, social scientists, psychotherapists, lawyers, policy experts of various sorts, professors, at least some journalists and editors, some clergy, and some artists and writers.

Characteristics of Professions   *Professions are high-status, knowledge-based occupations that have five major characteristics* (Freidson, 1970, 1986; Larson, 1977):

1. *Abstract, specialized knowledge.* Professionals have abstract, specialized knowledge of their field based on formal education and interaction with colleagues. Education provides the credentials, skills, and training that allow professionals to have job opportunities and assume positions of authority within organizations (Brint, 1994).
2. *Autonomy.* Professionals are autonomous in that they can rely on their own judgment in selecting the relevant knowledge or the appropriate technique for dealing with a problem. Consequently, they expect patients, clients, or students to respect that autonomy.
3. *Self-regulation.* In exchange for autonomy, professionals are theoretically self-regulating. All professions have licensing, accreditation, and regulatory associations that set professional standards and that require members to adhere to a code of ethics as a form of public accountability. Realistically,

however, many professionals work within large-scale bureaucracies that have rules, policies, and procedures to which everyone must adhere.

4. *Authority.* Because of their authority, professionals expect compliance with their directions and advice. Their authority is based on mastery of the body of specialized knowledge and on their profession's autonomy: Professionals do not expect the client to argue about the professional advice rendered.
5. *Altruism.* Ideally, professionals have concern for others, not just their own self-interest. The term *altruism* implies some degree of self-sacrifice whereby professionals go beyond their self-interest or personal comfort so that they can help a patient or client (Hodson and Sullivan, 2008).

Social Reproduction of Professionals   Although higher education is one of the primary qualifications for a profession, the emphasis on education gives children whose parents are professionals a disproportionate advantage early in life (Brint, 1994). There is a direct linkage between parental education/income and children's scores on college admissions tests such as the SAT, as shown in ▶ Figure 13.6. In turn, test scores are directly related to students' ability to gain admission to colleges and universities, which serve as springboards to most professions.

Race and gender are also factors in access to the professions. Historically, people of color have been underrepresented. Today, as more persons from underrepresented groups have gained access to professions such as law and medicine, their children have also gained the educational and mentoring opportunities necessary for professional careers, but wide disparities remain in many fields.

Deprofessionalization   Certain professions are undergoing a process of *deprofessionalization, in which some of the characteristics of a profession are eliminated* (Hodson and Sullivan, 2008). Occupations such as pharmacist have already been *deskilled,* as Nino Guidici explains:

> In the old days [people] took druggists as doctors. . . . All we do [now] is count pills. Count out twelve on the counter, put 'em in here, count out twelve more. . . . Doctors used to write out their own formulas and we made most of these things. Most of the work

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- **Research:** Between 2004 and 2014, 7 of the 10 fastest-growing jobs in the United States will be in health care, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Of the top 30 fastest-growing jobs, 17 are health care related.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to write for ten minutes in class. Have them tackle this question: "How do race, class, and gender contribute to the reproduction of professionals?"
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis
- **Media Coverage:** "The economy has clearly slipped into a jobs recession because the housing meltdown and credit market

Parents' Income

Income	Critical reading	Mathematics	Writing
Less than $20,000	434	456	430
$20,000–$40,000	462	473	453
$40,000–$60,000	488	496	477
$60,000–$80,000	502	510	490
$80,000–$100,000	514	525	504
$100,000–$120,000	522	534	512
$120,000–$140,000	526	537	517
$140,000–$160,000	533	546	525
$160,000–$200,000	535	548	529
More than $200,000	554	570	552

Parents' Education

Education	Critical reading	Mathematics	Writing
No high school diploma	419	441	417
High school diploma	464	474	455
Associate degree	482	490	471
Bachelor's degree	518	531	510
Graduate degree	553	565	546

- Critical reading
- Mathematics
- Writing

▲ **FIGURE 13.6 SAT SCORES BY PARENTS' INCOME AND EDUCATION, 2008**

Source: SAT, 2009.

is now done in the laboratory. The real druggist is found in the manufacturing firms. They're the factory workers and they're the pharmacists. We just get the name of the drugs and the number and the directions. It's a lot easier. (qtd. in Terkel, 1990/1972)

However, colleges of pharmacy in many universities have fought against deprofessionalization by upgrading the degrees awarded to pharmacy graduates from the traditional B.S. in pharmacy to a Ph.D. This upgrading of degrees has also occurred over the past two decades in law schools, where the Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) has been changed to the Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree.

Other Occupations

Occupations are categories of jobs that involve similar activities at different work sites (Reskin and Padavic, 2002). More than 500 different occupational categories and 31,000 occupation titles, ranging from motion picture cartoonist to drop-hammer operator,

are currently listed by the U.S. Census Bureau. Historically, occupations have been classified as blue collar and white collar. Blue-collar workers were primarily factory and craft workers who did manual labor; white-collar workers were office workers and professionals. However, contemporary workers in the service sector do not easily fit into either of these categories; neither do the so-called pink-collar workers, primarily women, who are employed in occupations such as preschool teacher, dental assistant, secretary, and clerk (Hodson and Sullivan, 2008).

Sociologists establish broad occupational categories by distinguishing between employment in the primary labor market and in the secondary labor market. The *primary labor market* consists of high-paying jobs with good benefits that have some degree of security and the possibility of future advancement. By contrast, the *secondary labor market* consists of low-paying jobs with few benefits and very little job security or possibility for future advancement (Bonacich, 1972).

professions high-status, knowledge-based occupations.

occupations categories of jobs that involve similar activities at different work sites.

primary labor market the sector of the labor market that consists of high-paying jobs with good benefits that have some degree of security and the possibility of future advancement.

secondary labor market the sector of the labor market that consists of low-paying jobs with few benefits and very little job security or possibility for future advancement.

turmoil has spread to the broader economy. Persistent job losses will eventually pull the overall economy into recession. Early in a downturn, businesses typically react by first cutting marginal jobs, which tend to be lowest paying, and the effect can be a transitory boost to average pay" (*Wall Street Journal,* 9/2008). Have students research current job statistics. Has unemployment started to rebound?

Upper-Tier Jobs: Managers and Supervisors Managers are essential in contemporary bureaucracies, where work is highly specialized and authority structures are hierarchical. Workers at each level of the hierarchy take orders from their immediate superiors and perhaps give orders to a few subordinates. Upper-level managers are typically responsible for coordination of activities and control of workers. The *span of control,* or the number of workers a manager supervises, is affected by the organizational structure and by technology. Some analysts believe that hierarchical organization is necessary to coordinate the activities of a large number of people; others suggest that it produces apathy and alienation among workers (Blauner, 1964).

Lower-Tier and Marginal Jobs Positions in the lower tier of the service sector are part of the secondary labor market, characterized by low wages, little job security, few chances for advancement, higher unemployment rates, and very limited (if any) unemployment benefits. Typical lower-tier positions include janitor, waitress, messenger, sales clerk, typist, file clerk, migrant laborer, and textile worker. Large numbers of young people, people of color, recent immigrants, and white women are employed in this sector (Callaghan and Hartmann, 1991).

Marginal jobs **differ from the employment norms of the society in which they are located;** examples in the U.S. labor market include personal service and private household workers. Marginal jobs are frequently not covered by government work regulations—such as minimum standards of pay, working conditions, and safety standards—or do not offer sufficient hours of work each week to provide a living (Hodson and Sullivan, 2008). Today, more than 11 million U.S. workers are employed in personal service industries such as eating and drinking places, hotels, laundries, beauty shops, and household service, primarily maid service (Hodson and Sullivan, 2008). Occupational segregation by race and gender is clearly visible in marginal jobs in personal service industries. Private household workers, including launderers, cooks, maids, housekeepers, gardeners, babysitters, and nannies, frequently must travel long distances to get to work, and many rely on public transportation, which can add hours to their workday. Moreover, household work is marginal: It lacks regularity, stability, and adequacy. The jobs are excluded from most labor legislation, employers often pay cash in order to avoid payroll taxes and Social Security, and the jobs typically provide no insurance or retirement benefits (Hodson and Sullivan, 2008).

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▲ Occupational segregation by race and gender is clearly visible in personal service industries, such as restaurants and fast-food chains. Women and people of color are disproportionately represented in marginal jobs such as waitperson or fast-food server—jobs that typically do not meet societal norms for benefits and security.

Contingent Work

Contingent work **is part-time work, temporary work, or subcontracted work that offers advantages to employers but that can be detrimental to the welfare of workers.** Contingent work is found in every segment of the workforce, including colleges and universities, where tenure-track positions are more scarce than in the past and a series of one-year, nontenure-track appointments at the lecturer or instructor level has become a means of livelihood for many professionals. The federal government is part of this trend, as is private enterprise. In the health care field, physicians, nurses, and other workers are increasingly employed through temporary agencies.

Employers benefit by hiring workers on a part-time or temporary basis; they are able to cut costs, maximize profits, and have workers available only when they need them. Temporary workers are the fastest-growing segment of the contingent workforce, and agencies that "place" them have increased dramatically in number in the last decade. The agencies provide workers on a contract basis to employers for an hourly fee; workers are paid a portion of this fee.

- **For Discussion:** Ask students how marginal jobs are defined. What are some examples?
- **Extra Examples:** Talk about some of the ways that marginal jobs have been internationalized. Introduce the term *global assembly line* and the categories of people most likely to do this kind of work.

- **For Discussion:** Ask students to discuss the effects of subcontracting on workers and corporations. If they were employers, how would they justify this practice to their employees?

Subcontracted work is another form of contingent work that often cuts employers' costs at the expense of workers. Instead of employing a large workforce, many companies have significantly reduced the size of their payrolls and benefit plans by **subcontracting— an agreement in which a corporation contracts with other (usually smaller) firms to provide specialized components, products, or services to the larger corporation.** Hiring and paying workers become the responsibility of the subcontractor, not of the larger corporation. The employment practices of some subcontractors are unethical, if not illegal.

The Underground Economy

Some social analysts make a distinction between the legitimate and the underground economies in the United States. For the most part, the occupations previously described in this chapter operate within the *legitimate economy:* Taxes on income are paid by employers and employees, and individuals who hold jobs requiring a specialized license (such as craftspeople or taxi drivers) possess the appropriate credentials for their work. By contrast, the *underground economy* is made up of a wide variety of activities through which people make money that they do not report to the government, and in some cases, their endeavors may involve criminal behavior (Venkatesh, 2006). Sometimes referred to as the "shadow economy," the underground economy is made up of workers who are paid "off the books," which means that they are paid in cash, their earnings are not reported, and no taxes are paid. Lawful jobs, such as nannies, construction workers, and landscape/yard workers, are often part of the shadow economy because workers and bosses make under-the-table deals so that both can gain through the transaction: Employers pay less for workers' services, and workers have more money to take home than if they paid taxes on their earnings. According to some financial analysts, the underground economy is increasing rapidly because of the growing number of low-wage, undocumented immigrant workers who come to the United States hoping for a better life for themselves and their families (McTague, 2005). Fear of apprehension by immigration authorities is enough to drive many undocumented workers into the underground economy.

The underground economy also involves trade in lawful goods that are sold "off the books" because no taxes are paid on the sales. In his study of the underground economy of the urban poor, the sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh (2006: 9) explains how these transactions take place:

> Most underground exchanges are short-term efforts to make a buck, but they can nevertheless follow strict patterns. Individuals know where to meet one another to trade off the books; there are usually particular places where this trading occurs and particular people who are known to be involved. People will have a rough idea of prices or rates of barter and trade before initiating the exchange. And it is not difficult to predict when conflict may arise; nor are people entirely unaware of the means for addressing disputes over quality, pricing, and service. In other words, while there are endless reasons to participate in the underground (or to stop doing so), there are always rules to be obeyed, codes to be followed, and likely consequences of actions.

The selling of goods in the underground economy may have increased in recent years due to the popularity of online commerce. Although individual sellers are responsible for paying taxes on items sold on websites such as eBay, it is unknown how many of the sellers actually report income from their sales. According to one way of thinking, operating a business in the underground economy reveals capitalism at its best because it shows how the "free market" might work if there were no government intervention. However, from another perspective, selling goods or services in the underground economy borders on—or moves into—criminal behavior. Some estimates of the output of the underground economy place it as low as $970 million and as high as $1 trillion, and analysts believe that increasing numbers of people work or sell goods in this shadow economy (McTague, 2005). For some

marginal jobs jobs that differ from the employment norms of the society in which they are located.

contingent work part-time work, temporary work, or subcontracted work that offers advantages to employers but that can be detrimental to the welfare of workers.

subcontracting an agreement in which a corporation contracts with other (usually smaller) firms to provide specialized components, products, or services to the larger corporation.

• **Sociological Imagination:** Send your students to research some of the most effective antipoverty programs aimed at children: "Let us, above all, open wide the exits from poverty to the children of the poor" (President Lyndon Baines Johnson).
• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy

individuals, the underground economy offers the only alternative to unemployment, particularly in poor communities where people often feel alienated from the wider world and believe that they must use shady means to survive (see Venkatesh, 2006).

Unemployment

There are three major types of unemployment—cyclical, seasonal, and structural. *Cyclical unemployment* occurs as a result of lower rates of production during recessions in the business cycle; a recession is a decline in an economy's total production that lasts at least six months. Although massive layoffs initially occur, some of the workers will eventually be rehired, largely depending on the length and severity of the recession. *Seasonal unemployment* results from shifts in the demand for workers based on conditions such as the weather (in agriculture, the construction industry, and tourism) or the season (holidays and summer vacations). Both of these types of unemployment tend to be relatively temporary.

By contrast, structural unemployment may be permanent. *Structural unemployment* arises because the skills demanded by employers do not match the skills of the unemployed or because the unemployed do not live where the jobs are located (McEachern, 2003). This type of unemployment often occurs when a number of plants in the same industry are closed or when new technology makes certain jobs obsolete. Structural unemployment often results from capital flight—the investment of capital in foreign facilities, as previously discussed. Today, many workers fear losing their jobs, exhausting their unemployment benefits (if any), and still not being able to find another job.

The *unemployment rate is the percentage of unemployed persons in the labor force actively seeking jobs.* The twenty-first century has seen a significant increase in the number of individuals reported to be unemployed in the United States. In 2000 the U.S. unemployment rate was 4.0 percent. However, by 2010 the overall rate had increased to 9.7 percent (see ▶ Map 13.2a and Map 13.2b). The unemployment rate for adult men was 10.0 percent, as compared to 8.0 percent for adult women. However, the breakdown for unemployment across age and racial/ethnic categories tells a more complete story: Teenagers of all racial/ethnic categories had a 26.1 percent unemployment rate. African Americans of all ages had a 16.5 percent unemployment rate; Hispanics (Latinos/as) had a 12.6 percent rate, as compared to a rate for whites (non-Hispanics) of 8.8 percent and for Asian Americans of 7.5 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). However, like other types of "official" statistics, unemployment rates may be misleading. Individuals who become discouraged in their attempt to find work and are no longer actively seeking employment are not counted as unemployed.

Labor Unions and Worker Activism

In their individual and collective struggles to improve their work environment and gain some measure of control over their work-related activities, workers have used a number of methods to resist workplace alienation. Many have joined labor unions to gain strength through collective action.

Labor Unions U.S. labor unions came into being in the mid-nineteenth century. Unions have been credited with gaining an eight-hour workday, a five-day workweek, health and retirement benefits, sick leave and unemployment insurance, and workplace health and safety standards for many employees. Most of these gains have occurred through *collective bargaining*—negotiations between employers and labor union leaders on behalf of workers. In some cases, union leaders have called strikes to force employers to accept the union's position

◀ During economic downturns and periods of high unemployment, good jobs become highly prized. These people are waiting for interviews at Con Edison, a large public utility in New York.

© AP Photo/Mark Lennihan

- **Media Coverage:** "The maker of Zippo lighters plans to lay off about 15% of its work force, partly because knockoffs of its trademarked lighters are hurting the bottom line. Zippo Manufacturing Co. said that it plans to lay off 121 workers. Besides the knockoffs, the company also blamed 'often confusing' Transportation Security Administration regulations governing lighters, an increase in gasoline and heating fuel prices and anti-smoking pressure" (*Houston Chronicle,* 9/2006).
- **Historical Perspective:** "We know what unions have done for other people. We have seen it and we have studied and we have cherished the idea of unionism. We have seen the history and development of unions in this country and we tell the growers that

▶ **MAP 13.2a**
U.S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY STATE BEFORE THE FALL OF 2008 (U. S. rate: 5.8%)

© Bureau of Labor Statistics/USDL

■	10.0% or over
■	7.0% to 9.9%
■	6.0% to 6.9%
■	5.0% to 5.9%
■	4.0% to 4.9%
■	3.0% to 3.9%
■	2.0% to 2.9%
□	1.9% or below
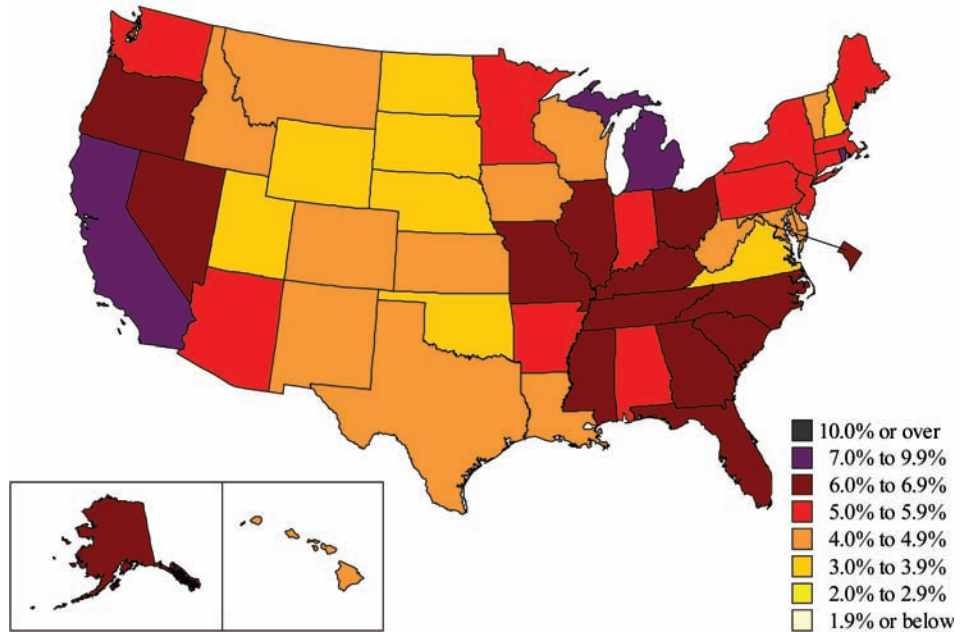
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics March 2010

▶ **MAP 13.2b**
U.S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY STATE AFTER THE GREAT RECESSION (U. S. rate: 9.7%)

© Bureau of Labor Statistics/USDL

■	10.0% or over
■	7.0% to 9.9%
■	6.0% to 6.9%
■	5.0% to 5.9%
■	4.0% to 4.9%
■	3.0% to 3.9%
■	2.0% to 2.9%
□	1.9% or below
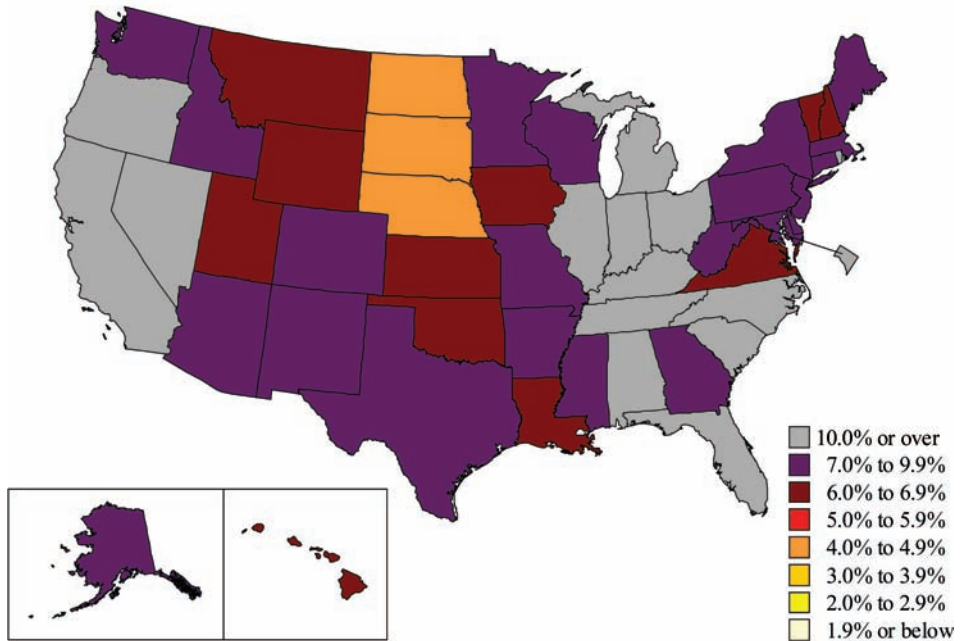
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics March 2010

we want nothing more, but that we want our own union and we are going to fight for it as long as it takes" (César Chávez).
• **For Discussion:** Ask students to discuss how the loss of unionized jobs might affect *all* workers.

• **Extra Examples:** "Fifty-six unions make up the membership of the American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations. There are about 15.4 million American workers who are members of unions, 10.5 million of whom belong to unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO" (aflcio.org).

on wages and benefits. While on strike, workers may picket in front of the workplace to gain media attention, to fend off "scabs" (nonunion workers) who might take over their jobs, and in some cases to discourage customers from purchasing products made or sold by their employer. In recent years, strike activity has diminished significantly because many workers have feared losing their jobs. In 2009 only 12.3 percent of wage and salary workers were union members, compared with 20.1 percent in 1983, the first year for which the federal government compiled such data (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). More men (13.3 percent) are union members than women (11.3 percent). In 2008 only 15 strikes, or work stoppages, involving more than 1,000 workers were reported, as compared with significantly higher numbers (in the 200 to 300 range) in the 1960s and 1970s (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). The number of workers involved in the actions declined from a peak of more than 2.5 million in 1971 to 72,000 in 2008. Clearly, union membership and activism have declined in the United States over the past four decades.

Absenteeism and Sabotage Absenteeism is one means by which workers resist working conditions they consider to be oppressive. Other workers use sabotage to bring about informal work stoppages. The phrase "throwing a monkey wrench in the gears" originated with the practice of workers "losing" a tool in assembly-line machinery. Sabotage of this sort effectively brought the assembly line to a halt until the now-defective piece of machinery could be repaired. Although most workers do not sabotage machinery, a significant number do resist what they perceive to be oppression from supervisors and employers.

▲ Seeking to improve economic and social opportunities for farmworkers, the late César Chávez held rallies and engaged in other protest activities in an effort to better the workers' lives.

Studies of worker resistance are very important to our understanding of how people deal with the social organization of work. Previously, workers (especially women) have been portrayed as passive "victims" of their work environment. However, this is not always the case for either women or men; many workers resist problematic situations and demand better wages and work conditions.

Employment Opportunities for Persons with a Disability

An estimated 24.5 million persons between the ages of 16 and 74 have a condition that prevents them from working or limits the amount of work they can do. In 1990 the United States became the first nation to formally address the issue of equality for persons with a disability. When Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), this law established "a clear and comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability." Combined with previous disability rights laws (such as those that provide for the elimination of architectural barriers from new, federally funded buildings and for the maximum integration of schoolchildren with disabilities), the ADA is a legal mandate for the full equality of people with disabilities.

Despite this law, many working-age persons with a disability are unemployed today (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Most persons with a disability believe they could work if they were offered the opportunity. However, even when persons with a disability are able to find jobs, they earn less than persons without a disability. On the average, workers with a disability make 85 percent (for men) and 70 percent (for women) of what their coworkers without disabilities earn, and the gap is growing (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

What does it cost to "mainstream" persons with disabilities? A survey of personnel directors and other executives responsible for making hiring decisions for their companies found that the average cost of workplace modifications to accommodate employees with a disability was less than $500 (Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, 2003). Other accommodations cost about $1,000, with the largest single cost being $14,500 each for special Braille computer displays for visually impaired employees (Noble, 1995). As employment opportunities change in the global economy, it is important that employers use common sense and a creative approach when thinking about how persons with disabilities can fit into the marketplace.

• **Historical Perspective:** "Employers may not ask job applicants about the existence, nature or severity of a disability. Applicants may be asked about their ability to perform specific job functions.

A job offer may be conditioned on the results of a medical examination, but only if the examination is required for all entering employees in similar jobs" (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990).

Politics and the Economy in the Future

Thinking about U.S. politics and government in the future is very much like the old story about optimists and pessimists. According to the story, an eight-ounce cup containing exactly four ounces of water is placed on a table. The optimist comes in, sees the cup, and says, "The cup is half full." The pessimist comes in, sees the cup, and says, "The cup is half empty." Clearly, both the pessimist and the optimist are looking at the same cup containing the same amount of water, but their perspective on what they see is quite different. For some analysts, looking at the future of the U.S. government and the economy is very much like this.

First, views of the future of politics and government relate to specific concerns about the United States:

- What will be the future of political parties? What did the 2008 presidential election tell us about the nature of these institutions?
- Are global corporate interests and the concerns of the wealthy in this nation and elsewhere overshadowing the needs and interests of everyday people?
- How will elected politicians and appointed government officials handle the challenges regarding the changing demographics of the United States? For example, how will the aging population influence their decisions? Will increasing racial, ethnic, and religious diversity influence their decisions?
- Will policies be based on the best interests of the largest number of people, or will these policies be based on the best interests of a small elite who are major contributors to political campaigns?

Second, how will the U.S. economy look in the future? What about the global economy? Although sociologists do not have a crystal ball with which to predict the future, some general trends can be suggested.

Many of the trends we examined in this chapter will produce dramatic changes in the organization of the economy and work in the future. U.S. workers may find themselves fighting for a larger piece of an ever-shrinking economic pie that includes a trade deficit and a huge national debt. Even as the gender and racial–ethnic composition of the labor force continues to diversify, many workers will remain in race- and/or gender-segregated occupations and industries. At the same time, workers may increasingly

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▲ The next great wave of energy production is so-called "green" technology: solar- and wind-produced electricity, for example. However, in this area the United States lags behind other nations, including China, which was among the nations to aggressively subsidize alternative energy early on.

be fragmented into two major labor market divisions: (1) those who work in the innovative, primary sector and (2) those whose jobs are located in the growing secondary, marginal sector. In the innovative sector, increased productivity will be the watchword as corporations respond to heightened international competition. In the marginal sector, alienation will grow as temporary workers, sometimes professionals, look for avenues of upward mobility or at least a chance to make their work life more tolerable. Labor unions will be unable to help workers unless the unions embark on innovative programs to recruit new members, improve their image, and recover their former political clout (Hodson and Sullivan, 2008). However, in spite of these problems, most analysts predict that the United States will remain a major player in the world economy.

Most social analysts predict that transnational corporations will become even more significant in the global economy of this century. As they continue to compete for world market share, these corporations will become even less aligned with the values of any one nation. However, those who advocate increased globalization typically focus on its potential impact on industrialized nations, not the effect it may have on the 80 percent of the world's population that resides in low-income and middle-income nations. Persons in low-income nations may

unemployment rate the percentage of unemployed persons in the labor force actively seeking jobs.

- **Extra Examples:** "NAFTA recognizes the reality of today's economy—globalization and technology. Our future is not in competing at the low-level wage job; it is in creating high-wage, new technology jobs based on our skills and our productivity" (Senator John Kerry).

- **Media Coverage:** In *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman pleads for Americans to wake up to the perils and opportunities of an increasingly resource-strapped world. The world is getting crowded and hot. More people tapping computers and on the road means more competition for resources, more emissions. It's all "intensifying the extinction of plants and animals, [and] strengthening petro-dictatorships."

become increasingly baffled and resentful when they are bombarded with media images of Western affluence and consumption; billions of "have-nots" may feel angry at the "haves"—including the engineers and managers of transnational companies living and working in their midst.

In recent years, the average worker in the United States and other high-income countries has benefited more from global economic growth than have workers in lower-income countries. For example, the average citizen of Switzerland has an income several hundred times that of a resident of Ethiopia. More than a billion of the world's people live in abject poverty; for many, this means attempting to survive on less than $400 a year.

A global workplace is emerging in which telecommunications networks link workers in distant locations. In the developed world, the skills of some professionals will transcend the borders of their countries. For example, there is a demand for the services of international law specialists, engineers, and software designers across countries. Even as nations become more dependent on one another, they will also become more competitive in the economic sphere. Changes in the global economy may require people in all nations—including the United States—to make changes in the way that things are done on the individual, regional, and national levels. How we rise to these challenges in politics and the economy remains to be seen in the decades ahead.

chapter review

● What are the three types of authority?

Max Weber identified three types of authority: charismatic, traditional, and rational–legal. Charismatic authority is power based on a leader's personal qualities. Traditional authority is based on long-standing custom. Rational–legal authority is based on law or written rules and regulations, as found in contemporary bureaucracies.

● What are the main types of political systems?

The main types of political systems are monarchies, authoritarian systems, totalitarian systems, and democratic systems.

● How do pluralist and power elite perspectives view power in the United States?

According to the pluralist (functionalist) model, power is widely dispersed throughout many competing interest groups. People influence policy by voting, joining special interest groups and political action campaigns, and forming new groups. According to the elite (conflict) model, power is concentrated in a small group of elites, whereas the masses are relatively powerless.

● Who are the power elite, and why are they important?

According to C. Wright Mills, the power elite is composed of influential business leaders, key

government leaders, and the military. The elites possess greater resources than the masses, and public policy reflects their preferences.

● What is the primary function of the economy?

The economy is the social institution that ensures the maintenance of society through the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

● How do the major contemporary economic systems differ?

Capitalism, socialism, and mixed economies are the main systems in industrialized countries. Capitalism is characterized by ownership of the means of production, pursuit of personal profit, competition, and limited government intervention. Socialism is characterized by public ownership of the means of production, the pursuit of collective goals, and centralized decision making. In mixed economies, elements of a capitalist, market economy are combined with elements of a command, socialist economy. These mixed economies are often referred to as democratic socialism.

● What are the characteristics of professions?

Professions are high-status, knowledge-based occupations characterized by abstract, specialized knowledge; autonomy; authority over clients and subordinate occupational groups; and a degree of altruism.

- **Extra Examples:** Provide your class with current examples of the concept of political economy. A good place to focus would be the oil and gas industry.
- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disc also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.

- **CourseMate:** The Sociology CourseMate for this text gives your students access to an interactive ebook, flash cards, video, and other study and learning tools, including quizzes that provide immediate feedback. It's easiest for students to log in at **www .cengagebrain.com.**

● **What is contingent work?**

Contingent work is part-time work, temporary work, or subcontracted work that offers advantages to employers but may be detrimental to workers. Through the use of contingent workers, employers are able to cut costs and maximize profits, but workers have little or no job security.

key terms

questions for critical thinking

1. Who is ultimately responsible for decisions and policies that are made in a democracy such as the United States: the people or their elected representatives?
2. How would you design a research project that studies the relationship between campaign contributions to elected representatives and their subsequent voting records? What would be your hypothesis? What kinds of data would you need to gather? How would you gather accurate data?

turning to video

▶❚❚ Watch the CBS video *Made in America* (running time 2:06), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video presents American Apparel, a company in Los Angeles, California, that avoids outsourcing by hiring all of their employees in the USA. As you watch the video, think about media reports focusing on American companies outsourcing labor to workers in less wealthy countries such as India. After you watch the video, try answering these questions: Should more companies operate like American Apparel, with a commitment to hiring only American workers? Why or why not? You may want to consider what, if any, of the United States' interests, particularly those of average Americans (whose unemployment rate is over 10% many parts of the country), the increasing wealth of other nations serves.

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Health, Health Care, and Disability

Medicine is, I have found, a strange and in many ways disturbing business. The stakes are high, the liberties taken tremendous. We drug people, put needles and tubes into them, manipulate their chemistry, biology, and physics, lay them unconscious and open their bodies up to the world. We do so out of an abiding confidence in our know-how as a profession. What you find when you get in close, however—close enough to see the furrowed brows, the doubts and missteps, the failures as well as the successes—is how messy, uncertain, and also surprising medicine turns out to be.

The thing that still startles me is how fundamentally human an endeavor it is. Usually, when we think about medicine and its remarkable abilities, what comes to mind is the science and all it has given us to fight sickness and misery: the tests, the machines, the drugs, the procedures. And without question, these are at the center of virtually everything medicine achieves. But we rarely see how it all actually works. You have a cough that won't go away—and then? It's not science you call upon but a doctor. A doctor with good days and bad days. A doctor with a weird laugh and a bad haircut. A doctor with three other patients to see and, inevitably, gaps in what he knows and skills he's still trying to learn. . . . We look for medicine to be an orderly field of knowledge and procedure. But it is not. It is an imperfect science, an enterprise of constantly changing

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▲ **Dr. Atul Gawande (center) has written movingly about the differences between people's expectations of physicians and the medical establishment and the realities that they find in health care today. Sociologists study these contradictions to better understand a very complex and important part of U.S. social life.**

knowledge, uncertain information, fallible individuals, and at the same time lives on the line. There is science in what we do, yes, but also habit, intuition, and sometimes plain old guessing. The gap between what we know and what we aim for persists. And this gap complicates everything we do.

—Atul Gawande, M.D. (2002: 4, 5, 7), a surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, was a surgical resident when he wrote these words describing how he feels about the power and the limits of medicine.

Chapter Focus Question

Why are health, health care, and disability significant concerns not only for individuals but also for entire societies?

The everyday life of a doctor like Atul Gawande is filled with its high points and low points: Some patients benefit from medical treatments they receive from physicians, whereas others have sustained injuries or developed illnesses that are too severe or are beyond the scope of current knowledge and practice in the health care system to be successfully resolved. Physicians are human beings just like the patients they treat; however, much more is expected of them because of the availability of health care in the United States and other high-income nations and because the dominant role of doctors in modern high-tech medicine has led many individuals to believe that virtually anything should be possible when it comes to one's health and longevity. However, this assumption is often not an accurate reflection of how health, illness, and health care actually work.

In this chapter, we will explore the dynamics of health, health care, and disability from a sociological perspective, as well as look at issues through the eyes of those who have experienced medical problems. Before reading on, test your knowledge about health, illness, and health care by taking the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz.

What does the concept of health mean to you? At one time, health was considered to be simply the absence of disease. However, the World Health Organization (2003: 7) defines *health* as **a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.** According to this definition, health involves not only the absence of disease but also a positive sense of wellness. In other words, health is a multidimensional phenomenon: It includes physical, social, and psychological factors.

What is illness? Illness refers to an interference with health; like health, illness is socially defined and may change over time and between cultures. For example, in the United States and Canada, obesity is viewed as unhealthy, whereas in other times and places, obesity

In this chapter

- Health in Global Perspective
- Health in the United States
- Health Care in the United States
- Sociological Perspectives on Health and Medicine
- Mental Illness
- Disability
- Health Care in the Future

health a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.

indicated that a person was prosperous and healthy.

What happens when a person is perceived to have an illness or disease? Healing involves both personal and institutional responses to perceived illness and disease. One aspect of institutional healing is health care and the health care delivery system in a society. *Health care* **is any activity intended to improve health.** When people experience illness, they often seek medical attention in hopes of having their health restored. A vital part of health care is *medicine*—**an institutionalized system for the scientific diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of illness.**

▲ Singapore has the lowest infant mortality rate in the world. Why? Finding the answer to this question would benefit people from every nation.

© Lee Snider/The Image Works

Health in Global Perspective

Studying health and health care issues around the world offers insights on illness and how political and economic forces shape health care in nations. Disparities in health are glaringly apparent between high-income and low-income nations when we examine factors such as the prevalence of life-threatening diseases, rates of life expectancy and infant mortality, and access to health services. In regard to global health, for example, the number of people infected with HIV/AIDS more than doubled between 1990 and 2000 (from fewer than 15 million to more than 34 million). AIDS has cut life expectancy by five years in Nigeria, eighteen years in Kenya, and thirty-three years in Zimbabwe (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). *Life expectancy* **refers to an estimate of the average lifetime of people born in a specific year.** AIDS results in higher mortality rates in childhood and young adulthood, stages in the life course when mortality is otherwise low. However, AIDS is not the only disease reducing life expectancy in some nations. Most deaths in low- and middle-income nations are linked to infectious and parasitic diseases that are now rare in high-income, industrialized nations. Among these diseases are tuberculosis, polio, measles, diphtheria, meningitis, hepatitis, malaria, and leprosy. Although

it is estimated that only 13 percent of U.S. citizens and 9 percent of Canadians will die prior to age 60, health experts estimate that more than 1.5 billion people around the world will die prior to age 60. This is particularly true in low-income nations such as Zambia, where 80 percent of the people are not expected to see their sixtieth birthday.

The *infant mortality rate* **is the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births in a given year.** The infant mortality rate in some low-income nations is staggering: 116 infants under 1 year of age die per 1,000 live births in Angola, 155 die in Sierra Leone, and 212 die in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (World Health Organization, 2009). The World Health Organization (2009) estimates that two-thirds of those infants die during the *first month* of life. There are many reasons for these differences in life expectancy and infant mortality. Many people in low-income countries have insufficient or contaminated food; lack access to pure, safe water; and do not have adequate sewage and refuse disposal. Added to these hazards is a lack of information about how to maintain good health. Many of these nations also lack qualified physicians and health care facilities with up-to-date equipment and medical procedures.

Nevertheless, tremendous progress has been made in saving the lives of children and adults over the past 20 years. Life expectancy at birth has risen to more

- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disc provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint® slides, videos, PowerPoint® and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.
- **Global Perspective:** WHO's primary mission is "to combat disease, especially key infectious diseases, and to promote the general health of the peoples of the world. As well as coordinating

international efforts to monitor outbreaks of infectious disease such as SARS, malaria, and AIDS, it also has programs to combat such diseases, by developing and distributing vaccines" (World Health Organization).

- **Extra Examples:** "One sixth of the world's population does not have access to clean drinking water. More than 2 million people,

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Health, Illness, and Health Care?

True	False		
T	F	1.	The idea that everyone should have guaranteed health insurance coverage is accepted by nearly all Americans.
T	F	2.	The field of epidemiology focuses primarily on how individuals acquire disease and bodily injury.
T	F	3.	The primary reason that African Americans have shorter life expectancies than whites is the high rate of violence in central cities and the rural South.
T	F	4.	Native Americans have shown dramatic improvement in their overall health level since the 1950s.
T	F	5.	Health care in most high-income, developed nations is organized on a fee-for-service basis as it is in the United States.
T	F	6.	The medical–industrial complex has operated in the United States with virtually no regulation, and allegations of health care fraud have largely been overlooked by federal and state governments.
T	F	7.	Media coverage of chronic depression and other mental conditions focuses primarily on these problems as "women's illnesses."
T	F	8.	It is extremely costly for employers to "mainstream" persons with disabilities in the workplace.

Answers on page 462.

than 70 years in 114 countries, up from only 55 countries in 1990. Although this increase has been attributed to a number of factors, an especially important advance has been the development of a safe water supply (United Nations Development Programme, 2009).

Will improvements in health around the world continue to occur? Organizations such as the United Nations argue that both public-sector and private-sector initiatives will be required to improve global health conditions. For example, a United Nations report states that in the era of globalization and dominance by transnational corporations, "money talks louder than need" when "cosmetic drugs and slow-ripening tomatoes come higher on the list [of priorities] than a vaccine against malaria or drought-resistant crops for marginal lands" (United Nations Development Programme, 1999: 68).

Recently, pressing questions have arisen about the availability of new technologies and life-saving drugs around the world. An example is the problem of providing access to drugs in countries with high rates of HIV/AIDS. Many people cannot afford to pay for drugs, such as the three-drug combination therapy that prolongs the life of many AIDS patients.

Transnational pharmaceutical companies fear that if they provide their name-brand drugs at a lower price in low-income countries, that might undercut their major sales base in high-income countries if those drugs become available as generic products (which are less costly and can be made by more than one manufacturer) or are re-imported into the high-income countries at a reduced price. The companies claim that they need the money generated from sales of their name-brand drugs in order to fund research on other products that will reduce suffering and sometimes prolong human life. For this reason, pharmaceutical companies have increasingly marketed

health care any activity intended to improve health.

medicine an institutionalized system for the scientific diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of illness.

life expectancy an estimate of the average lifetime of people born in a specific year.

infant mortality rate the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births in a given year.

most of them children, die each year from water-borne diseases" (CNN, 9/2008).
- **Active Learning:** Ask students to work in small groups and compare their Sociology and Everyday Life quiz answers. Take a look at the correct answers, and identify which questions most

group members missed. Send students to the Internet to learn more about these issues and report back to the class.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on Health, Illness, and Health Care

1. **False**   The battle over passage of the historic health care reform law in 2010 was a reflection of how divided the United States is over universal health coverage.

2. **False.**   The primary focus of the epidemiologist is on the health problems of social aggregates or large groups of people, not on individuals as such.

3. **False.**   The lower life expectancy of African Americans as a category is due to a higher prevalence of life-threatening illnesses, such as cancer, heart disease, hypertension, and AIDS. However, it should be noted that African American males do have the highest death rates from homicide of any racial–ethnic category in the United States.

4. **True.**   Native Americans (including American Indians and native Alaskans) as a category have had significant improvement in health in recent decades. Some analysts attribute this change to better nutrition and health care services. However, other analysts point out that Native Americans continue to have high rates of mortality from diabetes, alcohol-related illnesses, and suicide.

5. **False.**   The United States is one of the few high-income, developed nations that does not have some form of universal health coverage. In the United States, health care has traditionally been purchased by the patient. In most other high-income nations, health care is provided or purchased by the government.

6. **False.**   A number of government investigations have focused on rising health care payments and allegations of fraud in the health care delivery system. Billing frauds have been found in Medicare and Medicaid payments to physicians, hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, medical labs, and medical equipment manufacturers.

7. **False.**   Until recently, chronic depression and other mental conditions were most often depicted as "female" problems. However, male depression has become more widely publicized through documentaries on individuals' lives and through advertising for antidepressants.

8. **False.**   Although disability expenditures nationwide may be costly, individual employers often find that they can accommodate the workplace needs of a worker with a disability for costs ranging from zero to several thousand dollars, thus opening up new opportunities for people previously excluded from certain types of jobs and careers.

Sources: Cockerham, 2009; Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009.

their prescription drugs to patients through the media, particularly television and print advertisements (see the Framing Health Issues in the Media box on page 464). Pharmaceutical companies that hold the patents on various drugs see their products as something that needs to be protected by law, whereas people in human relief agencies around the world are concerned about the fact that one-third of the world's population does not have access to essential medicines and that—even worse—this figure rises to one-half in the poorest parts of Africa and Asia (United Nations Development Programme, 2009). If we are to see a significant improvement in life expectancy and health among people in all of the nations of the world, improvements are needed in the availability of new medical technologies and life-saving drugs.

How about improvements in health and health care within one nation? Is there a positive relationship between the amount of money that a society spends on health care and the overall physical, mental, and social well-being of its people? Not necessarily. If there were such a relationship, people in the United States would be among the healthiest and most physically fit people in the world. Some estimates suggest that we spend as much as $2.5 trillion annually on health care (Fritze, 2010). Health care spending accounts for about 20 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the United States while it accounts for only 10.9 percent of the GDP in Switzerland, 10.7 percent in Germany, 9.7 percent in Canada, and 9.5 percent in France (National Coalition on Health Care, 2009).

- **Box Note:** Which questions did your students miss? Use this information to guide your class presentations and activities. Which "educated guesses" need to be confronted with facts?

▲ Access to quality health care is much greater for some people than for others. The factors that are involved vary not only for people within one nation but also across the nations of the world.

Health in the United States

Even if we limit our discussion (for the moment) to people in the United States, why are some of us healthier than others? Is it biology—our genes—that accounts for this difference? Does the environment within which we live have an effect? How about our own individual lifestyle?

Social Epidemiology

The field of social epidemiology attempts to answer questions such as these. *Social epidemiology* is the study of the causes and distribution of health, disease, and impairment throughout a population (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009). Typically, the target of the investigation is disease agents, the environment, and the human host. *Disease agents*

include biological agents such as insects, bacteria, and viruses that carry or cause disease; nutrient agents such as fats and carbohydrates; chemical agents such as gases and pollutants in the air; and physical agents such as temperature, humidity, and radiation. The *environment* includes the physical (geography and climate), biological (presence or absence of known disease agents), and social (socioeconomic status, occupation, and location of home) environments. The human *host* takes into account demographic factors (age, sex, and race/ethnicity), physical condition, habits and customs, and lifestyle (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009). Let's look briefly at some of these factors.

Age   Rates of illness and death are highest among the old and the young. Mortality rates drop shortly after birth and begin to rise significantly during middle age. After age 65, rates of chronic diseases and mortality increase rapidly. *Chronic diseases* are illnesses that are long term or lifelong and that develop gradually or are present from birth; in contrast, *acute diseases* are illnesses that strike suddenly and cause dramatic incapacitation and sometimes death (Weitz, 2010). An older woman once described how she coped with chronic conditions associated with aging, particularly at the start of each day:

> Every morning, I wake up in pain. I wiggle my toes. Good. They still obey. I open my eyes. Good. I can see. Everything hurts but I get dressed. I walk down to the ocean. Good. It's still there. Now my day can start. About tomorrow I never know. After all, I'm eighty-nine. I can't live forever. (qtd. in Myerhoff, 1994: 1)

Two of the most common sources of chronic disease and premature death are tobacco use, which increases mortality among both smokers and people who breathe the tobacco smoke of others, and alcohol abuse, both of which are discussed later in

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social epidemiology   the study of the causes and distribution of health, disease, and impairment throughout a population.

chronic diseases   illnesses that are long term or lifelong and that develop gradually or are present from birth.

acute diseases   illnesses that strike suddenly and cause dramatic incapacitation and sometimes death.

- **Research:** "Chronic diseases—such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes—are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. These diseases account for 7 of every 10 deaths and affect the quality of life of 90 million Americans. Although chronic diseases are among the most common and costly health problems, they are also among the most preventable" (National Centers for

Disease Control). Have students research provisions in the new health care legislation designed to address disease prevention.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #10 Intellectual Connections Between Sociology and Other Fields
- **Extra Examples:** Help students to understand the kind of information that is available from the study of social epidemiology.

framing health issues in the media

It's Right for You! The Framing of Drug Ads

I thought I could get myself through this on my own. . . . I started seeing signs developing within me I should have paid attention to. I pushed and pushed and pushed, until I pushed myself right into a corner. . . .

> —"Mary" explaining how depression affected her life before her doctor prescribed Cymbalta, a drug for major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder

You know when you feel the weight of sadness. You may feel exhausted, hopeless, anxious. Whatever you do you feel lonely and do not enjoy the things you once loved. Things just don't feel like they used to. These are some symptoms of depression, a serious medical condition affecting over 20 million Americans. . . . You just shouldn't have to feel this way anymore. . . . When you know more about what's wrong, you can help make it right.

> —ad for Zoloft, an antidepression drug

These television and Internet ads for prescription antidepression drugs are only two of thousands of pharmaceutical advertisements that constantly bombard us. Drug advertising aimed at consumers accounts for nearly $5 billion in annual advertising dollars (Freudenheim, 2007). Most drug ads use *sympathetic and intuitive framing* to help television viewers, newspaper and magazine readers, and Internet users believe that they are not alone if they have high cholesterol,

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▲ **Increasingly, advertisements for prescription drugs are aimed at consumers, although they cannot purchase such products until a doctor prescribes them. Do you agree with this approach to informing patients? Why or why not?**

feelings of depression, patterns of sexual dysfunction, or whatever else may be bothering them. In many ads, a "real person" gives his or her testimonial about how a particular

this chapter. The fact that rates of chronic diseases increase rapidly after age 65 has obvious implications not only for people reaching that age (and their families) but also for society. The Census Bureau projects that about 20 percent of the U.S. population will be at least age 65 by the year 2050 and that the population of persons age 85 and over will have tripled from about 4 million (1.5 percent) in 2000 to about 12 million (5 percent). The cost of caring for many of these people—especially those who must be institutionalized—will increase in at least direct proportion to their numbers.

Sex Prior to the twentieth century, women had lower life expectancies than men because of high

mortality rates during pregnancy and childbirth. Preventive measures have greatly reduced this cause of female mortality, and women now live longer than men. For babies born in the United States in 2010, for example, life expectancy at birth is estimated to be 78.3 years, with 75.7 years for males and 80.8 years for females. Females have a slight biological advantage over males in this regard from the beginning of life, as can be seen in the fact that they have lower mortality rates both in the prenatal stage and in the first month of life (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009). However, gender roles and gender socialization also contribute to the difference in life expectancy: Men are more likely to work in dangerous occupations such as commercial fishing, mining,

Use specific examples, and explore various career options in this field (public health administrator, researcher, statistician, etc.).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Active Learning:** Have students research the history of lawsuits filed against pharmaceutical companies, based on claims of false

or misleading advertising. Which suits have been successful? How have they affected the language of these advertisements?
- **For Discussion:** Play for your class a sample of current drug advertisements (many can be found on the Internet). As a class, discuss the different framing methods used.

drug has helped with his or her problem. The undertone of the person's statement is to offer a *sympathetic* message to viewers ("I know what you're going through because I've been there myself!"). Then a narrator or voiceover (a person who is heard but not seen) makes several understanding (*intuitive*) statements that suggest to individuals in the media audience, "We know you don't want to discuss this with anyone, but we can help." Ads such as this offer a simple solution (in the form of a pill) to help people solve their problems if they will only follow the narrator's advice: "Ask your doctor if [the product] is right for you."

What are the strengths and limitations of framing prescription drug ads in this manner and addressing consumers directly rather than pitching the products only to the physicians who must prescribe the drugs? An obvious strength of direct advertising is that patients become aware of newer products and learn about certain illnesses or conditions of which they were unaware. However, major limitations exist when it comes to direct advertising of such products. Many drug ads do not tell the whole story: Some play down the fact that other drugs, or a nondrug option, may be more effective in treating the condition than the pill being marketed. Other ads encourage people who are not good candidates for a particular drug to insist that their physician prescribe it for them anyway.

Although more prescription drug ads today inform media audiences about possible side effects than those in the past, the narrators usually read the list of negative effects very quickly and then—in a highly reassuring voice—state that most side effects are extremely rare. One example is an ad for Mirapex, the restless-leg-syndrome drug, which states, "Tell your doctor . . . if you experience increased gambling, sexual, or other intense urges." Comments such as this may produce laughter from viewers rather than giving them a reason to seriously consider the possible negative consequences of certain prescription medications.

Today, the U.S. Congress and various governmental agencies continue to ponder the future of prescription drug ads that directly target consumers, but little is likely to come of these inquiries because spending on consumer drug advertising is so high and pressure from the pharmaceutical industry to continue these lucrative ads is so great. However, Mo Rocca (2007), a commentator on CBS News' *Sunday Morning* show, offered the following humorous, short-term solution to dealing with the side effects of TV drug ads:

> If there's one side effect to all these ads, it's heightened anxiety. . . . Maybe the best solution is to tune out the ads. Or at least ask your doctor if watching them is right for you. And in no instance should you watch them while you drink or operate heavy machinery. Otherwise, you're likely to experience nausea, dizziness . . . and an uncontrollable urge to throw your TV out the window.

reflect & analyze

How might functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist theorists differ in their explanation of these ads? As a sociology student, what effect (if any) do you think prescription drug ads in the media have on people you know?

construction, and public safety/firefighting. As a result of gender roles, males may be more likely than females to engage in risky behavior such as drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes (there is more social pressure on women not to smoke), using drugs, driving dangerously, and engaging in fights. Finally, women are more likely to use the health care system, with the result that health problems are identified and treated earlier (while there is a better chance of a successful outcome), whereas many men are more reluctant to consult doctors.

▶ Occupation and life expectancy may be related. Men are overrepresented in high-risk jobs, such as long-haul trucking, that may affect their life expectancies.

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- **Research:** Fewer than half of all women say they have talked to a health care professional in the past three years about smoking (33 percent) or alcohol use (20 percent), while just over half have talked about diet, exercise, and nutrition (55 percent) (Kaiser Foundation, 2007).

- **Box Note:** Divide your class into small groups, and have them create charts that help answer the "Reflect & Analyze" question.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis

Because women on average live longer than men, it is easy to jump to the conclusion that they are healthier than men. However, although men at all ages have higher rates of fatal diseases, women have higher rates of chronic illness.

Race/Ethnicity and Social Class

Racial/ethnic differences are also visible in statistics pertaining to life expectancy. Projections for infants born in 2010 reveal this sobering fact: Life expectancy for African American males is estimated at 70.2 years as compared to 77.2 for African American females and 75.7 years for white males.

Although race/ethnicity and social class are related to issues of health and mortality, research continues to show that income and the neighborhood in which a person lives may be equally or more significant than race or ethnicity with respect to these issues. How is it possible that the neighborhood you live in may significantly affect your risk of dying during the next year? Numerous studies have found that people have a higher survival rate if they live in better-educated or wealthier neighborhoods than if the neighborhood is low-income and has low levels of education. Among the reasons researchers believe that neighborhoods make a difference are the availability (or lack thereof) of safe areas to exercise, grocery stores with nutritious foods, and access to transportation, education, and good jobs. Many low-income neighborhoods are characterized by fast-food restaurants, liquor stores, and other facilities that do not afford residents healthy options.

As discussed in prior chapters, people of color are more likely to have incomes below the poverty line, and the poorest people typically receive less preventive care and less optimal management of chronic diseases than do other people. People living in central cities, where there are high levels of poverty and crime, or in remote rural areas generally have greater difficulty in getting health care because most doctors prefer to locate their practice in a "safe" area, particularly one with a patient base that will produce a high income. Although rural Americans make up 20 percent of the U.S. population, only about 10 percent of the nation's physicians practice in rural areas, and fewer specialists such as cardiologists are available in these areas.

Another factor is occupation. People with lower incomes are more likely to be employed in jobs that expose them to danger and illness—working in the construction industry or around heavy equipment in a factory, for example, or holding a job as a convenience store clerk or other position that exposes a person to the risk of armed robbery. Finally, people of color and poor people are more likely to live in areas that contain environmental hazards.

However, although Latinas/os are more likely than non-Latino/a whites to live below the poverty line, they have lower death rates from heart disease, cancer, accidents, and suicide, and an overall lower death rate. One explanation may be dietary factors and the strong family life and support networks found in many Latina/o families (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009). Obviously, more research is needed on this point, for the answer might be beneficial to all people.

Lifestyle Factors

As noted previously, social epidemiologists also examine lifestyle choices as a factor in health, disease, and impairment. We will examine three lifestyle factors as they relate to health: drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, and diet and exercise.

▼ Can your neighborhood be bad for your health? According to recent research, it can indeed, especially if it predominantly contains fast-food restaurants, liquor stores, and similarly unhealthy lifestyle options.

© David M. Grossman/The Image Works

- **Research:** "Blacks are less likely to achieve good cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar control than white patients treated by the same doctor. The findings raise questions about barriers that may exist between physicians and black patients" (Thomas D. Sequist, Brigham and Women's Hospital, 2008). Have students do further research on the impact of race on differential health outcomes.

- **Research:** "African-American students have lower rates on the following measures compared with White or Hispanic students: Annual illicit drug abuse among 12th-graders. Any illicit drug other than marijuana in all three grade levels (8th, 10th, 12th), Cigarette smoking and alcohol abuse among 10th and 12th grade students" (National Institute on Drug Abuse).

Drug Use and Abuse What is a drug? There are many different definitions, but for our purposes, a *drug* is any substance—other than food and water—that, when taken into the body, alters its functioning in some way. Drugs are used for either therapeutic or recreational purposes. *Therapeutic* use occurs when a person takes a drug for a specific purpose such as reducing a fever or controlling a cough. In contrast, *recreational* drug use occurs when a person takes a drug for no purpose other than achieving a pleasurable feeling or psychological state. Alcohol and tobacco are examples of drugs that are primarily used for recreational purposes; their use by people over a fixed age (which varies from time to time and place to place) is lawful. Other drugs—such as some antianxiety drugs or tranquilizers—may be used legally only if prescribed by a physician for therapeutic use but are frequently used illegally for recreational purposes.

Alcohol The use of alcohol is considered an accepted part of the dominant culture in the United States. Adults in this country consume an average of 2.5 gallons of wine, 21.8 gallons of beer, and 1.4 gallon of liquor a year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). In fact, adults consume more beer on average than milk or coffee. However, these statistics overlook the fact that among people who drink, 10 percent account for roughly half the total alcohol consumption in this country (Levinthal, 2010).

Although the negative short-term effects of alcohol are usually overcome, chronic heavy drinking or alcoholism can cause permanent damage to the brain or other parts of the body. For alcoholics, the long-term negative health effects include *nutritional deficiencies* resulting from poor eating habits (chronic heavy drinking contributes to high caloric consumption but low nutritional intake); *cardiovascular problems* such as inflammation and enlargement of the heart muscle, high blood pressure, and stroke; and eventually to *alcoholic cirrhosis*—a progressive development of scar tissue that chokes off blood vessels in the liver and destroys liver cells by interfering with their use of oxygen (Levinthal, 2010). Alcoholic cirrhosis is the ninth most frequent cause of death in the United States. The social consequences of heavy drinking are not always limited to the person doing the drinking. For example, abuse of alcohol and other drugs by a pregnant woman can damage the unborn fetus.

Can alcoholism be overcome? Many people get and stay sober. Some rely on organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous or church support groups to help them overcome their drinking problem. Others undergo medical treatment and therapy sessions to learn more about the root causes of their problem. Caroline Knapp (1996: 242–243), who started drinking at age 14 and continued throughout college, describes how she felt after she regained sobriety and came to view herself as a recovering alcoholic:

> I still think about drinking, and not drinking, many many times each day, and sometimes I think I always will. We live in an alcohol-saturated world; it's simply impossible to avoid the stuff. When I read the papers now, I find myself scanning the pages for items about drink-related disasters, things that will reinforce my sense that I've made the right choice: what celebrity got pulled over for drunk driving; what college kid got drunk and plunged out of a five-story window; what alcohol-fueled argument between a couple fired up into a case of domestic violence. Evidence of the havoc liquor can wreak is there in black and white, almost every day, but it's not nearly as prevalent as the other messages: the liquor ads, the images of gaiety and romance, phrases like CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH: $19.95. At times, I've grumbled to friends about longing to return to Prohibition, a gripe that stems from the feeling, familiar among many alcoholics, that if *I* can't drink, no one should. But alcohol occupies a large role in the social world and it's important for me to remember that I have to come to terms with it, that I still have a relationship with liquor, even if the relationship now has the quality of a divorce rather than an active involvement.

Nicotine (Tobacco) The nicotine in tobacco is a toxic, dependency-producing psychoactive drug that is more addictive than heroin. It is classified as a stimulant because it stimulates central nervous system receptors and activates them to release adrenaline, which raises blood pressure, speeds

> **drug** any substance—other than food and water— that, when taken into the body, alters its functioning in some way.

▲ Despite a variety of warnings from the U.S. Surgeon General about the potentially harmful effects of smoking, many people continue to light up cigarettes. Recent research has pointed out that even those who do not smoke may contract cancer or suffer other major health problems caused by exposure to secondhand and even thirdhand tobacco smoke.

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up the heartbeat, and gives the user a temporary sense of alertness. Although the overall proportion of smokers in the general population has declined somewhat since the 1964 Surgeon General warning that smoking is linked to cancer and other serious diseases, tobacco is still responsible for about one in every five deaths in this country (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2010). (▶ Figure 14.1 displays some of the nations and U.S. states that had instituted full or partial bans on public smoking as of 2010.) Even people who never light up a cigarette can be harmed by *environmental tobacco smoke*—the smoke in the air inhaled by nonsmokers as a result of other people's tobacco smoking and the residue of smoke on garments and furniture, for example (Levinthal, 2010). Researchers have found that environmental smoke is especially hazardous for nonsmokers who carpool or work with heavy smokers.

Illegal Drugs   Marijuana is the most extensively used illegal drug in the United States. About one-third of all people over age 12 have tried marijuana at least once. Although most marijuana users are between the ages of 18 and 25, use by teenagers has more than doubled during the past decade. High

doses of marijuana smoked during pregnancy can disrupt the development of a fetus and result in congenital abnormalities and neurological disturbances. Furthermore, some studies have found an increased risk of cancer and other lung problems associated with marijuana because its smokers are believed to inhale more deeply than tobacco users.

Another widely used illegal drug is cocaine: About 35.3 million people over the age of 12 in the United States report that they have used cocaine at least once, and about 2.4 million acknowledge having used it during the past month (National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2006). Cocaine may be either inhaled, injected intravenously, or smoked ("crack cocaine"). People who use cocaine over extended periods of time have higher rates of infection, heart problems, internal bleeding, hypertension, stroke, and other neurological and cardiovascular disorders than do nonusers. Intravenous cocaine users who share contaminated needles are also at risk for contracting AIDS.

Each of the drugs discussed in these few paragraphs represents a lifestyle choice that affects health. Whereas age, race/ethnicity, sex, and—at least to some degree—social class are ascribed characteristics, taking drugs is a voluntary action on a person's part.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases   The circumstances under which a person engages in sexual activity constitute another lifestyle choice with health implications. Although most people find sexual activity enjoyable, it can result in transmission of certain *sexually transmitted diseases* (STDs), including AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis, and genital herpes. Prior to 1960, the incidence of STDs in this country had been reduced sharply by barrier-type contraceptives (e.g., condoms) and the use of penicillin as a cure. However, in the 1960s and 1970s the number of cases of STDs increased rapidly with the introduction of the birth control pill, which led to women having more sexual partners and couples being less likely to use barrier contraceptives.

Gonorrhea and Syphilis   Until the 1960s, gonorrhea (today the second-most-common STD) and syphilis (which can be acquired not only by sexual intercourse but also by kissing or coming into intimate bodily contact with an infected person)

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Research:** An estimated 45.8 million adults in the United States smoke cigarettes even though this single behavior will result in death or disability for half of all regular users. Smoking-related illnesses cost the nation more than $150 billion each year (National Centers for Disease Control).

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Active Learning:** Using information from the Smoking Bans Around the World chart, send your students to the World Health Organization website to conduct further research on health problems in countries with and without smoking bans (**who.int/en**).

Smoking Bans Around the World

Smoking bans in effect

Albania
Argentina
Armenia
Australia *(except Northern Territory)*
Austria
Azerbaijan
Bahrain
Belgium
Bhutan
Botswana
Brazil
Bulgaria
Canada
Chile
Croatia
Cuba
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Egypt
Estonia
Finland
France
Gambia
Greece
Guatemala
Guinea

Hong Kong
Iceland
India
Indonesia
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Libya
Lithuania
Malaysia
Mali
Malta
Mexico
Montenegro
Morocco
The Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Poland
Romania

Rwanda
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Africa
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Syria
Taiwan
Tanzania
Thailand
Tunisia
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Uganda
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom
Uruguay
Uzbekistan
Venezuela
Yemen

United States, partial. States with bans include:
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Hawaii
Idaho
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Minnesota
Montana
Nevada
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
Ohio
Puerto Rico
Rhode Island
South Dakota
Tennessee
Vermont
Washington

▲ **FIGURE 14.1 SMOKING BANS AROUND THE WORLD (2010)**

Source: Matt Ray, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, Vol. 115, No. 8, August 2007.

- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask a representative from your student health center to address the class on the prevalence of smoking on college campuses.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

were the principal STDs in this country. Today, however, they constitute less than 15 percent of all cases of STDs reported in U.S. clinics. Untreated gonorrhea may spread from the sexual organs to other parts of the body, among other things negatively affecting fertility; it can also spread to the brain or heart and cause death. Untreated syphilis can, over time, cause cardiovascular problems, brain damage, or even death. Penicillin can cure most cases of either gonorrhea or syphilis as long as the disease has not spread.

Genital Herpes   This sexually transmitted disease produces a painful rash on the genitals. Genital herpes cannot be cured: Once the virus enters the body, it stays there for the rest of a person's life, regardless of treatment. However, the earlier that treatment is received, the more likely it is that the severity of the symptoms will be reduced. About 40 percent of persons infected with genital herpes have only a first attack of symptoms of the disease; the remaining 60 percent may have attacks four or five times a year for several years.

AIDS   AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome), which is caused by HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), is among the most significant health problems that this nation—and the world—faces today. Although AIDS almost inevitably ends in death, no one actually dies *of* AIDS. Rather, AIDS reduces the body's ability to fight diseases, making a person vulnerable to many diseases—such as pneumonia—that result in death.

AIDS was first identified in 1981, and the total number of AIDS-related deaths in the United States through 1985 was only 12,493; however, the numbers rose rapidly and precipitously after that. In recent years, the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed new estimates of HIV prevalence, or the total number of people living with HIV. Current estimates suggest that 1.1 million people are living with HIV/AIDS infection in the United States. In recent years, persons between the ages of 40 and 49 have accounted for the largest proportion of newly diagnosed HIV/AIDS cases; persons between 30 and 39 years of age have accounted for the second-largest proportion (National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009).

Worldwide, the number of people with HIV or AIDS continues to increase, but progress has been made in some countries in addressing this epidemic. The United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS estimates that in 2007, about 33 million people were living with HIV. The annual number of new HIV infections worldwide declined from 3 million in 2001 to 2.7 million in 2007. However, an estimated 370,000 children under age 15 became infected with HIV in 2007. Sub-Saharan Africa is the most heavily affected area, accounting for 67 percent of all people living with HIV and for 72 percent of AIDS deaths in 2007 (see ▶ Map 14.1).

HIV is transmitted through unprotected (or inadequately protected) sexual intercourse with an infected partner (either male or female), by sharing a contaminated hypodermic needle with someone who is infected, by exposure to blood or blood products (usually from a transfusion), and by an infected woman who passes the virus on to her child during pregnancy, childbirth, or breast feeding. It is not transmitted by casual contact such as shaking hands.

Staying Healthy: Diet and Exercise   Lifestyle choices also include positive actions such as a healthy diet and good exercise. Over the past several decades, a dramatic improvement in our understanding of food and diet has taken place, and many people in the United States have begun to improve their dietary habits. A significant portion of the population now eats larger amounts of vegetables, fruits, and cereals, substituting unsaturated fats and oils for saturated fats. These changes have contributed to a significant decrease in the incidence of heart disease and of some types of cancer. However, recent studies have raised concern that a significant percentage of children and adults in this country are overweight or obese to an extent that may decrease their life expectancy. ▶ Map 14.2 shows obesity rates across the United States.

Exercise is another factor. Regular exercise (at least three times a week) keeps the heart, lungs, muscles, and bones in good health and slows the aging process.

Health Care in the United States

Understanding health care as it exists in the United States today requires a brief examination of its history. During the nineteenth century, people became

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- **Extra Examples:** "From the point of view of the pharmaceutical industry, the AIDS problem has already been solved. After all, we already have a drug which can be sold at the incredible price of $8,000 an annual dose, and which has the added virtue of not diminishing the market by actually curing anyone" (Barbara Ehrenreich). Have the class discuss Ehrenreich's perspective, drawing on further research.

- **Media Coverage:** "Researchers . . . have completed a first round of tests of a new AIDS vaccine in healthy human volunteers and are thrilled with the results. Fully 90% of the subjects developed an immune response to the virus, meaning antibodies were produced which, if they rose to the right levels, could protect the body from a live virus . . ." (*Time*, 8/2006).

Adult Prevalance (%)

- 15.0 – 28.0
- 5.0 – <15.0
- 1.0 – <5.0
- 0.5 – <1.0
- 0.1 – <0.5
- <0.1
- No data available
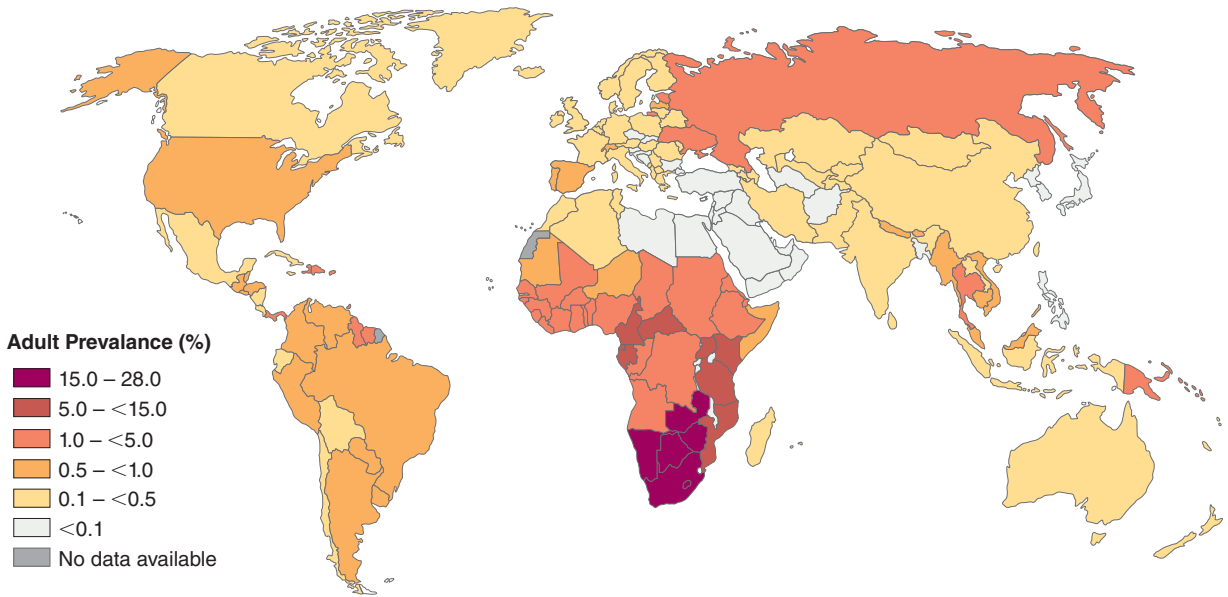
▲ **MAP 14.1 HIV INFECTIONS WORLDWIDE**

Source: UNAIDS, 2008.

15%–19%	20%–24%	25%–29%	≥30%
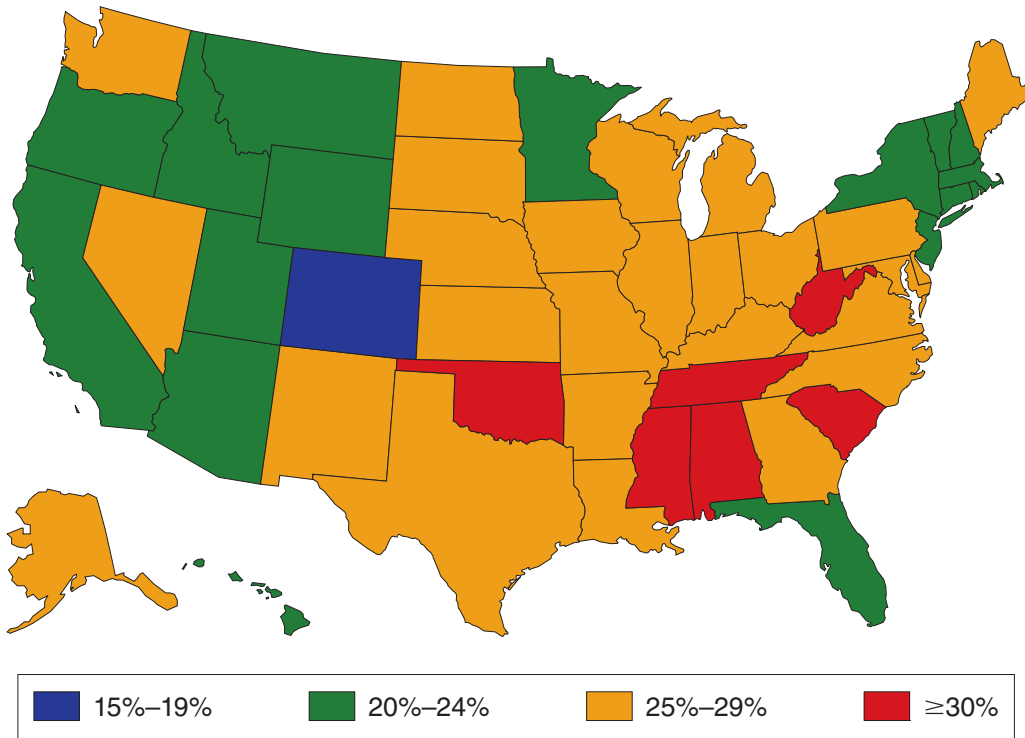
▲ **MAP 14.2 OBESITY IN THE UNITED STATES**

Source: National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008.

doctors in this country either through apprenticeships, purchasing a mail-order diploma, completing high school and attending a series of lectures, or obtaining bachelor's and M.D. degrees and studying abroad for a number of years. At that time, medical schools were largely proprietary institutions, and their officials were often more interested in acquiring students than in enforcing standards. The state licensing boards established to improve medical training and stop the proliferation of "irregular" practitioners failed to slow the growth of medical schools, and their number increased from 90 in 1880 to 160 in 1906. Medical school graduates were largely poor and frustrated because of the overabundance of doctors and quasi-medical practitioners, so doctors became highly competitive and anxious to limit the number of new practitioners. The obvious way to accomplish this was to reduce the number of medical schools and set up licensing laws to eliminate unqualified or irregular practitioners (Kendall, 1980).

The Rise of Scientific Medicine and Professionalism

Although medicine had been previously viewed more as an art than as a science, several significant discoveries during the nineteenth century in areas such as bacteriology and anesthesiology began to give medicine increasing credibility as a science (Nuland, 1997). At the same time that these discoveries were occurring, the ideology of science was being advocated in all areas of life, and people came to believe that almost any task could be done better if the appropriate scientific methods were used. To make medicine in the United States more scientific (and more profitable), the Carnegie Foundation (at the request of the American Medical Association and the forerunner of the Association of American Medical Colleges) commissioned an official study of medical education. The "Flexner report" that resulted from this study has been described as the catalyst of modern medical education but has also been criticized for its lack of objectivity.

The Flexner Report To conduct his study, Abraham Flexner met with the leading faculty at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine to develop a model of how medical education should take place; he next visited each of the 155 medical schools then in existence, comparing them with the model. Included in the model was the belief that a medical school should be a full-time, research-oriented, laboratory facility that devoted all of its energies to teaching and research, not to the practice of medicine (Kendall, 1980). It should employ "laboratory men" to train students in the "science" of medicine, and the students should then apply the principles they had learned in the sciences to the illnesses of patients (Brown, 1979). Only a few of the schools Flexner visited were deemed to be equipped to teach scientific medicine; nonetheless, his model became the standard for the profession (Duffy, 1976).

As a result of the Flexner report (1910), all but two of the African American medical schools then in existence were closed, and only one of the medical schools for women survived. As a result, white women and people of color were largely excluded from medical education for the first half of the twentieth century. Until the civil rights movement and the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s, virtually all physicians were white, male, and upper or upper-middle class.

The Professionalization of Medicine Despite its adverse effect on people of color and women who might desire a career in medicine, the Flexner report did help professionalize medicine. When we compare post-Flexner medicine with the characteristics of professions (see Chapter 13), we find that it meets those characteristics:

1. *Abstract, specialized knowledge.* Physicians undergo a rigorous education that results in a theoretical understanding of health, illness, and medicine. This education provides them with the credentials, skills, and training associated with being a professional.
2. *Autonomy.* Physicians are autonomous and (except as discussed subsequently in this chapter) rely on their own judgment in selecting the appropriate technique for dealing with a problem. They expect patients to respect that autonomy.
3. *Self-regulation.* Theoretically, physicians are self-regulating. They have licensing, accreditation, and regulatory boards and associations that set professional standards and require members to adhere to a code of ethics as a form of public accountability.

- **For Discussion:** Have students research and discuss the following question: How was health care in the United States affected by the development of scientific medicine and its professionalization?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Popular Culture:** "I recently went to a new doctor and noticed he was located in something called the Professional Building. I felt

better right away" (George Carlin). Have students examine the role of perception and the placebo effect in modern medicine.
- **Historical Perspective:** "Flexner railed against medical schools that had lax admission standards, faculty members who were poorly trained local doctors as opposed to physicians who were fully trained in the science of medicine, part-time professors as opposed to full-time clinical instructors, and tedious lectures in large classes

◄ A sight similar to the one on the left might have greeted Abraham Flexner as he prepared his report on medical education in the United States: students observing while their professors demonstrate surgical techniques. And although today's health care facilities look very different, many of the same teaching techniques are still employed.

4. *Authority.* Because of their authority, physicians expect compliance with their directions and advice. They do not expect clients to argue about the advice rendered (or the price to be charged).
5. *Altruism.* Physicians perform a valuable service for society rather than acting solely in their own self-interest. Many physicians go beyond their self-interest or personal comfort so that they can help a patient.

However, with professionalization, licensed medical doctors gained control over the entire medical establishment, a situation that has continued until the present and—despite current efforts at cost control by insurance companies and others—may continue into the future.

Medicine Today

Throughout its history in the United States, medical care has been on a *fee-for-service* basis: Patients are billed individually for each service they receive, including treatment by doctors, laboratory work, hospital visits, prescriptions, and other health-related expenses. Fee for service is an expensive way to deliver health care because there are few restrictions on the fees charged by doctors, hospitals, and other medical providers.

There are both good and bad sides to the fee-for-service approach. The good side is that in the "true spirit" of capitalism, coupled with the hard work and scholarship of many people, this approach has resulted in remarkable advances in medicine. The bad side of fee-for-service medicine is its inequality of distribution. In effect, the United States has a two-tier system of medical care. Those who can afford it are able to get top-notch medical treatment. And where they receive it may not be much like the hospitals that most of us have visited:

Every afternoon, between three and five, high above New York's Fifth Avenue, the usual quiet of Eleven West is broken by the soft rustle of white linen cloths and the clink of silver and china as high tea is served room by room. . . . Down the hall, a concierge waits to take your dinner order, provide a video from a list of over 950 titles, arrange for a manicure or massage, or send up that magazine or best-seller that you wanted to read. No, this is not a hitherto unknown outpost of the Four Seasons or the Ritz, but a 19-room wing of the Mt. Sinai Medical Center, one of the nation's leading hospitals. . . .

that inhibited learning" (Joseph DiPiro). Have students research and give class presentations on the impact of the Flexner report.
- **Historical Perspective:** "By the twentieth century . . . women were forced to turn [from the medical profession] in their search for medical information. One of the places to which they turned were popular women's magazines, which, as a part of their weekly or monthly diet of housekeeping tips, child-care strategies, and

fashion advice, also included articles and columns on health-care issues" (Kim Chuppa-Cornell, 9/2005).
- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to compose a brief research essay on the topic of the impact of the fee-for-service principle on the health care culture in the United States today. One good starting place is the work of Atul Gawande in *The New Yorker* magazine (**newyorker.com**).

Here at Mt. Sinai and a few other top hospitals . . . sheets are 250-count cotton, the bathrooms are marble and stocked with toiletries, and there is ample room to accommodate a nice seating group of leather wing chairs and a brocade sofa. And here no call button is pressed in vain. Hospital personnel not only come when summoned but are eagerly waiting to cater to your every need. . . .

On these select floors, multi-tiered food service carts and their clattering, plastic trays are gone. "Room service" is in full force. Meals are presented, often course by course, by bow-tied, black-jacketed waiters from rolling, linen-covered tables. (Winik, 1997)

The additional charges for rooms on floors such as those described above may run from $250 to $1,000 per night more than the cost of the standard private room (Winik, 1997). Obviously, this sort of medical care is not within the budget of most of us. However, the cost of health care per person in the United States rose from $141 in 1960 to $8,090 (more than 55 times as much) in 2009 (Plunkett Research, 2010) and is still increasing. ▶ Figure 14.2 reflects recent cost increases. Keeping in mind the issues that have been raised throughout this text regarding income disparity in the United States, the questions to be considered at this point are "Who pays for medical care, and how?" and "What about the people who simply cannot afford adequate medical care?"

▲ The luxury services of the Mt. Sinai private wing are clearly intended for use by the wealthy, but for many Americans the crowded emergency room of the nearest hospital, such as the one shown here, is their only source of primary care.

Paying for Medical Care in the United States

Until recently, the United States was the only high-income nation without some form of universal health coverage for all citizens. In 2010 the U.S. Congress passed a sweeping health care reform bill that was signed into law and will gradually bring about some changes in how health care is funded. Let's look first at the new health reform legislation and then compare its provisions with current methods of funding of health care in the United States.

The 2010 Health Care Reform Law   After a lengthy struggle in the U.S. Congress, a major health care reform bill was signed into law in 2010. Although individuals already covered by employer-based insurance or Medicare are unlikely to see major changes in their health coverage, the law will bring about changes in the future as it is implemented over a multiyear timetable. One of the central tenets in the law is the creation of a new insurance marketplace that lets individuals and families without coverage and small business owners pool their resources to increase their buying power in order to make health insurance more affordable. Private insurance companies will complete for their business based on cost and quality. Advocates of the new law believe that it is a first step in curbing abuses in the insurance industry.

Based on preliminary information, health care reform will occur in the following stages:

- **2010:** Adults who have been unable to get coverage because of a preexisting condition can join a high-risk insurance pool (as a stop-gap measure until the competitive health insurance marketplace begins in 2014). Insurance companies must cover children with preexisting conditions. Policies cannot be revoked when people get sick. Preventive services will be fully covered without co-pays or deductibles. Dependent

© AP Photo/Gary Kazanjian

▲ **FIGURE 14.2 INCREASE IN COST OF HEALTH CARE, 1993–2009**

Source: Plunkett Research, 2010.

▲ During the past century, many U.S. Presidents, senators, and representatives have sought to reform health care. After a prolonged, intense debate in 2009 and 2010, the United States joined the other high-income nations in offering universal health care when President Barack Obama signed the historic legislation on March 23, 2010.

- **For Discussion:** Have the class brainstorm different reasons that the United States doesn't pay for health care in the way most industrialized Western countries do.
- **U.S. Census:** Nationwide, about 46 million Americans lack health coverage, including 7.3 million children—just slightly below the peak of these statistics in 2006.

- **Active Learning:** "Americans pay up to 1000% more to fill their prescriptions than consumers in other countries—that is an alarming statistic" (Ken Salazar, former U.S. Senator and current Secretary of the Interior). Have the class interview their parents, grandparents, and other family members about how much they pay for prescription drugs.

children can remain on their parents' insurance plans until they reach the age of twenty-six.

- **2011:** Medicare recipients will have access to free annual wellness visits with no cost for preventive care, and those recipients who have to pay out of pocket for prescription drugs will receive substantial discounts.
- **2012:** The federal government will provide additional money for primary-care services, and new incentives will be offered to encourage doctors to join together in accountability care organizations. Hospitals with high readmission rates will face stiff penalties.
- **2013:** Households with incomes above $250,000 will be subject to higher taxes to help pay for health care reform. Medicare will launch "payment bundling" so that hospitals, doctors, and other health care providers are paid on the basis of patient outcome, not services provided.
- **2014:** Most people will be required to buy health insurance or pay a penalty for not having it. Insurance companies cannot deny a policy to anyone based on health status, nor can they refuse to pay for treatment on the basis of preexisting health conditions. Annual limits on health care coverage will be abolished. Each state must open a health insurance exchange, or marketplace, so that individuals and small businesses without coverage can comparatively shop for health packages. Tax credits will make insurance and health care more affordable for those who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid.
- **2018:** Insurance companies and plan administrators will pay a 40 percent excise tax on all family plans costing more than $27,500 a year.
- **2019:** Health reform law should have reduced the number of uninsured people by 32 million, leaving about 23 million uninsured. About one-third of the uninsured will be immigrants residing in the country without legal documentation.

These are a few of the highlights of the plan, which is a document of more than 2,000 pages in length. Examples of other provisions in the law include incentives to encourage doctors in training to pursue primary-care careers and to encourage more people to enter nursing. Some medical analysts believe this reform measure will provide more cost control, such as competitive insurance exchanges

that are supposed to lower premiums, and increase the quality of health care. Medicare pilot programs will be used to test innovative cost-reduction strategies, and greater emphasis is to be placed on the quality, not quantity, of services that health care providers deliver to their patients. If this is what the future of health care funding in the United States, how has it looked in the past and present? Let's look first at how private health insurance works.

Private Health Insurance Private health insurance is largely paid for by businesses and households. Beginning in the 1960s, medical insurance programs began to expand, and third-party providers (public and private insurers) began picking up large portions of doctor and hospital bills for insured patients. With third-party fee-for-service payment, patients pay premiums into a fund that in turn pays doctors and hospitals for each treatment the patient receives. Private health insurance premiums have continued to increase by about 6 percent per year, after a peak of 10.7 percent in 2002. Between 2002 and 2007, benefit payments slowed, from 9.4 percent to 6.6 percent, largely due to a decline in private health insurance spending growth on prescription drugs. During the same period, out-of-pocket spending (spending not reimbursed by a health insurance plan) increased by 5.3 percent because of increased out-of-pocket payments for prescription drugs, nursing home services, and nondurable medical supplies (Fritze, 2010).

Some believe that a third-party fee-for-service approach is the best and most cost-efficient method of delivering medical care. Others argue that fee for service is outrageously expensive and a very cost-ineffective way in which to provide for the medical needs of people in this country, particularly those who are without health insurance coverage. According to critics, third-party fee for service contributes greatly to medical inflation because it gives doctors and hospitals an incentive to increase medical services. In other words, the more services they provide, the more fees they charge, and the more money they make. Patients have no incentive to limit their visits to doctors or hospitals because they have already paid their premiums and feel entitled to medical care, regardless of the cost. This is one of the spiraling costs that advocates of the 2010 health care reform hope will be reduced when the new legislation is implemented.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #8 The Centrality of Race, Class, and Gender in Society and Sociological Analysis
- **Research:** Lost health, decreased workforce productivity, developmental and educational losses among children, and shorter lifespans have all been linked to being uninsured. These indirect costs are steep, with an estimated annual cost to the U.S.

economy of between $100 billion and $200 billion in 2006 (Kaiser Family Foundation).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy

Public Health Insurance   Since the 1960s, the United States has had two nationwide public health insurance programs, Medicare and Medicaid. In 1965, Congress enacted Medicare, a federal program for people age 65 and over (who are covered by Social Security or railroad retirement insurance or who have been permanently and totally disabled for two years or more). This program was primarily funded through Social Security taxes paid by current workers. We refer to Medicare as an entitlement program because people who receive benefits under the plan must have paid something to be covered. Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) provides coverage for some inpatient hospital expenses, including critical-access hospitals and skilled-nursing facilities. It also helps cover hospice care and limited home health care. Part B (medical insurance) helps cover doctors' services and outpatient care. It covers some of the services of physical and occupational therapists, and some home health care. Most people pay a monthly premium for Part B. Beginning in 2006, Medicare prescription drug coverage became available to everyone covered under Medicare. Private companies provide the coverage, and beneficiaries choose the drug plan and pay a monthly premium.

Medicaid is the federal government's health care program for low-income and disabled persons and certain groups of seniors in nursing homes. Medicaid is jointly funded by federal–state–local monies, and various factors are taken into account when determining whether or not a person is eligible for Medicaid. Among these are age, disability, blindness, and pregnancy. Income and resources are also taken into consideration, as well as whether the person is a U.S. citizen or a lawfully admitted immigrant. Each state has its own rules regarding who may be covered under Medicaid, and some provide time-limited coverage for specific categories of individuals, such as uninsured women with breast or cervical cancer or those individuals diagnosed with TB (tuberculosis). As compared to Medicare, Medicaid has had a more tarnished image throughout its history. Unlike Medicare recipients, who are often seen as "worthy" of their health care benefits, Medicaid recipients have been stigmatized by politicians and media outlets for their participation in a "welfare program." Today, many physicians refuse to take Medicaid patients because the administrative paperwork is burdensome and reimbursements are low—typically less than one-half of what private insurance companies pay for the same services.

When the health care reform law passed in 2010, both the Medicaid program and the Medicare program were in financial difficulty. These two programs cost $760.6 billion annually and account for one-fourth (25 percent) of all federal spending. Medicare and Medicaid are growing more rapidly than the U.S. economy and the revenues that are used to finance them. For example, in 2007 Medicare spending grew 7.2 percent to $431.2 billion, which followed a growth of 18.5 percent in 2006, because of the one-time implementation of Medicare Part D (prescription coverage). Similarly, Medicaid spending grew 6.4 percent in 2007 to $329.4 billion (Fritze, 2010). Under the new health care reform law, eligibility for "free" Medicaid coverage will expand significantly, so it may be difficult to contain costs in this area. However, it is predicted that the new focus on preventive health care services will improve the health of recipients and reduce costs.

Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)

Created in an effort to provide workers with health coverage by keeping costs down, *health maintenance organizations* (HMOs) provide, for a set monthly fee, total care with an emphasis on prevention to avoid costly treatment later. The doctors do not work on a fee-for-service basis, and patients are encouraged to get regular checkups and to practice good health practices (e.g., exercise and eat right). However, research shows that preventive care is good for the individual's health but does not necessarily lower total costs. As long as patients use only the doctors and hospitals that are affiliated with their HMO, they pay no fees, or only small co-payments, beyond their insurance premiums.

Recent concerns about physicians being used as gatekeepers who might prevent some patients from obtaining referrals to specialists or from getting needed treatment have resulted in changes in the policies of some HMOs, which now allow patients to visit health care providers outside an HMO's network or to

> **health maintenance organizations (HMOs)** companies that provide, for a set monthly fee, total care with an emphasis on prevention to avoid costly treatment later.

receive other previously unauthorized services by paying a higher co-payment. However, critics charge that those HMOs whose primary-care physicians are paid on a capitation basis—meaning that they receive only a fixed amount per patient whom they see, regardless of how long they spend with that patient—in effect encourage doctors to undertreat patients.

Managed Care   Another approach to controlling health care costs in the United States is known as *managed care—any system of cost containment that closely monitors and controls health care providers' decisions about medical procedures, diagnostic tests, and other services that should be provided to patients.* One type of managed care in the United States is a *preferred provider organization* (PPO), which is an organization of medical doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers who enter into a contract with an insurer or a third-party administrator to provide health care at a reduced rate to patients who are covered under specific insurance plans. In most managed-care programs, patients choose a primary-care physician from a list of participating doctors. Unlike many of the HMOs, when a patient covered under a PPO plan needs medical services, he or she may contact any one of a number of primary-care physicians or specialists who are "in-network" providers. Like HMOs, most PPO plans do contain a pre-certification requirement in which scheduled (nonemergency) hospital admissions and certain kinds of procedures must be approved in advance. Through measures such as this, these insurance plans have sought unsuccessfully to curb the rapidly increasing costs of medical care and to reduce the extensive paperwork and bureaucracy involved in the typical medical visit. For the foreseeable future, HMOs and PPOs are supposed to remain somewhat the same. After the passage of the health care reform measure, the Obama administration widely publicized a statement that people in plans such as these would not be affected by the new law. Rather, they would have assurance that they could get health care coverage even if they lost their job, changed jobs, moved out of state, got divorced, or were diagnosed with a serious illness.

The Uninsured and the Underinsured   Despite public and private insurance programs, about one-third of all U.S. citizens were without health insurance or had difficulty getting or paying for medical care at some time in the last year. Under the new health care reform, this situation will not change significantly until about 2014, when each state will open a health insurance exchange, or marketplace, for individuals and small businesses without health insurance coverage. Prior to this, millions of people will remain uninsured. As shown on ▶ Map 14.3, the number of people not covered by health insurance varies from state to state. Of the people not covered by health insurance, 8.7 million are children (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith, 2007). An estimated 45.7 million people in the United States had no health insurance in 2007—more than 15 percent of the nation's population (Familiesusa.org, 2009). Although every racial and ethnic group is affected, Latinos/as and African Americans are more likely to be uninsured than whites (non-Hispanics). During 2007–2008, 55 percent of Latinos/as, 40.3 percent of African Americans, and 34.0 percent of other racial and ethnic minorities were without health insurance, as compared to 25.8 percent of whites. Overall, one out of three people who are under the age of 65 were uninsured for some portion, or all, of 2007–2008. The working poor constitute a substantial portion of this category: It is estimated that four out of five individuals (79.2 percent) of those who were without health insurance were from working families. Furthermore, 69.7 percent were in families with a worker who was employed full time (Familiesusa.com, 2009). In a worst-case scenario, some who are uninsured (despite being employed full time) make too little to afford health insurance but too much to qualify for Medicaid, and their employers do not provide health insurance coverage. What happens when they need medical treatment? "They do without," explains Ray Hanley, medical services director for the Arkansas Department of Human Services (qtd. in Kilborn, 1997: A10).

Paying for Medical Care in Other Nations

Other nations have various ways in which they provide health care for their citizens. Let's examine how other nations pay for health care.

Canada   Health care in Canada is delivered through a publicly funded health care system. Services are provided by private entities and are mostly

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- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to research current information on paying for medical care in Canada, Great Britain, and China. Have them start with the information here and then dig deeper. A good place to start is journalist T. R. Reid's book *The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper and Fairer Health Care* and his *Frontline* documentary, *Sick Around the World* (pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline).

- **Media Coverage:** "Publicly financed health care for all has been a cherished hallmark of Canadian society since the 1960's, but . . . several provinces have begun introducing private clinics, stimulating a debate in Parliament over whether to reinforce the existing system or totally revamp it" (*New York Times,* 11/2002).
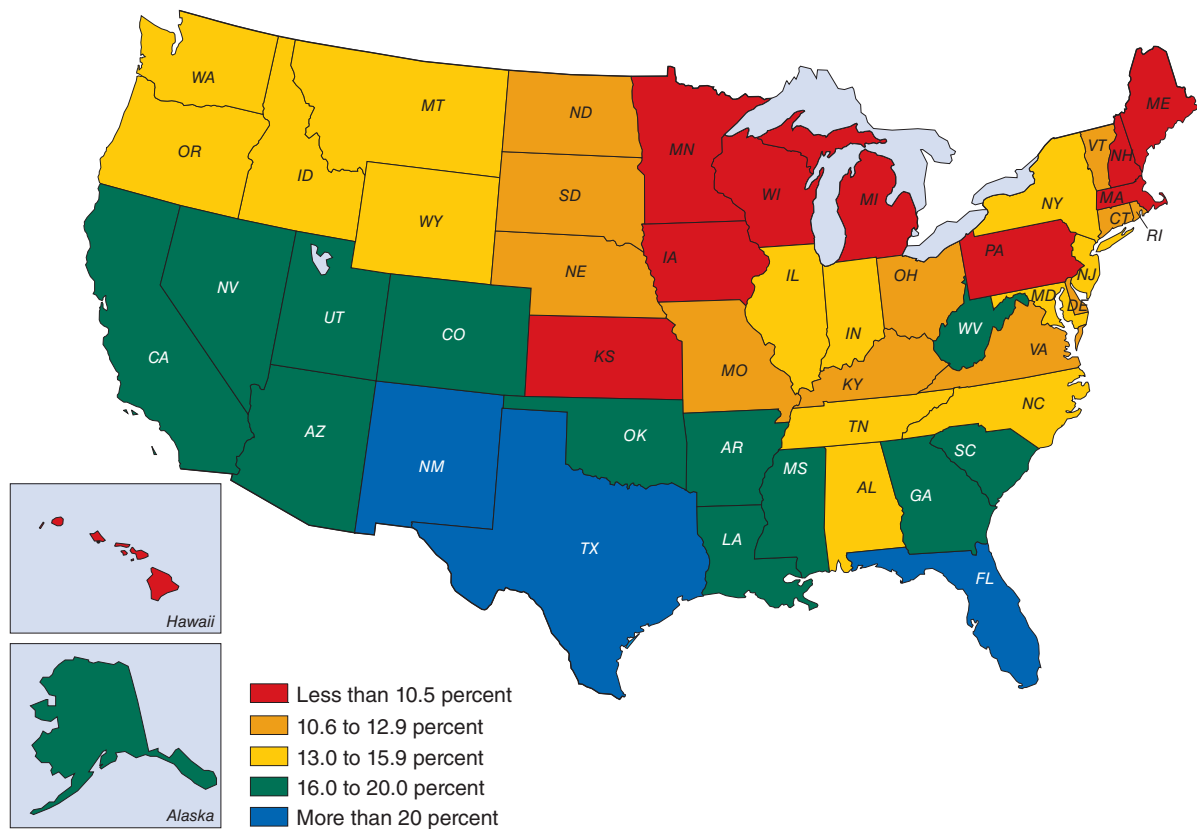
▲ MAP 14.3 **PERSONS NOT COVERED BY HEALTH INSURANCE, BY STATE**

Less than 10.5 percent
10.6 to 12.9 percent
13.0 to 15.9 percent
16.0 to 20.0 percent
More than 20 percent

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

free to patients. Information remains private between physician and patient, and the government is not involved in patient care. Each citizen receives a health card, and all patients receive the same level of care. As long as a person's premiums are paid up, health coverage is not affected by losing or changing jobs.

How did the contemporary Canadian health care system get started? In 1962 the government of the province of Saskatchewan implemented a health insurance plan despite opposition from doctors, who went on strike to protest the program. The strike was not successful, as the vast majority of citizens supported the government, which maintained health services by importing doctors from Great Britain. The Saskatchewan program proved itself viable in the years following the strike, and by 1972 all Canadian provinces and territories had coverage for medical and hospital services (Kendall, Linden, and Murray, 2008). As a result, Canada has a *universal health care system—a health care system in which all citizens receive medical services paid for by tax revenues.* In Canada, these revenues are supplemented by insurance premiums paid by all taxpaying citizens.

One major benefit of the Canadian system is a significant reduction in administrative costs. Whereas more than 20 percent of the U.S. health care dollar represents administrative costs, in Canada the corresponding figure is 10 percent (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009). However, the system is not without its critics, who claim that it is costly and often wasteful. For example, Canadians are allowed unlimited trips to

managed care any system of cost containment that closely monitors and controls health care providers' decisions about medical procedures, diagnostic tests, and other services that should be provided to patients.

universal health care a health care system in which all citizens receive medical services paid for by tax revenues.

the doctor, and doctors can increase their income by ordering extensive tests and repeat visits, just as in the United States (Kendall, Linden, and Murray, 2008).

The Canadian health care system does not constitute what is referred to as **socialized medicine— a health care system in which the government owns the medical care facilities and employs the physicians.** Rather, Canada has maintained the private nature of the medical profession. Although the government pays most health care costs, the physicians are not government employees and have much greater autonomy than do physicians in the health care system in Great Britain.

Great Britain   Great Britain has a centralized, single-payer health care system that is funded by general revenues. The National Health Service Act of 1946 provides for all health care services to be available at no charge to the entire population. Although physicians work out of offices or clinics— as in the United States or Canada—the government sets health care policies, raises funds and controls the medical care budget, owns health care facilities, and directly employs physicians and other health care personnel (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009).

Unlike the Canadian model, the health care system in Great Britain *does* constitute socialized medicine. Physicians receive capitation payments from the government: a fixed annual fee for each patient in their practice regardless of how many times they see the patient or how many procedures they perform. They also receive supplemental payments for each low-income or elderly patient in their practice, to compensate for the extra time such patients may require; bonus payments if they meet targets for providing preventive services, such as immunizations against disease; and financial incentives if they practice in medically underserved areas. Physicians may accept private patients, but such patients rarely constitute more than a small fraction of a physician's practice; hospitals reserve a small number of beds for private patients (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009). Why would anyone want to be a private patient who pays for her or his own care or hospital bed? The answer is primarily found in the desire to avoid the long waits ("queues") that the general population encounters and the fact that private patients can enter the hospital for surgery at times convenient to the consumer rather than wait upon the convenience of the system (Gill, 1994).

China   After a lengthy civil war, in 1949 the Communist Party won control of mainland China but found itself in charge of a vast nation with a population of one billion people, most of whom lived in poverty and misery. Malnutrition was prevalent, life expectancies were short, and infant and maternal mortality rates were high. In the cities, only the elite could afford medical care; in the rural areas where most of the population resided, Western-style health care barely existed (Weitz, 2010). With a lack of both financial resources and trained health care personnel, China needed to adopt innovative strategies in order to improve the health of its populace. One such policy was developing a large number of *physician extenders* and sending them out into the cities and rural areas to educate the public regarding health and health care and to treat illness and disease. Referred to as *street doctors* in urban areas and *barefoot doctors* in the countryside, these individuals had little formal training and worked under the supervision of trained physicians (Weitz, 2010).

Over the past four decades, medical training has become more rigorous, and supervision has increased. All doctors receive training in both Western and traditional Chinese medicine. Doctors who work in hospitals receive a salary; all other doctors now work on a fee-for-service basis. In urban areas, the cost of health care is paid by employers; however, 78 percent of the population lives in rural areas, where most work on family farms and are expected to pay for their own health care. The cost of health care generally remains low, but the cost of hospital care has risen; accordingly, many Chinese—if they can afford it—purchase health care insurance to cover the cost of hospitalization (Weitz, 2010). As a low-income country, China spends only 2–3 percent of its gross domestic product on health care, but the health of its citizens is just slightly below that of most industrialized nations.

Regardless of which system of delivering medical care that a nation may have, the health care providers and the general population of the nation face new issues that arise as a result of new technology.

Social Implications of Advanced Medical Technology

Advances in medical technology are occurring at a speed that is almost unbelievable; however, sociologists and other social scientists have identified

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- **Extra Examples:** "The barefoot doctors program largely fell apart in the 1980s and '90s: The central government provided less financial support for the program, and the country's emerging free-market system began forcing farmers to pay for their health care. The World Health Organization recently ranked China as fourth-worst out of 190 countries for equality of health care" (NPR, 11/2005).

- **Extra Examples:** Have the class research and summarize some of the ways that advanced medical technology is different from holistic and alternative medicine. Have them build a diagram or chart to demonstrate the differences and overlaps between these methods.

- **For Discussion:** Have students reflect on the following statement, using examples from their own experience: "Patients—when they

specific social implications of some of the new technologies (see Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009):

1. *The new technologies create options for people and for society, but options that alter human relationships.* An example is the ability of medical personnel to sustain a life that in earlier times would have ended as the result of disease or an accident. Although this can be beneficial, technologically advanced equipment that can sustain life after consciousness is lost and there is no likelihood that the person will recover can create a difficult decision for the family of that person if he or she has not left a *living will*—a document stating the person's wishes regarding the medical circumstances under which his or her life should be terminated. Federal law requires all hospitals and other medical facilities to honor the terms of a living will. Recent media coverage of individuals whose lives have been prolonged by new medical technologies has made more people aware of some end-of-life issues.

2. *The new technologies increase the cost of medical care.* For example, the computerized axial tomography (CT or CAT) scanner—which combines a computer with X-rays that are passed through the body at different angles—produces clear images of the interior of the body that are invaluable in investigating disease. However, the cost of such a scanner is around $1 million. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) equipment that allows pictures to be taken of internal organs ranges in cost from $1 million to $2.5 million. Can the United States afford such equipment in every hospital for every patient? The money available for health care is not unlimited, and when it is spent on high-tech equipment and treatment, it is being reallocated from other health care programs that might be of greater assistance to more people.

3. *The new technologies raise provocative questions about the very nature of life.* In Chapter 11, we briefly discuss in vitro fertilization—a form of assisted reproductive technology. But during 1997, Dr. Ian Williams and his associates in Scotland took in vitro fertilization a step further: They cloned a lamb (that they named Dolly) from the DNA of an adult sheep. Subsequently, scientists have cloned other animals in the same manner, raising a number of profound questions: If scientists can duplicate mammals from adult DNA, is it possible to clone a perfect (whatever that may be) human being instead of taking a chance on a child that is born to a couple? If it is possible, would it be ethical? For example, if—as discussed earlier in this text—most parents prefer a boy over a girl if they are going to have only one child, would the world suddenly have substantially more boys than girls? Would everyone start to look alike, eliminating diversity? If a child were born other than through cloning and had some sort of biological defect, would the child have the right to sue his or her parents for negligence?

However, at the same time that high-tech medicine is becoming a major part of overall health care, many people are turning to holistic medicine and alternative healing practices.

Holistic Medicine and Alternative Medicine

When examining the subject of medicine, it is easy to think only in terms of conventional (or mainstream)

▲ High-technology medical imaging devices such as the one shown here are very expensive. Some analysts question whether an expenditure of this size could be better used instead to help more people in different ways.

socialized medicine a health care system in which the government owns the medical care facilities and employs the physicians.

really have control over their lives and over their disease in some way—I think are overall going to do better regardless of whether that comes from traditional treatments or a combination of western medicine plus other alternative approaches" (Bill Owen).

• **Extra Examples:** "The central role of the patient's lifestyle, beliefs, observations and habits is honored. Holistic Medicine recognizes the person who has the illness as more important than the type of illness that person is manifesting. Treatment methods which are least likely to do harm are used first in Holistic Medicine. These are often also more cost-effective than conventional drugs or surgery" (American Holistic Medical Association). Have students examine research on the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of holistic medicine.

• **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

medical treatment. By contrast, *holistic medicine* **is an approach to health care that focuses on prevention of illness and disease and is aimed at treating the whole person—body and mind—rather than just the part or parts in which symptoms occur.** Under this approach, it is important that people not look solely to medicine and doctors for their health, but rather that people engage in health-promoting behavior. Likewise, medical professionals must not only treat illness and disease but also work with the patient to promote a healthy lifestyle and self-image.

Many practitioners of *alternative medicine—healing practices inconsistent with dominant medical practice—take a holistic approach,* and today many people are turning to alternative medicine either in addition to or in lieu of traditional medicine. However, some medical doctors are opposed to alternative medicine. In understanding the medical establishment's reaction to alternative medicine, it is important to keep in mind the philosophy of scientific medicine—that medicine is a science, not an art. Thus, to the extent to which alternative medicine is "nonscientific," it must be quackery and therefore something that is undoubtedly worthless and possibly harmful. Undoubtedly, self-interest is also involved in mainstream medicine's reaction to alternative medicine: If the public can be persuaded that scientific

medicine is the only legitimate healing practice, fewer health care dollars will be spent on a form of medical treatment that is (at least to some extent) in competition with the medical establishment (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009). But if all forms of alternative medicine (including chiropractic, massage, and spiritual) are taken into account, people spend more money on unconventional therapies than they do for all hospitalizations (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009).

Sociological Perspectives on Health and Medicine

Functionalist, conflict, symbolic interactionist, and postmodernist perspectives focus on different aspects of health and medicine; each provides us with significant insights on the problems associated with these pressing social concerns.

A Functionalist Perspective: The Sick Role

According to the functionalist approach, if society is to function as a stable system, it is important for people to be healthy and to contribute to their society. Consequently, sickness is viewed as a form of deviant behavior that must be controlled by society. This view was initially set forth by the sociologist Talcott Parsons (1951) in his concept of the *sick role—the set of patterned expectations that defines the norms and values appropriate for individuals who are sick and for those who interact with them.* According to Parsons, the sick role has four primary characteristics:

1. People who are sick are not responsible for their condition. It is assumed that being sick is not a deliberate and knowing choice of the sick person.
2. People who assume the sick role are temporarily exempt from their normal roles and obligations. For example, people with illnesses are typically not expected to go to school or work.
3. People who are sick must want to get well. The sick role is considered to be a temporary one that people must relinquish as soon as their condition improves sufficiently. Those who do not return to their regular activities in a timely fashion may be labeled as hypochondriacs or malingerers.
4. People who are sick must seek competent help from a medical professional to hasten their recovery.

▲ The use of herbal therapies is a form of alternative medicine that is increasing in popularity in the United States. How does this approach to health care differ from a more traditional medical approach?

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- **Sociological Imagination:** After you have covered the functional perspective, ask students to write for ten minutes on the meaning of the sick role and how it functions in our society.
- **For Discussion:** Ask students about the fundamental premises of the functionalist perspective on health in the United States.
- **Historical Perspective:** "Parsons used ideas from Freud's psychoanalytic theories as well as from functionalism and from

Max Weber's work on authority to create an 'ideal type' that could be used to shed light on the social forces involved in episodes of sickness" (Andrew Roberts, Middlesex University).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

As these characteristics show, Parsons believed that illness is dysfunctional for both individuals and the larger society. Those who assume the sick role are unable to fulfill their necessary social roles, such as being parents or employees. Similarly, people who are ill lose days from their productive roles in society, thus weakening the ability of groups and organizations to fulfill their functions.

According to Parsons, it is important for the society to maintain social control over people who enter the sick role. Physicians are empowered to determine who may enter this role and when patients are ready to exit it. Because physicians spend many years in training and have specialized knowledge about illness and its treatment, they are certified by the society to be "gatekeepers" of the sick role. When patients seek the advice of a physician, they enter into the patient–physician relationship, which does not contain equal power for both parties. The patient is expected to follow the "doctor's orders" by adhering to a treatment regime, recovering from the malady, and returning to a normal routine as soon as possible.

What are the major strengths and weaknesses of Parsons's model and, more generally, of the functionalist view of health and illness? Parsons's analysis of the sick role was pathbreaking when it was introduced. Some social analysts believe that Parsons made a major contribution to our knowledge of how society explains illness-related behavior and how physicians have attained their gatekeeper status. In contrast, other analysts believe that the sick-role model does not take into account racial–ethnic, class, and gender variations in the ways that people view illness and interpret this role. For example, this model does not take into account the fact that many individuals in the working class may choose not to accept the sick role unless they are seriously ill—because they cannot afford to miss time from work and lose a portion of their earnings. Moreover, people without health insurance may not have the option of assuming the sick role.

A Conflict Perspective: Inequalities in Health and Health Care

Unlike the functionalist approach, conflict theory emphasizes the political, economic, and social forces that affect health and the health care delivery system. Among the issues of concern to conflict theorists are the ability of all people to obtain health

▲ According to the functionalist perspective, the sick role exempts the patient from routine activities for a period of time but assumes that the individual will seek appropriate medical attention and get well as soon as possible.

care; how race, class, and gender inequalities affect health and health care; power relationships between doctors and other health care workers; the dominance of the medical model of health care; and the role of profit in the health care system.

Who is responsible for problems in the U.S. health care system? According to many conflict theorists, problems in U.S. health care delivery are rooted in the capitalist economy, which views medicine as a commodity that is produced and sold by the medical–industrial complex. The *medical–industrial complex encompasses local physicians and hospitals as well*

holistic medicine an approach to health care that focuses on prevention of illness and disease and is aimed at treating the whole person—body and mind—rather than just the part or parts in which symptoms occur.

sick role the set of patterned expectations that defines the norms and values appropriate for individuals who are sick and for those who interact with them.

medical–industrial complex local physicians, local hospitals, and global health-related industries such as insurance companies and pharmaceutical and medical supply companies that deliver health care today.

as global health-related industries such as insurance companies and pharmaceutical and medical supply companies (Relman, 1992).

The United States is one of the few industrialized nations that has relied almost exclusively on the medical–industrial complex for health care delivery and has not had any form of universal health coverage to provide some level of access to medical treatment for all people. Consequently, access to high-quality medical care has been linked to people's ability to pay and to their position within the class structure. Those who are affluent or have good medical insurance may receive high-quality, state-of-the-art care in the medical–industrial complex because of its elaborate technologies and treatments. However, people below the poverty level and those just above it have greater difficulty gaining access to medical care. Referred to as the *medically indigent,* these individuals do not earn enough to afford private medical care but earn just enough money to keep them from qualifying for Medicaid (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009). In the profit-oriented capitalist economy, these individuals are said to "fall between the cracks" in the health care system.

Who benefits from the existing structure of medicine? According to conflict theorists, physicians—who hold a legal monopoly over medicine—benefit from the existing structure because they can charge inflated fees. Similarly, clinics, pharmacies, laboratories, hospitals, supply manufacturers, insurance companies, and many other corporations derive excessive profits from the existing system of payment in medicine. In recent years, large drug companies and profit-making hospital corporations have come to occupy a larger and larger part of health care delivery. As a result, medical costs have risen rapidly, and the federal government and many insurance companies have placed pressure for cost containment on other players in the medical–industrial complex (Tilly and Tilly, 1998).

Conflict theorists increase our awareness of inequalities of race, class, and gender as these statuses influence people's access to health care. They also inform us about the problems associated with health care becoming "big business." However, some analysts believe that the conflict approach is unduly pessimistic about the gains that have been made in health status and longevity—gains that are at least partially due to large investments in research and treatment by the medical–industrial complex.

A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective: The Social Construction of Illness

Symbolic interactionists attempt to understand the specific meanings and causes that we attribute to particular events. In studying health, symbolic interactionists focus on the meanings that social actors give their illness or disease and how these affect people's self-concept and relationships with others. According to symbolic interactionists, we socially construct "health" and "illness" and how both should be treated. For example, some people explain disease by blaming it on those who are ill. If we attribute cancer to the acts of a person, we can assume that we will be immune to that disease if we do not engage in the same behavior. Nonsmokers who learn that a lung cancer victim had a two-pack-a-day habit feel comforted that they are unlikely to suffer the same fate. Similarly, victims of AIDS are often blamed for promiscuous sexual conduct or intravenous drug use, regardless of how they contracted HIV. In this case, the social definition of the illness leads to the stigmatization of individuals who suffer from the disease.

Although biological characteristics provide objective criteria for determining medical conditions such as heart disease, tuberculosis, or cancer, there is also a subjective component to how illness is defined. This subjective component is very important when we look at conditions such as childhood hyperactivity, mental illness, alcoholism, drug abuse, cigarette smoking, and overeating, all of which have been medicalized. The term *medicalization* **refers to the process whereby nonmedical problems become defined and treated as illnesses or disorders.** Medicalization may occur on three levels: (1) the conceptual level (e.g., the use of medical terminology to define the problem), (2) the institutional level (e.g., physicians are supervisors of treatment and gatekeepers to applying for benefits), and (3) the interactional level (e.g., when physicians treat patients' conditions as medical problems). For example, the sociologists Deborah Findlay and Leslie Miller (1994: 277) explain how gambling has been medicalized:

> Habitual gambling . . . has been regarded by a minority as a sin, and by most as a leisure pursuit—perhaps wasteful but a pastime nevertheless. Lately, however, we have seen gambling described as a psychological illness—"compulsive gambling." It is in the process of being medicalized. The consequences of this shift

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- **For Discussion:** Lead a class discussion based on the following questions: How does the symbolic interactionist perspective on health care compare with other perspectives? What unique contribution can it make to our understanding?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** What is meant by the social construction of illness? Ask students to talk about the ways that illness has been described

and experienced in their family. Call attention to the wide variety of experiences of the same phenomenon, such as having a cold.
- **Recent Events:** "An independent panel convened this week by the National Institutes of Health found that it is important that menopause not be viewed as a disease. The tendency among women and their healthcare providers in the U.S. to medicalize menopause concerned the panel because the tendency can lead to overuse of

in discourse (that is, in the way of thinking and talking) about gambling are considerable for doctors, who now have in gamblers a new market for their services or "treatment"; perhaps for gambling halls, which may find themselves subject to new regulations, insofar as they are deemed to contribute to the "disease"; and not least, for gamblers themselves, who are no longer treated as sinners or wastrels, but as patients, with claims on our sympathy, and to our medical insurance plans as well.

Sociologists often refer to this form of medicalization as the *medicalization of deviance* because it gives physicians and other medical professionals greater authority to determine what should be considered "normal" and "acceptable" behavior and to establish the appropriate mechanisms for controlling "deviant behaviors."

According to symbolic interactionists, medicalization is a two-way process: Just as conditions can be medicalized, so can they be demedicalized. **Demedicalization refers to the process whereby a problem ceases to be defined as an illness or a disorder.** Examples include the removal of certain behaviors (such as homosexuality) from the list of mental disorders compiled by the American Psychiatric Association and the deinstitutionalization of mental health patients. The process of demedicalization also continues in women's health as advocates

seek to redefine childbirth and menopause as natural processes rather than as illnesses (Conrad, 1996).

In addition to how health and illness are defined, symbolic interactionists examine how doctors and patients interact in health care settings (see "Sociology Works!"). Some physicians may hesitate to communicate certain kinds of medical information to patients, such as why they are prescribing certain medications or what side effects or drug interactions may occur (Kendall, 2004).

Symbolic interactionist perspectives on health and health care provide us with new insights on the social construction of illness and how health and illness cannot be strictly determined by medical criteria. Symbolic interactionists also make us aware of the importance of communication between physicians and patients, including factors that may reduce effective medical treatment for some individuals. However, these approaches have been criticized for suggesting that few objective medical criteria exist for many illnesses and for overemphasizing micro-level issues without giving adequate recognition to macrolevel issues such as the effects on health care of managed care, health maintenance organizations, and for-profit hospital chains.

A Postmodernist Perspective: The Clinical Gaze

In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1994/1963), postmodern theorist Michel Foucault questioned existing assumptions about medical knowledge and the power that doctors have gained over other medical personnel and everyday people. Foucault asserted that truth in medicine—as in all other areas of life—is a social construction, in this instance one that doctors have created. Foucault believed that doctors gain power through the *clinical* (or "observing") *gaze,* which they use to gather information. Doctors develop the clinical gaze through their observation of patients; as the doctors begin to diagnose and treat medical conditions, they also start to speak

▲ Is gambling a moral issue or a medical one? According to sociologists, the recent trend toward viewing compulsive gambling as a health care issue is an example of the medicalization of deviance.

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medicalization the process whereby nonmedical problems become defined and treated as illnesses or disorders.

demedicalization the process whereby a problem ceases to be defined as an illness or a disorder.

sociology works!

Sociology Sheds Light on the Physician–Patient Relationship

DOCTOR: What's the problem?

(Chair noise).

PATIENT: . . . had since last Monday evening so it's a week of sore throat.

DOCTOR: . . . hm . . . hm . . .

PATIENT: . . . which turned into a cold . . . and then a cough.

DOCTOR: A cold you mean what? Stuffy nose?

PATIENT: uh stuffy nose yeah not a chest . . . cold . . .

DOCTOR: . . . hm . . . hm . . . And a cough.

PATIENT: And a cough . . . which is the most irritating aspect. . . .

DOCTOR: Okay. Uh, any fever?

PATIENT: Not that I know of . . . I took it a couple of times in the beginning but haven't felt like—

DOCTOR: How bout your ears? . . . (Mishler, 2005: 322)

In this brief excerpt from the transcript of a discussion between a doctor and patient, the patient responds to the doctor's request for information by telling him what her symptoms are and how they began to change when her illness "turned into a cold . . . and then a cough." According to sociologists who study the social organization of health care, this transcript indicates that the physician wants the patient to continue speaking when he makes sounds such as "hm . . . hm," but he also wants to remain in control of the conversation. When the patient mentions that she has a "cold," for example, the doctor asks for further clarification of her specific symptoms so that he can determine, efficiently and in a short period of time, what kind of cold she has and what the treatment plan should be (Mishler, 2005). This is one brief passage from many pages of medical transcripts that researchers have used to study what they refer to as the struggle between the voice of medicine and the voice of the lifeworld (Mishler, 1984, 2005).

What are the voices of medicine and of the lifeworld? In this context, the voice of medicine refers to the technical,

"wisely" about everything. As a result, other people start to believe that doctors can "penetrate illusion and see . . . the hidden truth" (Shawver, 1998).

According to Foucault, the prestige of the medical establishment was further enhanced when it became possible to categorize all illnesses within a definitive network of disease classification under which physicians can claim that they know why patients are sick. Moreover, the invention of new tests made it necessary for physicians to gaze upon the naked body, to listen to the human heart with an instrument, and to run tests on the patient's body fluids. Patients who objected were criticized by doctors for their "false modesty" and "excessive restraint" (Foucault, 1994/1963: 163). As the new rules allowed for the patient to be touched and prodded, the myth of the doctor's diagnostic wisdom was further enhanced, and "medical gestures, words, gazes took on a philosophical density that had formerly belonged only to mathematical thought" (Foucault, 1994/1963: 199). For Foucault, the formation of

clinical medicine was merely one of the more-visible ways in which the fundamental structures of human experience have changed throughout history.

Foucault's work provides new insights on medical dominance, but it has been criticized for its lack of attention to alternative viewpoints. Among these is the possibility that medical breakthroughs and new technologies actually help physicians become wiser and more scientific in their endeavors. Another criticism is that Foucault's approach is based upon the false assumption that people are passive individuals who simply comply with doctors' orders—he does not take into account that people (either consciously or unconsciously) may resist the myth of the "wise doctor" and not follow "doctors' orders" (Lupton, 1997).

Foucault's analysis (1988/1961) was not limited to doctors who treat bodily illness; he also critiqued psychiatrists and the treatment of insanity.

The Concept Quick Review summarizes the major sociological perspectives on health and medicine.

to see the hidden truth" (Lois Shawver, notes on reading *The Birth of the Clinic*).

- **For Discussion:** "As a medical doctor, it is my duty to evaluate the situation with as much data as I can gather and as much expertise as I have and as much experience as I have to determine whether or not the wish of the patient is medically justified" (Jack

Kevorkian). Have students examine this statement in the context of Kevorkian's controversial work with assisted suicide.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #10 Intellectual Connections Between Sociology and Other Fields
- **Extra Examples:** "More and more Americans feel disconnected from their doctors, especially compared to a generation ago. And they certainly have less confidence in the profession as a whole. In

scientific attitude adopted by many doctors in their communication with patients. This type of discourse is generally abstract, neutral, and somewhat distant. By contrast, the voice of the lifeworld refers to the natural, everyday attitudes that are expressed by patients when they talk to their physician in the hope of gaining additional insight on their medical condition. Some sociologists believe that a constant struggle exists between these two "voices" in the doctor–patient relationship and that this struggle affects the outcome of each medical encounter. The voice of medicine makes it difficult for patients to believe that their concerns are being heard when the physician is visibly in a hurry, does not listen, interrupts frequently, and/or talks down to the patient.

To minimize the voice of medicine, some sociologists advocate *therapeutic communication* between doctors and patients. In therapeutic communication (1) the physician engages in full and open communication with the patient and feels free to ask questions about psychosocial as well as physical conditions, (2) the patient provides full and open information to the physician and feels free to ask questions and seek clarifications, and (3) a genuine rapport develops between physician and patient (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009).

According to some social analysts, it takes a doctor no additional time to use a positive communication style that conveys friendliness, empathy, genuineness, candor, an openness to conversation, and a nonjudgmental attitude toward the patient. Such a communication style certainly helps physicians establish positive relationships with their patients. Of course, patients should also try to communicate in a positive manner with physicians, people whom the patients hope will be able to help them remain healthy or help them resolve an existing medical problem (Weiss and Lonnquist, 2009).

reflect & analyze

Sociologists who study the social organization of medicine will continue to look for new insights on the physician–patient relationship in the future. What other sociological perspectives do you believe might be useful in explaining the dynamics of doctor–patient communications or other social interactions (such as between physicians and other health professionals) that routinely take place within the health care system?

[concept quick review 14.1]

Sociological Perspectives on Health and Medicine

A Functionalist Perspective: The Sick Role	People who are sick are temporarily exempt from normal obligations but must want to get well and seek competent help.
A Conflict Perspective: Inequalities in Health and Health Care	Problems in health care are rooted in the capitalist system, exemplified by the medical–industrial complex.
A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective: The Social Construction of Illness	People socially construct both "health" and "illness," and how both should be treated.
A Postmodernist Perspective: The Clinical Gaze	Doctors gain power through observing patients to gather information, thus appearing to speak "wisely."

1966, a Harris Poll found that almost three-quarters of Americans had 'a great deal' of confidence in their health care leaders. That number has steadily dropped over the last four decades, so that today only slightly more than a third feel the same way, the same poll shows" (Pauline W. Chen, *New York Times,* 9/2008).
- **Active Learning:** Have students analyze doctor–patient interactions, using examples from their own experience or those of their friends and family. Ask them to apply one of the major sociological perspectives to the interaction and to draw conclusions about the different styles of communication involved.
- **Box Note:** When your students respond to the "Reflect & Analyze" question here, encourage them to think about their own interactions with their physicians as they were growing up.

Mental Illness

Mental illness affects many people; however, it is a difficult topic for sociological research. Social analysts such as Thomas Szasz (1984) have argued that mental illness is a myth. According to this approach, "mental illnesses" are actually individual traits or behaviors that society deems unacceptable, immoral, or deviant. According to Szasz, labeling individuals as "mentally ill" harms them because they often come to accept the label and are then treated accordingly by others.

Is mental illness a myth? After decades of debate on this issue, social analysts are no closer to reaching a consensus than they were when Szasz originally introduced his ideas. However, many scholars believe that mental illness is a reality that has biological, psychological, environmental, social, and other factors involved. Many medical professionals distinguish between a *mental disorder*—a condition that makes it difficult or impossible for a person to cope with everyday life—and *mental illness*—a condition in which a person has a severe mental disorder requiring extensive treatment with medication, psychotherapy, and sometimes hospitalization.

How many people are affected by mental illness? Some answers to this question have come from a systematic national study known as the National Comorbidity Survey. The term *comorbidity* refers to the physical and mental conditions—such as physical illness and depression—that compound each other and undermine the individual's overall well-being (Angel and Angel, 1993). Researchers in the study found that among respondents between the ages of 15 and 54, nearly 50 percent had been diagnosed with a mental disorder at some time in their lives (Kessler, 1994). However, severe mental illness—such as schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder (manic depression), and major depression—typically affects less than 15 percent of U.S. adults at some time in their lives (Bourdon et al., 1992; Kessler, 1994). According to the researchers, the prevalence of mental disorders in the United States is greater than most analysts had previously believed. The most widely accepted classification of mental disorders is the American Psychiatric Association's (1994) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, which is illustrated in ■ Table 14.1. When the next edition of the DSM is published in 2012, it will be interesting to see how the listings compare to those shown in this table.

table 14.1

Mental Disorders Identified by the American Psychiatric Association

Anxiety Disorders	Disorders characterized by anxiety that is manifested in phobias, panic attacks, or obsessive–compulsive disorder
Dissociative Disorders	Problems involving a splitting or dissociation of normal consciousness such as amnesia and multiple personality
Disorders First Evident in Infancy, Childhood, or Adolescence	Including mental retardation, attention-deficit hyperactivity, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and stuttering
Eating or Sleeping Disorders	Including such problems as anorexia and bulimia, or insomnia and other problems associated with sleep
Impulse Control Disorders	Including the inability to control undesirable impulses such as kleptomania, pyromania, and pathological gambling
Mood Disorders	Emotional disorders such as major depression and bipolar (manic-depressive) disorder
Organic Mental Disorders	Psychological or behavioral disorders associated with dysfunctions of the brain caused by aging, disease, or brain damage
Personality Disorders	Maladaptive personality traits that are generally resistant to treatment, such as paranoid and antisocial personality types
Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders	Disorders with symptoms such as delusions or hallucinations
Somatoform Disorders	Psychological problems that present themselves as symptoms of physical disease, such as hypochondria
Substance-Related Disorders	Disorders resulting from abuse of alcohol and/or drugs such as barbiturates, cocaine, or amphetamines

Source: Adapted from American Psychiatric Association, 1994.

- **Sociological Imagination:** "The number of kids receiving specialized services for physical, cognitive, learning and other problems has doubled since fiscal 1977, to an estimated 6.9 million (or roughly 11% of all students nationwide), and cash-strapped school districts are struggling to find funding for those children, who on average cost more than twice as much to educate as nondisabled students" (*Time,* 9/2006).

- **Table Note:** Discuss with your class some of the consequences of having these kinds of mental disorders. Have students work in pairs to brainstorm and create a chain of consequences that might result from any one of these conditions.

Mental disorders are very costly to the nation. Direct costs associated with mental disorders include the price of medication, clinic visits, and hospital stays. However, many indirect costs are incurred as well. These include the loss of earnings by individuals, the costs associated with homelessness and incarceration, and other indirect costs that exist but are difficult to document.

The Treatment of Mental Illness

In *Madness and Civilization,* Michel Foucault (1988/1961) examined the "archaeology of madness" from 1500 to 1800 to determine how ideas of mental illness have changed over time and to describe the "birth of the asylum." According to Foucault, early in this period insanity was considered part of everyday life, and people with mental illnesses were free to walk the streets; however, beginning with the Renaissance and continuing into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the mentally ill were viewed as a threat to others. During that time, asylums were built, and a clear distinction was drawn between the "insane" and the rest of humanity. According to Foucault (1988/1961: 252), people came to see "madness" as a minority status that does not have the right to autonomy:

> Madness is childhood. Everything at the [asylum] is organized so that the insane are transformed into minors. They are regarded as children who have an overabundance of strength and make dangerous use of it. They must be given immediate punishments and rewards; whatever is remote has no effect on them.

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, many people with mental disorders do not receive professional treatment. However, mental disorders—particularly substance-related ones (due to alcohol and other drug abuse)—are the leading cause of hospitalization for men between the ages of 18 and 44, and the second leading cause (after childbirth) for women in that age group (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2000).

Many people seeking psychiatric assistance are treated with medications or psychotherapy—which is believed to help patients understand the underlying reasons for their problem—and sometimes treatment in psychiatric wards of local hospitals or in private psychiatric hospitals. However, the introduction of new psychoactive drugs to treat mental disorders and the deinstitutionalization movement in the 1960s have created dramatic changes in how people with mental disorders are treated. **Deinstitutionalization refers to the practice of rapidly discharging patients from mental hospitals into the community.** Originally devised as a *solution* for the problem of "warehousing" mentally ill patients in large, prison-like mental hospitals in the first half of the twentieth century, deinstitutionalization is now viewed as the *problem* by many social scientists. The theory behind this process was that patients' rights were being violated because many patients experienced involuntary commitment (i.e., without their consent) to the hospitals, where they remained for extended periods of time. Instead, some professionals believed that the patients' mental disorders could be controlled with proper medications and treatment from community-based mental health services. Advocates of deinstitutionalization also believed that this practice would relieve the stigma attached to mental illness and hospitalization. However, critics of deinstitutionalization argue that this process exacerbated long-term problems associated with inadequate care for people with mental illness.

Admitting people to mental hospitals on an involuntary basis ("involuntary commitment") has always been controversial; however, it remains the primary method by which police officers, judges, social workers, and other officials deal with people—particularly the homeless—whom they have reason to believe are mentally ill and imminently dangerous to others if not detained (Monahan, 1992). State mental hospitals continue to provide most of the chronic inpatient care for poor people with mental illnesses; these institutions tend to serve as a revolving door to poverty-level board-and-care homes, nursing homes, or homelessness, as contrasted with the situation of patients who pay their bills at private psychiatric facilities through private insurance coverage or Medicare (Brown, 1985).

deinstitutionalization the practice of rapidly discharging patients from mental hospitals into the community.

According to the sociologist Erving Goffman (1961a), mental hospitals are a classic example of a *total institution,* previously defined as a place where people are isolated from the rest of society for a period of time and come under the complete control of the officials who run the institution.

Disability

What is a disability? There are many different definitions. In business and government, disability is often defined in terms of work—for instance, "an inability to engage in gainful employment." Medical professionals tend to define it in terms of organically based impairments—the problem being entirely within the body (Albrecht, 1992). However, not all disabilities are visible to others or necessarily limit people physically. *Disability* refers to a reduced ability to perform tasks one would normally do at a given stage of life and that may result in stigmatization or discrimination against the person with disabilities. In other words, the notion of disability is based not only on physical conditions but also on social attitudes and the social and physical environments in which people live. In an elevator, for example, the buttons may be beyond the reach of persons using a wheelchair. In this context, disability derives from the fact that certain things have been made inaccessible to some people. According to disability rights advocates, disability must be thought of in terms of how society causes or contributes to the problem—not in terms of what is "wrong" with the person with a disability.

Although anyone can become disabled, some people are more likely to be or to become disabled than others. African Americans have higher rates of disability than whites, especially more serious disabilities; persons with lower incomes also have higher rates of disability (Weitz, 2010). However, "disability knows no socioeconomic boundaries. You can become disabled from your mother's poor nutrition or from falling off your polo pony," says Patrisha Wright, a spokesperson for the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (qtd. in Shapiro, 1993: 10).

For persons with chronic illness and disability, life expectancy may take on a different meaning. Knowing that they will likely not live out the full life expectancy for persons in their age cohort, they may come to "treasure each moment," as did the late James Keller, a former baseball coach:

> In December 1992, I found out I have Lou Gehrig's disease—amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS. I learned that this disease destroys every muscle in the body, that there's no known cure or treatment and that the average life expectancy for people with ALS is two to five years after diagnosis.
>
> Those are hard facts to accept. Even today, nearly two years after my diagnosis, I see myself as a 42-year-old career athlete who has always been blessed with excellent health. Though not an hour goes by in which I don't see or hear in my mind that phrase "two to five years," I still can't quite believe it. Maybe my resistance to those words is exactly what gives me the strength to live with them and the will to make the best of every day in every way. (Keller, 1994)

As Keller's comments illustrate, disease and disability are intricately linked.

Environment, lifestyle, and working conditions may all contribute to either temporary or chronic disability. For example, air pollution in automobile-clogged cities leads to a higher incidence of chronic respiratory disease and lung damage, which may result in severe disability for some people. Eating certain types of food and smoking cigarettes increase the risk for coronary and cardiovascular diseases (Albrecht, 1992). In contemporary industrial societies, workers in the second tier of the labor market (primarily recent immigrants, white women, and people of color) are at the greatest risk for certain health hazards and disabilities. Employees in data processing and service-oriented jobs may also be affected by work-related disabilities. The extensive use of computers has been shown to harm some workers' vision; to produce joint problems such as arthritis, low-back pain, and carpal tunnel syndrome; and to place employees under high levels of stress that may result in neuroses and other mental health problems (Albrecht, 1992). As shown in ■ Table 14.2, nearly one out of five people in the United States (20.8 percent) has a "chronic health condition which, given the physical, attitudinal, and financial barriers built into the social system, makes it difficult to perform one or more activities

- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students define *disability* and explain ways in which the perception of this condition has changed over the past century.
- **For Discussion:** "Americans believe that people should work hard and get ahead on their own, but when disaster strikes and they need help with retirement or disability, Americans as a whole should come to their aid" (Jacob Hacker). Ask the class to discuss and evaluate this statement, drawing on specific examples.
- **Historical Perspective:** "Employers may not ask job applicants about the existence, nature or severity of a disability. Applicants may be asked about their ability to perform specific job functions. A job offer may be conditioned on the results of a medical

table 14.2
Percentage of U.S. Population with Disabilities

Characteristic	Percentage[a]
With a disability	20.8
Severe	13.7
Not severe	7.0
Has difficulty or is unable to:	
See words and letters	3.5
Hear normal conversation	3.5
Have speech understood	1.2
Lift or carry ten pounds	6.9
Use stairs	9.2
Walk	9.4
Has difficulty or needs assistance with:	
Getting around inside the house	1.7
Getting in/out of bed or a chair	2.5
Taking a bath or shower	2.2
Dressing	1.7
Eating	0.8
Getting to or using the toilet	1.1
Has difficulty or needs assistance with:	
Going outside the home alone	4.0
Managing money and bills	2.2
Preparing meals	2.3
Doing light housework	3.1
Using the telephone	1.3

[a]Percentage of persons age 15 and older.

Source: Steinmetz, 2006.

1992; Cohen, 1994). They believe that they have been restricted from entry into schools and the workforce not due to their own limitations, but by societal barriers.

Living with disabilities is a long-term process. For infants born with certain types of congenital (present at birth) problems, their disability first acquires social significance for their parents and caregivers. In a study of children with disabilities in Israel, the sociologist Meira Weiss (1994) challenged the assumption that parents automatically bond with infants, especially those born with visible disabilities. She found that an infant's appearance may determine how parents will view the child. Parents are more likely to be bothered by external, openly visible disabilities than by internal or disguised ones; some parents are more willing to consent to or even demand the death of an "appearance-impaired" child (Weiss, 1994). According to Weiss, children born with internal (concealed) disabilities are at least initially more acceptable to parents because they do not violate the parents' perceived body images of their children. Weiss's study provides insight into the social significance that people attach to congenital disabilities.

Among persons who acquire disabilities through disease or accidents later in life, the social significance of their disability can be seen in how they initially respond to their symptoms and diagnosis, how they view the immediate situation and their future, and how the illness and disability affect their lives. When confronted with a disability, most people adopt one of two strategies—avoidance or vigilance. Those who use the avoidance strategy deny their condition in order to maintain hopeful images of the future and elude depression; for example, some individuals refuse to participate in rehabilitation following a traumatic injury because they want to pretend that the disability does not exist. By contrast, those using the vigilance strategy actively seek knowledge and treatment so that they can respond appropriately to the changes in their bodies (Weitz, 2010).

generally considered appropriate for persons of their age" (Weitz, 2010).

Can a person in a wheelchair have equal access to education, employment, and housing? If public transportation is not accessible to those in wheelchairs, the answer is certainly no. As disability rights activist Mark Johnson put it, "Black people fought for the right to ride in the front of the bus. We're fighting for the right to get on the bus" (qtd. in Shapiro, 1993: 128).

Many disability rights advocates argue that persons with a disability have been kept out of the mainstream of society. They have been denied equal opportunities in education by being consigned to special education classes or special schools. For example, people who grow up deaf are often viewed as disabled; however, many members of the deaf community instead view themselves as a "linguistic minority" that is part of a unique culture (Lane,

disability a reduced ability to perform tasks one would normally do at a given stage of life and that may result in stigmatization or discrimination against the person with disabilities.

examination, but only if the examination is required for all entering employees in similar jobs" (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **Extra Examples:** "An employer generally does not have to provide a reasonable accommodation unless an individual with a disability has asked for one. . . . Where more than one accommodation would work, the employer may choose the one that is less costly or that is easier to provide" (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission).

▲ Disabilities are often the result of violent activity. Many veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan now suffer physical and emotional disabilities that may be with them for the rest of their lives.

Sociological Perspectives on Disability

How do sociologists view disability? Those using the functionalist framework often apply Parsons's sick-role model, which is referred to as the *medical model* of disability. According to the medical model, people with disabilities become, in effect, chronic patients under the supervision of doctors and other medical personnel, subject to a doctor's orders or a program's rules, and not to their own judgment (Shapiro, 1993). From this perspective, disability is deviance.

The deviance framework is also apparent in some symbolic interactionist perspectives. According to symbolic interactionists, people with a disability experience *role ambiguity* because many people equate disability with deviance (Murphy et al., 1988). By labeling individuals with a disability as "deviant," other people can avoid them or treat them as outsiders. Society marginalizes people with a disability because they have lost old roles and statuses and are labeled as "disabled" persons. According to the sociologist Eliot Freidson (1965), how the people are labeled results from three factors: (1) their degree of responsibility for their impairment, (2) the apparent seriousness of their condition, and (3) the perceived legitimacy of the condition. Freidson concluded that the definitions of and expectations for people with a disability are socially constructed factors.

Finally, from a conflict perspective, persons with a disability are members of a subordinate group in conflict with persons in positions of power in the government, in the health care industry, and in the rehabilitation business, all of whom are trying to control their destinies (Albrecht, 1992). Those in positions of power have created policies and

- **Sociological Imagination:** Have the class write a short exploration of sociological perspectives on disability using examples from current events.
- **U.S. Census:** Families with a female householder with no husband present were more likely than other family types to report having members with a disability.

- **Active Learning:** Students could write an extra-credit paper that elaborates on the long-term process of living with disabilities. It should be based on interviews with local community members with disabilities.

artificial barriers that keep people with disabilities in a subservient position (Asch, 1986; Hahn, 1987). Moreover, in a capitalist economy, disabilities are big business. When people with disabilities are defined as a social problem and public funds are spent to purchase goods and services for them, rehabilitation becomes a commodity that can be bought and sold by the medical–industrial complex (Albrecht, 1992). From this perspective, persons with a disability are objectified. They have an economic value as consumers of goods and services that will allegedly make them "better" people. Many persons with a disability endure the same struggle for resources faced by people of color, women, and older persons. Individuals who hold more than one of these

▲ Double amputee Oscar Pistorius uses carbon fiber prosthetics to allow him to race in international events. Many observers found it ironic when Pistorius had to fight for his chance to qualify for the 2008 Olympics after some of his competitors argued that the prosthetics gave him an unfair advantage.

ascribed statuses, combined with experiencing disability, are doubly or triply oppressed by capitalism.

Social Inequalities Based on Disability

People with visible disabilities are often the objects of prejudice and discrimination, which interfere with their everyday life. For example, Marylou Breslin, executive director of the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, was wearing a businesswoman's suit, sitting at the airport in her battery-powered wheelchair, and drinking a cup of coffee while waiting for a plane. A woman walked by and plunked a coin in the coffee cup that Breslin held in her hand, splashing coffee on Breslin's blouse (Shapiro, 1993). Why did the woman drop the coin in Breslin's cup? The answer to this question is found in stereotypes built on lack of knowledge about or exaggeration of the characteristics of people with a disability. Some stereotypes project the image that persons with disabilities are deformed individuals who may also be horrible deviants. For example, slasher movies such as the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series show a villain who was turned into a hateful, sadistic killer because of disfigurement resulting from a fire. Lighter fare such as the *Batman* movies depict villains as individuals with disabilities: the Joker, disfigured by a fall into a vat of acid, and the Penguin, born with flippers instead of arms (Shapiro, 1993). Other stereotypes show persons with disabilities as pathetic individuals to be pitied. Fund-raising activities by many charitable organizations—such as "poster child" campaigns showing a photograph of a friendly-looking child with a visible disability—sometimes contribute to this perception. Even apparently positive stereotypes become harmful to people with a disability. An example is what some disabled persons refer to as "supercrips"—people with severe disabilities who seem to excel despite the impairment and who receive widespread press coverage in the process. Disability rights advocates note that such stereotypes do not reflect the day-to-day reality of most persons with disabilities, who must struggle constantly with smaller challenges (Shapiro, 1993).

Today, many working-age persons with a disability in the United States are unemployed (see "Census Profiles: Disability and Employment Status"). Most of them believe that they could and

census profiles

Disability and Employment Status

One of the questions on Census 2000 asked respondents about long-lasting conditions such as a physical, mental, or emotional condition that substantially limited important basic activities. The survey also asked if they were working at a job or business. The answers allowed the Census Bureau to determine how many people with a disability and how many people without a disability were employed at the time the census was conducted. As you can see from the figure set forth below, for the population aged 21 to 64 years (the period during which people are most likely to be employed), less than 50 percent of persons with a disability were employed, compared with almost 80 percent of persons without a disability who were employed. Is employment among persons with a disability related primarily to their disability status, or do other facts—such as prejudice or lack of willingness to make the necessary accommodations that would allow such persons to hold a job—play a significant part in the high rate of unemployment of persons with a disability?

Not employed / Employed

Persons with a disability

Not employed / Employed

Persons without a disability

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

would work if offered the opportunity. However, even when persons with a severe disability are able to find jobs, they typically earn less than persons without a disability (Yelin, 1992). On average, workers with a severe disability make 59 percent of what their coworkers without disabilities earn, and the gap is growing (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). The problem has been particularly severe for African Americans and Latinos/as with disabilities. Among Latinos/as with a severe disability, only 26 percent are employed; those who work earn 80 percent of what white (non-Latino) persons with a severe disability earn.

Employment, poverty, and disability are related. On the one hand, people may become economically disadvantaged as a result of chronic illness or disability. On the other hand, poor people are less likely to be educated and more likely to be malnourished and have inadequate access to health care—all of which contribute to risk of chronic illness, physical and mental disability, and the inability to participate in the labor force. In addition, the type of employment available to people with limited resources increases their chances of becoming disabled. They may work in hazardous places such as mines, factory assembly lines, and chemical plants, or in the construction industry, where the chance of becoming seriously disabled is much higher (Albrecht, 1992).

Generalizations about the relationship between disability and income are difficult to make for at least three reasons. First, most research on disability is organized around specific conditions or impairments, making it problematic to reach conclusions about how much income a person loses because of a disability (DeJong, Batavia, and Griss, 1989). Second, generalizations about entire categories of people (such as whites, African Americans, or Latinos/as) tend to be inaccurate because of differences *within* each group. For example, the sociologist Ronald Angel (1984) found significant differences in the effect of disabilities on Latinos depending on whether they were Mexican American, Puerto Rican, or Cuban American. Angel concluded that although both Mexican American and Puerto Rican men had lower rates of full-time employment and lower hourly wages relative to (non-Latino) whites, Puerto Ricans were worse off than Mexican Americans in terms of earnings and number of work hours. Third, there is the problem

of determining which factor occurred first. For example, some of the problems for Puerto Ricans with disabilities are tied to their overall position of economic disadvantage. Although disability is associated with lower earnings and higher rates of unemployment for both males and females, a disability has a stronger negative effect on women's labor-force participation than it does on men's. Compared to men, women with disabilities are overrepresented as clerical and service workers and underrepresented as managers and administrators. Women with disabilities are also much less likely to be covered by pension and health plans than are men (Russo and Jansen, 1988).

Health Care in the Future

Central questions regarding the future of health care are how to provide coverage for the largest number of people and how to do this without bankrupting the entire nation. At the time of this writing, medical analysts and political leaders are attempting to understand how the health care reform bill will be implemented and how it will affect the health of the nation. This reform bill constitutes a form of universal health coverage and has widespread opposition from those who want to reduce taxes and keep the government out of their daily lives. A major sticking point on the passage of the health reform bill was the surtax on the wealthy, and it will be interesting to see how this issue comes out as the plan is implemented in the future. Overall, our best hope for good medical care is that a payment system will be developed that pays for good patient results at a reasonable cost and thus brings about a transformation in the current U.S. health care system.

A key factor in contemporary health care is the role that advanced technologies play in the rising

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▲ One of the expected benefits of the 2010 health care reform legislation is more efficient medical treatment and administration, ultimately lowering the overall cost of health care in the United States.

- **For Discussion:** "[O]ur objectives should be a health system within which the necessary health care needs of all our citizens are met; a system which consumes resources prudently, balances spending on health with other national priorities, spreads costs over the broadest possible base, and does not disproportionately impact any segment of the economy" (Walter Maher, *Business and Health,*

9/2001). Have students discuss this statement based on current events.
- **For Discussion:** Ask your class to discuss and evaluate the following observation: "Pharmaceutical companies will soon rule the world if we keep letting them believe we are a happy, functional society so long as all the women are on Prozac, all children on Ritalin, and all men on Viagra" (Terri Guillemets).

you can make a difference

Helping Others in the Fight Against Illness!

It's so nice to have someone come in and talk to you and do what they do. When you get kind of down, it definitely helps perk you up. I have visitors, but some of the people here don't. These ladies make us feel pampered.

> —Lona, a patient recovering from colon cancer, describing how much she appreciated a group of volunteers who made her feel better in the hospital

She was depressed. Her doctor told her to put a little makeup on. She said, "Even if I had some, I wouldn't be motivated to do it." I saw a need for people to provide these things, especially with cancer, because their skin can get dry from treatments.

> —Beverly Barnes explaining why she began Patient Pride to bring makeup and other cosmetic products to cancer patients (qtd. in Leptich, 2005)

Beverly Barnes did not intend to start the program now known as Patient Pride when she went to the hospital to visit a friend who was recuperating from surgery. However, by the time she left the hospital, having helped her friend put on makeup and freshen her appearance, Barnes realized how much seemingly small acts of kindness can mean to people who are ill or recuperating from surgery.

Patient Pride is only one of many examples of how everyday people can make a difference in the lives of people experiencing illness or disability. There are many Internet sources that you can check out to learn more about volunteering and participating in the fight against diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular disease:

- The American Cancer Society's home page (which has links to various volunteer activities): **www.cancer.org**

- The American Heart Association's home page: **www.americanheart.org**

---

costs of medical care and their usefulness as major tools for diagnosis and treatment. Technology is a major stimulus for social change, and the health care systems in high-income nations such as the United States reflect the rapid rate of technological innovation that has occurred in the last few decades. In the future, advanced health care technologies will no doubt provide even more accurate and quicker diagnosis, effective treatment techniques, and increased life expectancy.

However, technology alone cannot solve many of the problems confronting us in health and health care delivery. In fact, some aspects of technological innovation may be dysfunctional for individuals and society. As we have seen, some technological "advances" raise new ethical concerns, such as the moral and legal issues surrounding the cloning of human life. Some "advances" also may fail: A new prescription drug may be found to cause side effects that are more serious than the illness that it was supposed to remedy. Whether advanced technology succeeds or fails in some areas, it will probably continue to increase the cost of health care in the future. As a result, the gap between the rich and the poor in the United States will contribute to inequalities of access to vital medical services. On a global basis, new technologies may lower the death rate in some low-income countries, but it will primarily be the wealthy in those nations who will have access to the level of health care that many people in higher-income countries take for granted.

As previously discussed, the organization of U.S. health care will continue to change in the future. Finally, to a degree, health care in the future will be up to each of us. What measures will we take to safeguard ourselves against illness and disorders? How can we help others who are the victims of acute and chronic diseases or disabilities? Although we cannot change global or national health problems, there are some small (but not insignificant) things we can do to make a difference (see the You Can Make a Difference box).

- **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disc also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.

chapter review

● **What is health, and why are sociologists interested in studying health and medicine?**

According to the World Health Organization, health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. In other words, health is not only a biological issue but also a social issue. For this reason, sociologists are interested in studying health and medicine. As a social institution, medicine is one of the most important components of quality of life.

● **How do acute and chronic diseases differ, and which is most closely linked to spiraling health care costs?**

Acute diseases are illnesses that strike suddenly and cause dramatic incapacitation and sometimes death. Chronic diseases, such as arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease, are long-term or lifelong illnesses that develop gradually or are present at birth. Treatment of chronic diseases is typically more costly because of the duration of these problems.

● **How is health care paid for in the United States?**

Throughout most of the past hundred years, medical care in the United States has been paid for on a fee-for-service basis. The term *fee for service* means that patients are billed individually for each service they receive. This approach to paying for medical services is expensive because few restrictions are placed on the fees that doctors, hospitals, and other medical providers can charge patients. Recently, there have been efforts at cost containment, and HMOs and managed care have produced both positive and negative results in the contemporary practice of medicine. Health maintenance organizations (HMOs) provide, for a set monthly fee, total care with an emphasis on prevention to avoid costly treatment later. Managed care refers to any system of cost containment that closely monitors and controls health care providers' decisions about medical procedures, diagnostic tests, and other services that should be provided to patients.

● **What is the functionalist perspective on health and illness?**

According to the functionalist approach, if society is to function as a stable system, it is important for people to be healthy and to contribute to their society. Consequently, sickness is viewed as a form of deviant behavior that must be controlled by society. Sociologist Talcott Parsons (1951) described the sick role—the set of patterned expectations that defines the norms and values appropriate for individuals who are sick and for those who interact with them. Although individuals are given permission to not perform their usual activities for a period of time, they are expected to seek medical attention and get well as soon as possible so that they can go about their normal routine.

● **What is the conflict perspective on health and illness?**

Conflict theory tends to emphasize the political, economic, and social forces that affect health and the health care delivery system. Among these issues are the ability of all people to obtain health care; how race, class, and gender inequalities affect health and health care; power relations between doctors and other health care workers; the dominance of the medical model of health care; and the role of profit in the health care system.

● **What is the symbolic interactionist perspective on health and illness?**

In studying health, symbolic interactionists focus on the fact that the meaning that social actors give their illness or disease will affect their self-concept and their relationships with others. According to symbolic interactionists, we socially construct "health" and "illness" and how both should be treated. Symbolic interactionists also examine medicalization—the process whereby nonmedical problems become defined and treated as illnesses or disorders.

● **What is the postmodernist perspective on health and illness?**

Postmodern theorists such as Michel Foucault argue that doctors and the medical establishment have

gained control over illness and patients at least partly because of the physicians' clinical gaze, which replaces all other systems of knowledge. The myth of the wise doctor has also been supported by the development of disease classification systems and new tests.

● **How did deinstitutionalization change the way that mental illness is treated?**

Deinstitutionalization shifted many mental patients from hospital treatment to community- or family-based care. This was possible because of newer drugs and treatments; however, it also created new issues because of social stereotypes about the "mentally ill" and differences of opinion about various treatment options.

● **What is a disability, and how prevalent are disabilities in the United States?**

Disability is a physical or health condition that stigmatizes or causes discrimination. An estimated 49.7 million persons in the United States have one or more physical or mental disabilities. This number continues to increase for several reasons. First, with advances in medical technology, many people who once would have died from an accident or illness now survive, although with an impairment. Second, as more people live longer, they are more likely to experience diseases (such as arthritis) that may have disabling consequences. Third, persons born with serious disabilities are more likely to survive infancy because of medical technology. However, less than 15 percent of persons with a disability today were born with it; accidents, disease, and war account for most disabilities in this country.

key terms

acute diseases 463

chronic diseases 463

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universal health care 479

questions for critical thinking

1. Why is it important to explain the social, as well as the biological, aspects of health and illness in societies?
2. In what ways are race, class, and gender intertwined with physical and mental disorders?
3. How would functionalists, conflict theorists, and symbolic interactionists suggest that health care delivery might be improved in the United States?
4. Based on this chapter, how do you think illness and disability will be handled in the United States in the near future? Are there things that we can learn from other nations regarding the delivery of health care? Why or why not?

turning to video

Watch the CBS video *Young and Uninsured* (running time 2:22), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video examines how young adults are the largest uninsured age group in the country, and explores some of the ways in which the federal health care legislation passed into law in 2010 seeks to help. As you watch the video, think about your own health care situation: Did you have insurance before the new law started going into effect? Do you have it now? After you watch the video, try answering these questions: Should insuring young people, who generally have fewer health problems than older people, have been a priority of the new law? Why or why not?

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St. Louis, Missouri:

It was a good life, a really good ride. . . . I made a wonderful career out of understanding the cultures of Latin America and the culture of the United States and how to do business in both.

—Amparo Kollman-Moore, a naturalized U.S. citizen who migrated to this country from Columbia, describing how she felt about rising through the ranks of a medical supply company to become president of its Latin American division (qtd. in Preston, 2010: A1, A3)

The tomato-farming region of Immokalee, Florida:

We live here in fear. We fear Immigration will come, and many people just don't go out.

—Antonia Fuentes, a Mexican farmworker who has picked tomatoes for two years and would welcome even a guest worker program that would permit her to stay in the United States for a set period of time (qtd. in Goodnough and Steinhauer, 2006: A35)

▲ **The controversial 2010 Arizona legislation that cracked down on illegal immigration has had a perhaps unanticipated secondary effect: bringing the issue back into the national focus, where it had waned in the years after the 2008 real-estate meltdown and subsequent economic recession.**

© JAVIER ROJAS/Landov

A migrant shelter in Nogales, Mexico:

It's hard to cross. But it's harder to see your children have little to eat.

—Raul Gonzalez, who turned himself in to U.S. authorities after he was robbed and his feet started bleeding from walking for five days to get across the border, states the common theme of most immigrants: We want a better life for ourselves and our children (qtd. in CNN.com, 2006).

Fort Hancock, Texas:

It's very hard over there [in El Porvenir, Mexico]. They are killing people over there who have nothing to do with drug trafficking. They kill you just for having seen what they are doing.

—Vicente Burciaga, who escaped from El Porvenir, Mexico, to Fort Hancock, Texas, is seeking political asylum with his wife and infant son after gang members burned down five homes in their area and killed a neighbor in one of many episodes of drug violence in their community (qtd. in McKinley, 2010: A1).

Chapter Focus Question

What effect does migration have on cities and on shifts in the global population?

Around the world, people move from one location to another for many reasons, and individuals and families that immigrate to the United States from other nations are no exception. As the interviews indicate, some persons move to the United States for economic opportunities while others move because they fear for their life. In the United States and many other high-income countries, there is a lack of consensus about the causes and consequences of immigration: Some are adamantly opposed to immigration; others believe that it is acceptable under certain circumstances.

Where do we stand in the United States in the second decade of the twenty-first century? As economic conditions have worsened in the United States, immigration remains a source of contention for many people. However, some sociologists and other social analysts wonder how much the general public actually knows about immigrants to this country. Some people view immigrants as undocumented workers who are in the country illegally. Fewer people are aware that many immigrants, such as Amparo Kollman-Moore, are professionals or top technicians and administrators with high-paying white-collar careers (Preston, 2010). According to David Kallick, director for immigration research at the Fiscal Policy Institute, "The United States is getting a more varied and economically important flow of immigrants than the public seems to realize" (qtd. in Preston, 2010: A3). Even fewer people are aware of the number of individuals who enter the United States because they fear for their life if they remain in their country of origin (McKinley, 2010). The issue of immigration has produced a divisive battle over immigration reform. The state of Arizona, for example, passed a stringent new law on illegal immigration in 2010, causing strife

not only in that state but throughout the nation. The Arizona law requires that immigrants meet federal requirements to carry necessary identity documents that legitimize their presence in the United States. Failure to carry immigration documents is now an Arizona state crime, and police there have been given broad power to detain any individual suspected of being in the country illegally (Archibold, 2010). Recently, a federal judge delayed enactment of some provisions of this law. After the state of Arizona appeals the judge's ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court may hear this case. President Obama stated that the original law threatens to undermine basic notions of fairness and diminish trust between police and community members (Archibold, 2010).

Clearly, immigration is an important factor in understanding the dynamics of population and urbanization in the United States and other nations. However, immigration is only one factor associated with population growth and urban change: Birth rates and death rates are also important but have received relatively little attention. In this chapter, we explore the dynamics of population and urbanization, with a focus on how birth rates, death rates, and migration affect growth and change in societies such as ours. Before reading on, test your knowledge about current U.S. immigration issues by taking the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz.

Demography: The Study of Population

How large is the world's population? More than 6.8 billion people live in the world today, and every single day, the population increases by approximately 206,563 people (see ▶ Figure 15.1). This means that the population increases by about 8,607 people each hour, and if we break it down even further, 143 people are added to the world's population each minute, and 2.4 persons (statistically speaking) are added every second (U.S. Census Bureau International Data Base, 2010).

What causes the population to grow rapidly? This question is of interest to scholars who specialize in the study of *demography—a subfield of sociology that examines population size, composition, and distribution.* Many sociological studies use demographic analysis as a component of the research design because all aspects of social life are affected by demography. For example, an important relationship exists between population size and the availability of food, water, energy, and housing. Population size, composition, and distribution are also connected to issues such as poverty, racial and ethnic diversity, shifts in the age structure of society, and concerns about environmental degradation (Weeks, 2008).

Increases or decreases in population can have a powerful impact on the social, economic, and political structures of societies. As used by demographers, a *population* is a group of people who live in a specified geographic area. Changes in populations occur as a result of three processes: fertility (births), mortality (deaths), and migration.
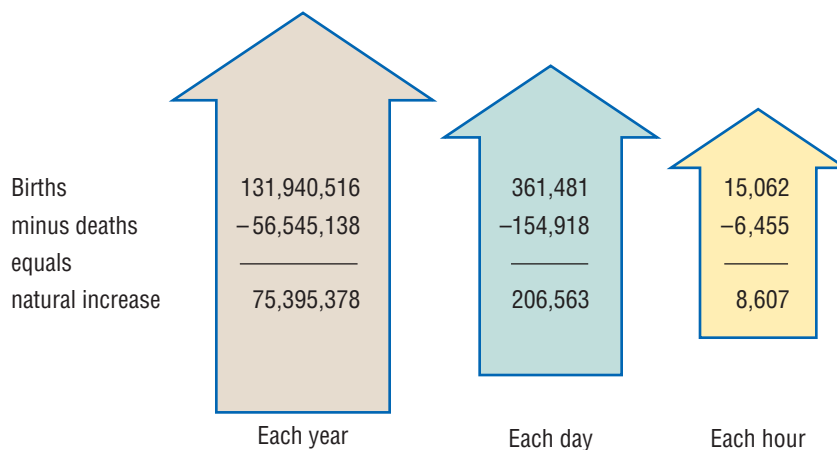
Fertility

Fertility is the actual level of childbearing for an individual or a population. The level of fertility in a society is based on biological and social factors, the primary biological factor being the number of women of childbearing age (usually between ages 15 and 45). Other biological factors affecting fertility include the general health and level of nutrition of women of childbearing age. Social factors influencing the level of fertility include the roles available to women in a society and prevalent viewpoints regarding what constitutes the "ideal" family size.

Based on biological capability alone, most women could produce twenty or more children during their childbearing years. *Fecundity* is the potential number of children who could be born if every woman reproduced at her maximum biological capacity. Fertility rates are not as high as fecundity rates because people's biological capabilities are limited by social factors such as practicing voluntary abstinence and refraining from sexual intercourse until an older age, as well as by contraception, voluntary sterilization, abortion, and infanticide. Additional social factors affecting fertility include significant changes in the number of available partners for sex and/or marriage (as a result of war, for example), increases in the number of women of childbearing age in the workforce, and high rates of unemployment. In some countries, governmental policies also affect the fertility rate. For example, the United Nations projects that China's policy of allowing only one child per family in order to limit population growth will result in that country's population starting to decline in 2042 (Beech, 2001).

	Each year	Each day	Each hour
Births	131,940,516	361,481	15,062
minus deaths	−56,545,138	−154,918	−6,455
equals	————	———	———
natural increase	75,395,378	206,563	8,607

▲ **FIGURE 15.1 GROWTH IN THE WORLD'S POPULATION**
Every single day, the world's population increases by more than 200,000 people.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau International Data Base, 2010.

- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disc provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint® slides, videos, PowerPoint® and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **For Discussion:** Ask students to brainstorm answers to this question: Why is the study of demography increasingly important?

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About U.S. Immigration?

True	False	
T	F	1. All "unauthorized immigrants" in the United States entered the country illegally.
T	F	2. Nearly two-thirds of the children living in unauthorized immigrant families in the United States are U.S. citizens by birth.
T	F	3. Adult males make up a larger percentage of the unauthorized immigrant population than adult females.
T	F	4. Unauthorized immigrants from Mexico and Latin America represent slightly less than 50 percent of the unauthorized population in the United States.
T	F	5. During the past ten years, more unauthorized immigrants came to the United States from Europe and Canada than from Asia.
T	F	6. Unauthorized male immigrants are more likely to be employed than are males who are either legal immigrants or native-born.
T	F	7. The percentage of unauthorized immigrant workers in white-collar occupations has risen substantially in recent years.
T	F	8. Most undocumented immigrant workers settle in six states (California, New York, Florida, Texas, New Jersey, and Illinois).

Answers on page 504.

The most basic measure of fertility is the *crude birth rate—the number of live births per 1,000 people in a population in a given year.* In 2009 the crude birth rate in the United States was almost 14.0 (13.82) per 1,000, as compared with an all-time high rate of 27 per 1,000 in 1947 (following World War II). This measure is referred to as a "crude" birth rate because it is based on the entire population and is not "refined" to incorporate significant variables affecting fertility, such as age, marital status, religion, and race/ethnicity.

In most areas of the world, women are having fewer children. Women who have six or seven children tend to live in agricultural regions of the world, where children's labor is essential to the family's economic survival and child mortality rates are very high. For example, Uganda has a crude birth rate of almost 48.0 (47.8) per 1,000, as compared with 14 per 1,000 in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). However, in Uganda and some other African nations, families need to have many children in order to ensure that one or two will live to adulthood due to high rates of poverty, malnutrition, and disease.

Mortality

The primary cause of world population growth in recent years has been a decline in *mortality—the incidence of death in a population.* The simplest measure of mortality is the *crude death rate—the number of deaths per 1,000 people in a population in a given year.* In 2009 the U.S. crude death rate was about 8.4 per 1,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). In high-income, developed nations, mortality rates have declined dramatically as diseases such

demography a subfield of sociology that examines population size, composition, and distribution.

fertility the actual level of childbearing for an individual or a population.

crude birth rate the number of live births per 1,000 people in a population in a given year.

mortality the incidence of death in a population.

crude death rate the number of deaths per 1,000 people in a population in a given year.

- **For Discussion:** Have the class respond to the following: "The hungry world cannot be fed until and unless the growth of its resources and the growth of its population come into balance. Each man and woman—and each nation—must make decisions of conscience and policy in the face of this great problem" (President Lyndon Baines Johnson).

- **Sociological Literacy:** Ask students to answer the following questions in a brief essay written for the next class meeting: What kinds of information can demographers learn from age-specific birth rates? Why are these data important for future population projections?

- **Global Perspective:** "Parents whose only child was killed or maimed in China's earthquake would be allowed to have another,

sociology and everyday life

ANSWERS to the Sociology Quiz on U.S. Immigration

1. **False.** Although the term "unauthorized immigrant" refers to a U.S. resident who is not a citizen of this country, who has not been admitted for permanent residence, or who does not have an authorized temporary status that permits longer-term residence and work, some "unauthorized immigrants" originally entered the country with valid visas but overstayed their visas' expiration or otherwise violated the terms of their admission.

2. **True.** Based on available estimates, about 3.1 million children, or 64 percent of all children living in unauthorized immigrant families, are U.S. citizens by birth.

3. **True.** It is estimated that that about 58 percent of the unauthorized adult immigrant population is composed of males, whereas females make up about 42 percent.

4. **False.** Unauthorized immigrants from Mexico and Latin America account for almost 80 percent of the unauthorized population in the United States. Most unauthorized immigrants come from Mexico, and the Pew Hispanic Center estimates that about 80 to 85 percent of all Mexican immigrants residing in the United States for less than 10 years are undocumented.

5. **False.** Unauthorized immigrants from South and East Asia made up about 13 percent of the undocumented population, whereas immigrants from Europe and Canada accounted for about 6 percent of all illegal U.S. immigration.

6. **True.** Undocumented male workers are often younger than legal immigrant or native-born males, and they are also less likely to attend college. As a result, a few years ago, 94 percent of unauthorized male immigrants were in the workforce, as compared with 86 percent of male legal immigrants and 83 percent of native-born adult males. Today, these numbers may have changed due to economic conditions in the nation.

7. **False.** Unauthorized immigrant workers continue to be underrepresented in white-collar occupations, such as management, business, and professional occupations and overrepresented in occupational categories (such as farming, cleaning, construction, and food preparation) that typically require less education and have no licensing requirements.

8. **False.** Although most immigrant workers previously settled in one of these six states, many more are moving to—or initially arriving at—destinations throughout various regions of the country, including states such as North Carolina, Georgia, Nebraska, and Idaho.

Source: Based on Passel, 2006.

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as malaria, polio, cholera, tetanus, typhoid, and measles have been virtually eliminated by vaccinations and improved sanitation and personal hygiene (Weeks, 2008). Just as smallpox appeared to be eradicated, however, HIV/AIDS rapidly rose to surpass the 30 percent fatality rate of smallpox. (The ten leading causes of death in the United States in 1900 and 2007 are shown in ■ Table 15.1.) In low-income, less-developed nations, infectious diseases remain the leading cause of death; in some areas, mortality rates are rapidly increasing as a result of HIV/AIDS. Children under age 15 constitute a growing number of those who are infected with HIV.

But many children do not survive long enough to contract communicable diseases. On a global basis, large numbers of newborn infants do not live to see their first birthday. The measure of these deaths is referred to as the *infant mortality rate*, which is defined in Chapter 14 as the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births in a given year. The infant mortality rate is an important reflection of a society's level of preventive (prenatal) medical care, maternal nutrition, childbirth procedures, and neonatal care for infants. Differential levels of access to these services are reflected in the divergent infant mortality rates for African Americans

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offering some solace to grieving couples. Though commonly called a one child policy, the rules offer a welter of exceptions and loopholes, some of them put into practice because of widespread opposition to the limits. For example, in large parts of rural China, most families are allowed a second child, especially if the first was a girl. Local officials often have wide discretion on enforcement, a

fact that has made the policy susceptible to corruption" (Associated Press, 5/2008).

- **Box Note:** Have your students check their answers to the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz. Ask students to discuss the consequences of these statements for immigration legislation and reform.

table 15.1

The Ten Leading Causes of Death in the United States, 1900 and 2007

Cause of Death—1900	Rank	Cause of Death—2007
Influenza/pneumonia	1	Heart disease
Tuberculosis	2	Cancer
Stomach/intestinal disease	3	Stroke
Heart disease	4	Chronic lung disease
Cerebral hemorrhage	5	Accidents (unintentional injuries)
Kidney disease	6	Alzheimer's disease
Accidents	7	Diabetes mellitus
Cancer	8	Influenza and pneumonia
Diseases in early infancy	9	Nephritis, nephritic syndrome, and nephrosis
Diphtheria	10	Septicemia

Sources: National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics, 2009.

and whites. In 2006, for example, the U.S. mortality rate for white infants was 567 per 1,000 live births, as compared with 13.3 per 1,000 live births for African American infants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

As discussed in Chapter 14, *life expectancy* is an estimate of the average lifetime in years of people born in a specific year. For persons born in the United States in 2009, for example, life expectancy at birth was 78.1 years, as compared with 82.1 years in Japan and 50 years or less in the African nations of Nigeria, Somalia, and South Africa (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Life expectancy varies by sex; for instance, females born in the United States in 2009 could expect to live almost 81 years as compared with 75.7 years for males. Life expectancy also varies by race. Life expectancy for African American males born in 2010 is estimated at 70.2 years as compared to 77.2 for African American females and 75.7 years for white males (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

Migration

Migration is the movement of people from one geographic area to another for the purpose of changing residency. Migration affects the size and distribution of the population in a given area. *Distribution* refers to the physical location of people throughout a geographic area. In the United States, people are not evenly distributed throughout the country; many of us live in densely populated areas. *Density* is the number of people living in a specific geographic area. In urbanized areas, density may be measured by the number of people who live per room, per block, or per square mile.

Migration may be either international (movement between two nations) or internal (movement within national boundaries). Internal migration has occurred throughout U.S. history and has significantly changed the distribution of the population over time.

Migration involves two types of movement: immigration and emigration. *Immigration* is the movement of people into a geographic area to take up residency. Each year, more than one million people enter the United States, primarily from Latin America and Asia. The last three decades have seen a tenfold increase in the number of adult Mexican immigrants living in the United States. Today, these immigrants alone account for more than 11 to 12 million people in this country, and their children make up approximately 20 percent of the U.S. child population, with these rates being even higher in states such as Texas and California. Working with immigrant families and their children has become an important concern (see the You Can Make a Difference box).

Immigration rates are not an accurate reflection of the actual number of immigrants who enter a country. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service records only legal immigration based on entry visas and change-of-immigration-status forms. Similarly, few records are maintained regarding *emigration*—the movement of people out of a geographic area to take up residency elsewhere. To determine the net migration in a geographic area, the number of people leaving that area to take up permanent or semipermanent residence elsewhere (emigrants) is subtracted from the number of

> **migration** the movement of people from one geographic area to another for the purpose of changing residency.

- **Active Learning:** Pull up an online life expectancy calculator for your class session. Have students input their own data (see **http://moneycentral.msn.com/investor/calcs/n_expect/main.asp**).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Media Coverage:** "Dozens of Indian men and women infected with HIV/AIDS have agreed to marry each other after meeting at a special matchmaking event, hoping to end the isolation the deadly

infection often brings. Thirty infected men and women from across the country met at the 'HIV+ Find a Life Partner' session in the western city of Surat, brought together by a local voluntary group working with HIV/AIDS patients. For over two hours, they shared their experiences, discussed their families, medical histories and professions, with some even introducing their prospective partners

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© David Young-Wolff/PhotoEdit

▲ Political unrest, violence, and war are "push" factors that encourage people to leave their country of origin. By contrast, job opportunities, such as construction work in the United States, are a major "pull" factor for people from low-income countries.

people entering that area to take up residence there (immigrants), unless more people are moving out of the area than into it, in which case the mathematical process is reversed.

People migrate either voluntarily or involuntarily. *Pull* factors at the international level, such as a democratic government, religious freedom, employment opportunities, or a more temperate climate, may draw voluntary immigrants into a nation. Within nations, people from large cities may be pulled to rural areas by lower crime rates, more space, and a lower cost of living. People such as Antonia Fuentes, whose decision to migrate to the United States is described at the beginning of this chapter, are drawn by pull factors such as greater economic opportunities at their destination and are pushed by factors such as low wages and few employment opportunities in their previous place of residence. *Push* factors at the international level, such as political unrest, violence, war, famine, plagues, and natural disasters, may encourage people to leave one area and relocate elsewhere. Push factors in regional U.S. migration include unemployment, harsh weather conditions, a high cost of living, inadequate school systems, and high crime rates.

Involuntary, or forced, migration usually occurs as a result of political oppression, such as when Jews fled Nazi Germany in the 1930s or when Afghans left their country to escape oppression there in the early 2000s. Slavery is the most striking example of involuntary migration; for example, the 10 million to 20 million Africans forcibly transported to the Western Hemisphere prior to 1800 did not come by choice (see Chapter 9).

Population Composition

Changes in fertility, mortality, and migration affect the *population composition—the biological and social characteristics of a population, including age, sex, race, marital status, education, occupation, income, and size of household.*

One measure of population composition is the *sex ratio—the number of males for every hundred females in a given population.* A sex ratio of 100 indicates an equal number of males and females in the population. If the number is greater than 100, there are more males than females; if it is less than 100, there are more females than males. In the United States, the estimated sex ratio for 2009 was 97, which means there were 97 males per 100 females. Although approximately 124 males are conceived for every 100 females, male fetuses miscarry at a higher rate. From birth to age 14, the sex ratio is 1.04; in the age 15–64 category, however, the ratio shifts to 1.0, and from 65 upward, women outnumber men. By age 65, the sex ratio is about 75—that is, there are 75 men for every 100 women.

For demographers, sex and age are significant population characteristics; they are key indicators of fertility and mortality rates. The age distribution of a population has a direct bearing on the demand for schooling, health, employment,

to accompanying relatives, before agreeing to marry" (Reuters, 10/2006).

- **Global Perspective:** "Sudan's 22-year civil war displaced more than four million people—the highest number of internally displaced people in the world—but it also guarded the region against the spread of AIDS. That isolation is over and the impoverished inhabitants face a new and previously unknown killer" (*The Independent,* 12/2005).

- **Media Coverage:** "Under the United States''wet-foot/dry-foot' policy, most Cubans who reach U.S. soil are allowed to remain and seek American residency, while those intercepted at sea are generally sent home. The migrants in a recent case left Cuba without government permission in January, reaching an old bridge

you can make a difference

Creating a Vital Link Between College Students and Immigrant Children

The program that I volunteered for is the Youth Tutoring Program. This program is designed to help refugee, immigrant, and underserved minority children get additional help on homework or class assignments. The program also offers activities to help children succeed in school. Its goal is to help the children develop effective problem-solving skills and create supportive peer networks.

My experience with the program and especially with the kids [has] been wonderful and truly rewarding. I love the children there, and I enjoy teaching them as well as building a relationship with them. . . . The students have taught me the importance of a strong and caring friendship.
—Sovanny That (2007), who was completing her doctor of pharmacy degree when she wrote these words, explains why she feels so strongly about making a contribution through her volunteer work with immigrant and refugee children.

Sovanny That's volunteer work took place with the Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA), a nonprofit, multiethnic organization that provides services for newly arrived immigrant families in the state of Washington. Across the nation, volunteers provide much needed services for recent immigrants and their children, who may need assistance not only in learning about life in the United States but also in developing basic learning skills for school. Adjusting to a new environment is difficult for adults, but it can be even more challenging for young children who may not understand the reasons why their families have moved to faraway places.

Like Sovanny, thousands of other college students seek to make a difference in the lives of immigrant children through organized volunteer activities at their schools. At Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, for example, the Northwestern Community Development Corps (NCDC) is a student-run organization that engages students in community development in the greater Chicago area. According to the group's mission statement, "We promote civic engagement through direct service, social awareness, and advocacy" (NCDC, 2007). Among the projects offered by NCDC is the Centro Romero After School program, where college volunteers tutor seven- to twelve-year-old children from immigrant or refugee families in math, reading, and spelling. After the homework is completed, the volunteers enjoy playing games with the children. Tutoring programs for immigrant students exist nationwide in various public schools and colleges, and most college students who volunteer in these programs find their activities to be both rewarding and a learning experience as the children begin to thrive through their efforts.

Depending on the area of the country in which you live, children from immigrant and refugee families may trace their roots to Mexico, Central or South America, Somalia, Ethiopia, or Eastern Europe, among other places. By serving in such a program, volunteers may not only help the children gain a foothold in this country but may also help dispel a pervasive myth that immigrant students are a drain on the U.S. educational system. Volunteers may help other people see that these students are a valuable resource in our schools because they provide firsthand knowledge of the larger world in which we live. As the sociologist Robert Crosnoe (2006) suggested in his recent book on how to help Mexican immigrant children succeed in school (and this would apply to other racial/ethnic groups as well), recent immigrants should be seen not as a *threat* but as a potential *resource* for our nation. Consequently, we should make every effort to see that the American Dream is a realistic goal, and not just an ideology, for new arrivals as well as for everyone else residing in this country.

Does your college or university have a volunteer coordinator who might provide you with the name of programs where you could put your skills to work helping immigrant students or other people who can benefit from your knowledge and expertise?

housing, and pensions. The current distribution of a population can be depicted in a **population pyramid—a graphic representation of the distribution of a population by sex and age.** Population pyramids are a series of bar graphs divided into five-year age cohorts; the left side of the pyramid shows the number or percentage of males in each age bracket; the right side provides the same

population composition the biological and social characteristics of a population, including age, sex, race, marital status, education, occupation, income, and size of household.

sex ratio a term used by demographers to denote the number of males for every hundred females in a given population.

in the Florida Keys. But the U.S. Coast Guard sent the migrants back to Cuba after determining the bridge did not qualify as dry land because parts were missing and it no longer connected to U.S. soil" (Associated Press, 10/2006).
• **For Discussion:** "On the one hand we publicly pronounce the equality of all peoples; on the other hand, in our immigration laws, we embrace in practice these very theories we abhor and verbally condemn" (Emanuel Celler). Have students restate and evaluate this perspective.
• **Active Learning:** "School officials who work with children of immigrants say it's not uncommon for students to miss school because they're out translating for their parents or meeting other family obligations. If parents work two jobs, or there is a single parent, high school students often must meet younger siblings

Immigration and the Changing Face(s) of the United States

Throughout U.S. history, immigration has had a profound effect on our nation. Chances are very good that almost all of us can trace our heritage and our family roots to one or more other nations where our ancestors lived before coming to the United States. Immigration has also been a controversial topic at times throughout our nation's history, just as it is at the start of the twenty-first century.

When we look at the faces of the people around our country today, we see a wide diversity of human beings, most of whom are seeking to live their lives together positively and peacefully. Demographers and other social science researchers are interested in studying how people become part of the mainstream of a country to which they have immigrated while still maintaining their own unique cultural identity, and why some of them do not want to become part of that mainstream.

As you view the pictures on these three pages, think about how you and other members of your family came to view yourselves as Americans—residents of the United States of America—and what this means to you and to them in terms of what you think and do on a daily basis. Doing so helps us gain a better understanding of some of the sociological issues relating to immigration.

▲ At a march to show support for the Somali community in Lewiston, Maine, marchers urged people to "Love Thy Neighbor!" rather than to attempt to keep new arrivals from other countries from moving into the city.

© AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty

◀ IMMIGRANTS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

For recent immigrants, education is a key that may open the door to greater involvement in one's new country. Some educational experiences may be more long term (such as completing a college degree), whereas others serve more immediate needs, such as the acculturation and parenting class that these recent Hmong immigrants have completed to help them adjust to their new life in the United States.

© AP Photo/Ann Heisenfelt

▼ POLITICS AND IMMIGRATION

Voting and political participation help people have a voice in the U.S. democratic process. Here, four languages are used to encourage residents of South Boston to vote on "Super Tuesday" in 2008. How does politics influence our thinking about immigration? Does immigration influence our thinking about politics? Can our opinions change over time?

© AP Photo/Charles Krupa

© Alexander Tamargo/Contributor/Getty Images

▲ IMMIGRATION AND THE CHANGING FACE OF THE MEDIA

As recent immigrants to the United States reach out to find media sources that reflect their culture and interests, executives at many media outlets strive to reach the large number of young people (typically between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four) who represent the future of the larger ethnic categories in this country. For example, Latinos and Latinas are a key target audience for both Hispanic and so-called mainstream media. On the Spanish-language cable network program *Acceso Maximo,* for instance, viewers vote for their favorite videos and artists by text messaging or voting online.

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▶ **IMMIGRANTS AND EMPLOYMENT**

Many people often view the world's *immigrants* and *workers* as being almost interchangeable because the primary purpose of much immigration is either to find work or for employers to have a larger pool of low-paid workers from which to hire new employees. Immigrant workers in the United States hold many jobs, ranging from agricultural and gardening positions to high-tech and health-care-related professions. As with many of our ancestors, these California landscape workers hope that their earnings will help their children have a more secure future in this country.

© Tony Freeman/PhotoEdit

reflect & analyze

1. When did your ancestors immigrate to the United States? Or, if you are a Native American, what is the history of your group? Do some research to find out about your ancestors.

2. Do you believe that non-English-speaking immigrants to this country should be expected—or required—to read and speak English at school, work, and other public places? Why or why not?

▶ turning to video

Watch the ABC video *Minutemen Patrol the Border* (running time 2:13), available on the Kendall Companion Website and through Cengage Learning eResources accounts. Following President George W. Bush's controversial efforts in 2005 to combat illegal immigration, this news report provides a look at the Minutemen, private citizens who live usually along U.S. borders and patrol for illegal immigrants, as well as communities where illegal immigration is an unexpected source of conflict. As you watch the video, think about the photographs, commentary, and questions that you encountered in this photo essay. After you've watched the video, consider another question: To what degree is racism involved in some U.S. citizens' anti-illegal-immigrant feelings and actions?

Windows Media Player

RUN FOR THE BORDER
ILLEGAL ALIEN CRISIS?

00:00:39   Playing: 277 Kbps

Mexico, 2000

Age

6 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Males
(in millions)
Females
(in millions)

Iran, 2000

Age

6 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Males
(in millions)
Females
(in millions)

United States, 2000

Age

12 10 8 6 4 2 0 2 4 6 8 10 12
Males
(in millions)
Females
(in millions)

France, 2000

Age

3 2.5 2 1.5 1 0.5 0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3
Males
(in millions)
Females
(in millions)

◀ **FIGURE 15.2 POPULATION PYRAMIDS FOR MEXICO, IRAN, THE UNITED STATES, AND FRANCE**

Sources: Weeks, 2005; UNAIDS/WHO, 2000.

information for females. The age/sex distribution in the United States and other high-income nations does not have the appearance of a classic pyramid, but rather is more rectangular or barrel-shaped. By contrast, low-income nations, such as Mexico and Iran, which have high fertility and mortality rates, do fit the classic population pyramid. ▶ Figure 15.2 compares the demographic composition of Mexico, Iran, the United States, and France.

Population Growth in Global Context

What are the consequences of global population growth? Scholars do not agree on the answer to this question. Some biologists have warned that Earth is

> **population pyramid** a graphic representation of the distribution of a population by sex and age.

after school, oversee their homework, cook dinner and put them to bed" (*Washington Post,* 5/2004). Have students put this statement in context by interviewing peers whose parents are immigrants.
- **Box Note:** Invite a volunteer organizer from your university or community to come to class and answer questions about how students can get involved and learn more about immigration issues.

- **Box Note:** Have students watch and evaluate the episode of the *30 Days* series involving a Minuteman who goes to live with a family of undocumented immigrants. Ask students to take notes on the ways that the perspectives of both parties change based on the encounter (**http://vimeo.com/11155073**).

a finite ecosystem that cannot support the 10 billion people predicted by 2050; however, some economists have emphasized that free-market capitalism is capable of developing innovative ways to solve such problems. The debate is not a new one; for several centuries, strong opinions have been voiced about the effects of population growth on human welfare.

The Malthusian Perspective

English clergyman and economist Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834) was one of the first scholars to systematically study the effects of population. Displeased with societal changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution in England, Malthus (1965/1798: 7) anonymously published *An Essay on the Principle of Population, As It Affects the Future Improvement of Society,* in which he argued that "the power of population is infinitely greater than the power of the earth to produce subsistence [food] for man."

According to Malthus, the population, if left unchecked, would exceed the available food supply. He argued that the population would increase in a geometric (exponential) progression (2, 4, 8, 16 . . .) while the food supply would increase only by an arithmetic progression (1, 2, 3, 4 . . .). In other words, a *doubling effect* occurs: Two parents can have four children, sixteen grandchildren, and so on, but food production increases by only one acre at a time. Thus, population growth inevitably surpasses the food supply, and the lack of food ultimately ends population growth and perhaps eliminates the existing population (Weeks, 2008). Even in a best-case scenario, overpopulation results in poverty.

However, Malthus suggested that this disaster might be averted by either positive or preventive checks on population. *Positive checks* are mortality risks, such as famine, disease, and war; *preventive checks* are limits to fertility. For Malthus, the only acceptable preventive check was *moral restraint*; people should practice sexual abstinence before marriage and postpone marriage as long as possible in order to have only a few children.

Malthus has had a lasting impact on the field of population studies. Most demographers refer to his dire predictions when they examine the relationship between fertility and subsistence needs. Overpopulation is still a daunting problem that capitalism and technological advances thus far have not solved, especially in middle- and low-income nations with rapidly growing populations and very limited resources.

The Marxist Perspective

Among those who attacked the ideas of Malthus were Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. According to Marx and Engels, the food supply is not threatened by overpopulation; technologically, it is possible to produce the food and other goods needed to meet the demands of a growing population. Marx and Engels viewed poverty as a consequence of the exploitation of workers by the owners of the means of production. For example, they argued that England had poverty because the capitalists skimmed off some of the workers' wages as profits. The labor of the working classes was used by capitalists to earn profits, which, in turn, were used to purchase machinery that could replace the workers rather than supply food for all. From this perspective, overpopulation occurs because capitalists desire to have a surplus of workers (an industrial reserve army) so as to suppress wages and force workers concerned about losing their livelihoods to be more productive.

According to some contemporary economists, the greatest crisis today facing low-income nations is capital shortage, not food shortage. Through technological advances, agricultural production has reached the level at which it can meet the food needs of the world if food is distributed efficiently. Capital shortage refers to the lack of adequate money or property to maintain a business; it is a problem because the physical capital of the past no longer meets the needs of modern economic development. In the past, self-contained rural economies survived on local labor, using local materials to produce the capital needed for other laborers. For example, in a typical village a carpenter made the loom needed by the weaver to make cloth. Today, in the global economy, the one-to-one exchange between the carpenter and the weaver is lost. With an antiquated, locally made loom, the weaver cannot compete against electronically controlled, mass-produced looms. Therefore, the village must purchase capital from the outside, using its own meager financial resources. In the process, the complementary relationship between labor and capital is lost; modern technology brings with it steep costs and results

- **Applied Sociology:** Talk with your class about why demographers are especially interested in the sex and age composition of a given national or local population.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **Historical Perspective:** "Pressures resulting from unrestrained population growth put demands on the natural world that can overwhelm any efforts to achieve a sustainable future. If we are to halt the destruction of our environment, we must accept limits to that growth" (1992 "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity," signed by 1,600 senior scientists from 70 countries, including 102 Nobel Prize laureates).
- **For Discussion:** Ask the class what Malthus meant by the doubling effect. Is this issue still relevant today?

in village noncompetitiveness and underemployment (see Keyfitz, 1994).

Marx and Engels made a significant contribution to the study of demography by suggesting that poverty, not overpopulation, is the most important issue with regard to food supply in a capitalist economy. Although Marx and Engels offer an interesting counterpoint to Malthus, some scholars argue that the Marxist perspective is self-limiting because it attributes the population problem solely to capitalism. In actuality, nations with socialist economies also have demographic trends similar to those in capitalist societies.

▲ **FIGURE 15.3 THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION**

The Neo-Malthusian Perspective

More recently, *neo-Malthusians* (or "new Malthusians") have reemphasized the dangers of overpopulation. To neo-Malthusians, Earth is "a dying planet" with too many people and too little food, compounded by environmental degradation. Overpopulation and rapid population growth result in global environmental problems, ranging from global warming and rain-forest destruction to famine and vulnerability to epidemics (Ehrlich, Ehrlich, and Daily, 1995). Unless significant changes are made, including improving the status of women, reducing racism and religious prejudice, reforming the agriculture system, and shrinking the growing gap between rich and poor, the consequences will be dire (Ehrlich, Ehrlich, and Daily, 1995).

Early neo-Malthusians published birth control handbooks, and widespread acceptance of birth control eventually reduced the connection between people's sexual conduct and fertility (Weeks, 2008). Later neo-Malthusians have encouraged people to be part of the solution to the problem of overpopulation by having only one or two children in order to bring about *zero population growth—the point at which no population increase occurs from year to year* because the number of births plus immigrants is equal to the number of deaths plus emigrants (Weeks, 2008).

Demographic Transition Theory

Some scholars who disagree with the neo-Malthusian viewpoint suggest that the theory of demographic transition offers a more accurate picture of future population growth. *Demographic transition* **is the process by which some societies have moved from high birth and death rates to relatively low birth and death rates as a result of technological development.** Demographic transition is linked to four stages of economic development (see ▶ Figure 15.3):

- *Stage 1: Preindustrial societies.* Little population growth occurs because high birth rates are offset by high death rates. Food shortages, poor sanitation, and lack of adequate medical care contribute to high rates of infant and child mortality.
- *Stage 2: Early industrialization.* Significant population growth occurs because birth rates are relatively high whereas death rates decline. Improvements in health, sanitation, and nutrition produce a substantial decline in infant mortality rates. Overpopulation is likely to occur because more people are alive than the society has the ability to support.
- *Stage 3: Advanced industrialization and urbanization.* Very little population growth occurs because both birth rates and death rates are low. The birth

zero population growth the point at which no population increase occurs from year to year.

demographic transition the process by which some societies have moved from high birth rates and death rates to relatively low birth rates and death rates as a result of technological development.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis
- **For Discussion:** Have the class discuss what zero population growth is. Why do neo-Malthusians suggest that zero population growth is essential?
- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students write for ten minutes about the theory of demographic transition. Do all societies go through these stages? Why or why not?
- **Research:** Have students discuss the following: "In poor countries, a higher birth rate and poor health go hand in hand. In many parts of the world, childbirth is itself a leading cause of death. The chance that a woman will die, at some point in her life, from

rate declines as couples control their fertility through contraceptives and become less likely to adhere to religious directives against their use. Children are not viewed as an economic asset; they consume income rather than produce it. Societies in this stage attain zero population growth, but the actual number of births per year may still rise due to an increased number of women of childbearing age.

- *Stage 4: Postindustrialization.* Birth rates continue to decline as more women gain full-time employment and the cost of raising children continues to increase. The population grows very slowly, if at all, because the decrease in birth rates is coupled with a stable death rate.

Debate continues as to whether this evolutionary model accurately explains the stages of population growth in all societies. Advocates note that demographic transition theory highlights the relationship between technological development and population growth, thus making Malthus's predictions obsolete. Scholars also point out that demographic transitions occur at a faster rate in now-low-income nations than they previously did in the nations that are already developed. For example, nations in the process of development have higher birth rates and death rates than the now-developed societies did when they were going through the transition. The death rates declined in the now-developed nations as a result of internal economic development—not, as is the case today, through improved methods of disease control (Weeks, 2008). Critics suggest that this theory best explains development in Western societies.

Other Perspectives on Population Change

In recent decades, other scholars have continued to develop theories about how and why changes in population growth patterns occur. Some have studied the relationship between economic development and a decline in fertility; others have focused on the process of *secularization*—the decline in the significance of the sacred in daily life—and how a change from believing that otherworldly powers are responsible for one's life to a sense of responsibility for one's own well-being is linked to a decline

in fertility. Based on this premise, some analysts argue that the processes of industrialization and economic development are typically accompanied by secularization but that the relationship between these factors is complex when it comes to changes in fertility.

Shifting from the macrolevel to the microlevel, education and social psychological factors also play into the decisions that individuals make about how many children to have. Family planning information is more readily available to people with more years of formal education and may cause them to engage in decision making in accord with *rational choice theory,* which is based on the assumption that people make decisions based on a calculated cost–benefit analysis ("What do I gain and lose from a specific action?"). In low-income countries or other settings in which children are identified as an economic resource for their parents throughout life, fertility rates are higher than in higher-income countries. However, as modernization and urbanization occur in such societies, the positive economic effects of having more children may be offset by the cost of caring for those children and the lowered economic advantage gained from having children in an industrialized nation.

As demographers have reformulated the demographic transition theory, they have highlighted additional factors that are likely to be causes of fertility decline, and they have suggested that demographic transition is not just one process, but rather a set of intertwined transitions. One is the epidemiological transition—the shift from deaths at younger ages due to acute, communicable diseases. Another is the fertility transition—the shift from natural fertility to controlled fertility, resulting in a decrease in the fertility rate. Other transitions include the migration transition, the urban transition, the age transition, and the family and household transition, which occur as a result of lower fertility, longer life, an older age structure, and predominantly urban residence.

As the demographer John R. Weeks (2008) points out, we can best understand demographic events and behavior by studying the context of global change to determine how factors such as political change, economic development, and perhaps the process of "Westernization" may influence population growth and patterns of migration.

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complications relating to childbirth varies dramatically. Better medical care obviously improves the odds of a woman surviving pregnancy and childbirth, but so does reducing the number of pregnancies she has" (Population Reference Bureau, 2008).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **Popular Culture:** Have students research the cases of celebrities who are adopting children from around the world (Brad and Angelina, Mia Farrow, Madonna). Discuss the relationship of adoption to the idea of zero population growth.
- **Sociological Imagination:** "Mexico is Latin America's Tower of Babel. The government recognizes 162 living languages, plus some 300 dialects. And with worsening conditions at home and relatively

framing immigration in the media

Media Framing and Public Opinion

Inside his little Western wear store tucked in a corner of East Riverside Drive, Francisco Javier Aceves can't help but feel a kinship with the angular young men who come in to buy jeans, cowboy boots, phone cards and cell phones. As sure as regular payday, they come in also to wire money to their families back home in Mexico, in places such as Veracruz, Tabasco, Chiapas and Oaxaca.

"Sometimes they come three or four in a car," Aceves said about his customers. "Sometimes they just start lining up to wire money. . . ." The flow of money repeats and repeats, affirming emotional bonds between people separated by a border. . . . It is part of a growing phenomenon. Every month, Mexican immigrants working in the United States in mostly low-paying jobs send more than $1 billion to their families back home, more than Mexico earns from tourism or foreign investment. (Castillo, 2003: J1)

This newspaper article about Mexican immigrants who send money to their families in Mexico is an example of sympathetic framing by the news media. Sympathetic framing refers to news writing that focuses on the human interest side of a story and shows that the individuals involved are caring people who are representative of a larger population.

In stark contrast to sympathetic framing of such stories are those news reports that employ negative framing to describe recent immigrants from countries such as Mexico. Negative framing describes immigrants as nothing more than cheap labor that benefits employers in this country who do not believe in paying a living wage. Articles focusing on the problematic aspects of illegal immigrants or of "guest worker" programs usually emphasize that such workers suppress the wages of other low-income employees because they are willing to work for less money. Negative framing also emphasizes that these workers bring in (or give birth to) millions of children who speak little English, contributing to the decline of public education.

Negative framing of the issue of immigrant labor is not new in the United States. For many years, "immigrant, foreign labor" has been described as a threat to the livelihood of other workers and as a menace to public safety. In 1904 the *San Francisco Chronicle* carried lengthy articles describing how Japanese laborers were taking jobs away from U.S. workers, reflecting a pattern of media reporting that continues to be a topic in the twenty-first century (Puette, 1992).

In the early 2000s, when former President George W. Bush introduced his "Guest Worker Proposal," both sympathetic and negative media framing of immigrant workers ensued. Some articles emphasized the importance of immigrant workers' contributions to the United States. Other reports highlighted the problematic aspects of guest worker programs, arguing that immigration undermines the future of the country.

How the media frame stories about immigrant workers may influence social policy. Will we close our borders to immigration? Will we develop new programs to allow limited entry of immigrant workers? Not only are these important legal and social policy questions, but they are also issues that journalists and other news analysts must face as they frame their stories on immigrants and the billions of dollars that are sent to other countries in exchange for the labor of these workers.

Perhaps the American Dream now transcends the borders of this country. Francisco Javier Aceves (the store proprietor) described to one reporter how the young men who came into his shop have their own dreams of making money, building a home in Mexico one piece at a time, and then going back: "They tell me this. They'll say, 'With this, I'm going to put the roof on my house.'" He paused, smiling slowly, "They're excited!" (qtd. in Castillo, 2003: J4).

reflect & analyze

Since the recent decline in the U.S. housing market and the economic crisis in this country, the number of residential construction jobs has been drastically reduced. Would these problems have any effect on the "pull" factors that attract immigrants to this country? How might "push" factors still be important in determining if and when people immigrate to this country?

A Brief Glimpse at International Migration Theories

Why do people relocate from one nation to another? Several major theories have been developed in an attempt to explain international migration. The *neoclassical economic approach* assumes that migration patterns occur based on geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labor. The United States and other high-income countries that have

rosy reports from family or community members already here, the indigenous population—those who speak primarily a local indigenous language of Mexico—has climbed in the United States" (Associated Press, 9/2006).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **For Discussion:** "Our Nation's immigration laws are disrespected both by those who cross our borders illegally and by the businesses that hire those illegal immigrants" (U.S. Representative Steve Israel). Have students discuss this viewpoint, drawing on specific examples from the news and other research.
- **Historical Perspective:** "The laws should be rigidly enforced which prohibit the immigration of a servile class to compete with

had growing economies and a limited supply of workers for certain types of jobs have paid higher wages than are available in areas with a less-developed economy and a large labor force. As a result, people move to gain higher wages and sometimes better living conditions. They also may take jobs in other countries so that they can send money to their families in their country of origin (see the Framing Immigration in the Media box). For example, it is estimated that Mexican workers in the United States send about half of what they earn to their families across the border, an amount that may total nearly $7 billion per year during good economic times (Ferriss, 2001).

Unlike the neoclassical explanation of migration, which focuses on individual decision making, the *new households economics of migration approach* emphasizes the part that entire families or households play in the migration process. From this approach, the previous example of Mexican workers' temporary migration to the United States would be examined not only from the perspective of the individual worker but also in terms of what the entire family gains from the process of having one or more migrant family members work in another country. By having a diversity of family income (originating from more than one source), the family is cushioned from the economic woes of the nation that most of the family members think of as "home."

Two conflict perspectives on migration add to our knowledge of why people migrate. Split-labor-market theory (discussed in Chapter 9) suggests that immigrants from low-income countries are often recruited for secondary labor market positions: dead-end jobs with low wages, unstable employment, and sometimes hazardous working conditions. By contrast, migrants from higher-income countries may migrate for primary-sector employment—jobs in which well-educated workers are paid high wages and receive benefits such as health insurance and a retirement plan. The global migration of some high-tech workers is an example of this process, whereas the migration of farmworkers and construction helpers is an example of secondary labor market migration.

Finally, world systems theory (discussed later in this chapter) views migration as linked to the problems caused by capitalist development around the world (Massey et al., 1993). As the natural resources,

land, and workforce in low-income countries with little or no industrialization have come under the influence of international markets, there has been a corresponding flow of migrants from those nations to the highly industrialized, high-income countries, especially those with which the poorer nations have had the most economic, political, or military contact.

After flows of migration commence, the pattern may continue because potential migrants have personal ties with relatives and friends who now live in the country of destination and can serve as a source of stability when the potential migrants relocate to the new country. Known as *network theory,* this approach suggests that once migration has commenced, it takes on a life of its own and that the migration pattern which ensues may be different from the original *push* or *pull* factors that produced the earlier migration. Another approach, *institutional theory,* suggests that migration may be fostered by groups—such as humanitarian aid organizations relocating refugees or smugglers bringing people into a country illegally—and that the actions of these groups may produce a larger stream of migrants than would otherwise be the case.

As you can see from these diverse approaches to explaining contemporary patterns of migration, the reasons that people migrate are numerous and complex, involving processes occurring at the individual, family, and societal levels.

Urbanization in Global Perspective

Urban sociology is a subfield of sociology that examines social relationships and political and economic structures in the city. According to urban sociologists, a *city* is a relatively dense and permanent settlement of people who secure their livelihood primarily through nonagricultural activities. Although cities have existed for thousands of years, only about 3 percent of the world's population lived in cities 200 years ago, as compared with almost 50 percent today. Current estimates suggest that two out of every three people around the world will live in urban areas by 2050 (United Nations, 2000). ▶ Map 15.1 shows the percent of total population living in urban areas as the process of urbanization continues on a global basis.

▲ **MAP 15.1 PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION LIVING IN URBAN AREAS, 2009**

Source: Globalhealthfacts.org/Based on Population Reference Bureau 2009. World Population Data Sheet.

Emergence and Evolution of the City

Cities are a relatively recent innovation when compared with the length of human existence. The earliest humans are believed to have emerged anywhere from 40,000 to 1,000,000 years ago, and permanent human settlements are believed to have begun first about 8000 B.C.E. However, some scholars date the development of the first city between 3500 and 3100 B.C.E., depending largely on whether a formal writing system is considered as a requisite for city life (Sjoberg, 1965; Weeks, 2008; Flanagan, 2002).

According to the sociologist Gideon Sjoberg (1965), three preconditions must be present in order for a city to develop:

1. *A favorable physical environment,* including climate and soil favorable to the development of plant and animal life and an adequate water supply to sustain both.
2. *An advanced technology* (for that era) that could produce a social surplus in both agricultural and nonagricultural goods.
3. *A well-developed social organization,* including a power structure, in order to provide social stability to the economic system.

Based on these prerequisites, Sjoberg places the first cities in the Middle Eastern region of Mesopotamia or in areas immediately adjacent to it at about 3500 B.C.E. However, not all scholars concur; some place the earliest city in Jericho (located in present-day Jordan) at about 8000 B.C.E., with a population of about 600 people (see Kenyon, 1957).

The earliest cities were not large by today's standards. The population of the larger Mesopotamian centers was between 5,000 and 10,000 (Sjoberg, 1965). The population of ancient Babylon (probably founded around 2200 B.C.E.) may have grown as large as 50,000 people; Athens may have held 80,000 people (Weeks, 2008). Four to five thousand years ago, cities with at least 50,000 people existed in the Middle East (in what today is Iraq and Egypt) and Asia (in what today is Pakistan and China), as well as in Europe. About 3,500 years ago, cities began to reach this size in Central and South America.

histories of some of their favorite cities to see how these histories match Sjoberg's theory. Also have them reflect on the following: "Eventually, I think Chicago will be the most beautiful great city left in the world" (Frank Lloyd Wright [1867–1959]).
• **For Discussion:** "This is the duty of our generation as we enter the twenty-first century—solidarity with the weak, the persecuted, the lonely, the sick, and those in despair. It is expressed by the desire to give a noble and humanizing meaning to a community in which all members will define themselves not by their own identity but by that of others" (Elie Wiesel). Have students consider to what extent these goals are pursued and to what extent they are abandoned in contemporary communities.

Preindustrial Cities

The largest preindustrial city was Rome; by 100 C.E., it may have had a population of 650,000 (Chandler and Fox, 1974). With the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 C.E., the nature of European cities changed. Seeking protection and survival, those persons who lived in urban settings typically did so in walled cities containing no more than 25,000 people. For the next 600 years, the urban population continued to live in walled enclaves, as competing warlords battled for power and territory during the "dark ages." Slowly, as trade increased, cities began to tear down their walls.

Preindustrial cities were limited in size by a number of factors. For one thing, crowded housing conditions and a lack of adequate sewage facilities increased the hazards from plagues and fires, and death rates were high. For another, food supplies were limited. In order to generate food for each city resident, at least fifty farmers had to work in the fields (Davis, 1949), and animal power was the only means of bringing food to the city. Once foodstuffs arrived in the city, there was no effective way to preserve them. Finally, migration to the city was difficult. Many people were in serf, slave, and caste systems whereby they were bound to the land. Those able to escape such restrictions still faced several weeks of travel to reach the city, thus making it physically and financially impossible for many people to become city dwellers.

In spite of these problems, many preindustrial cities had a sense of *community*—a set of social relationships operating within given spatial boundaries or locations that provides people with a sense of identity and a feeling of belonging. The cities were full of people from all walks of life, both rich and poor, and they felt a high degree of social integration. You will recall that Ferdinand Tönnies (1940/1887) described such a community as *Gemeinschaft*—a society in which social relationships are based on personal bonds of friendship and kinship and on intergenerational stability, such that people have a commitment to the entire group and feel a sense of togetherness. By contrast, industrial cities were characterized by Tönnies as *Gesellschaft*—societies exhibiting impersonal and specialized relationships, with little long-term commitment to the group or consensus on values (see Chapter 4). In *Gesellschaft* societies, even neighbors are "strangers" who perceive that they have little in common with one another.

Industrial Cities

The Industrial Revolution changed the nature of the city. Factories sprang up rapidly as production shifted from the primary, agricultural sector to the secondary, manufacturing sector. With the advent of factories came many new employment opportunities not available to people in rural areas. Emergent technology, including new forms of transportation and agricultural production, made it easier for people to leave the countryside and move to the city. Between 1700 and 1900, the population of many European cities mushroomed. For example, the population of London increased from 550,000 to almost 6.5 million. Although the Industrial Revolution did not start in the United States until the mid-nineteenth century, the effect was similar. Between 1870 and 1910, for example, the population of New York City grew by 500 percent. In fact, New York City became the first U.S. *metropolis*—one or more central cities and their surrounding suburbs that dominate the economic and cultural life of a region. Nations, such as Japan and Russia, that became industrialized after England and the United States experienced a delayed pattern of urbanization, but this process moved quickly once it commenced in those countries.

▲ During the Industrial Era, people not only moved from the countryside into cities, but some people also moved from the cities to the suburbs after transportation became available to make getting from home to work and back again an easier process.

• **For Discussion:** Ask the class to discuss ways in which the Industrial Revolution changed the nature of the city.

Postindustrial Cities

Since the 1950s, postindustrial cities have emerged in nations such as the United States as their economies have gradually shifted from secondary (manufacturing) production to tertiary (service and information-processing) production. Postindustrial cities increasingly rely on an economic structure that is based on scientific knowledge rather than industrial production, and as a result, a class of professionals and technicians grows in size and influence. Postindustrial cities are dominated by "light" industry, such as software manufacturing; information-processing services, such as airline and hotel reservation services; educational complexes; medical centers; convention and entertainment centers; and retail trade centers and shopping malls. Most families do not live close to a central business district. Technological advances in communication and transportation make it possible for middle- and upper-income individuals and families to have more work options and to live greater distances from the workplace; however, these options are not often available to people of color and those at the lower end of the class structure.

On a global basis, cities such as New York, London, and Tokyo appear to fit the model of the postindustrial city (see Sassen, 2001). These cities have experienced a rapid growth in knowledge-based industries such as financial services. London, Tokyo, and New York have—at least until recently—experienced an increase in the number of highly paid professional jobs, and more workers have been in high-income categories. Many people have benefited for a number of years from these high incomes and have created a lifestyle that is based on materialism and the gentrification of urban spaces. Meanwhile, those persons outside the growing professional categories have seen their own quality of life further deteriorate and their job opportunities become increasingly restricted to secondary labor markets in their respective "global" cities.

Perspectives on Urbanization and the Growth of Cities

Urban sociology follows in the tradition of early European sociological perspectives that compared social life with biological organisms or ecological processes. For example, Auguste Comte pointed out that cities are the "real organs" that make a society function. Emile Durkheim applied natural ecology to his analysis of *mechanical solidarity,* characterized by a simple division of labor and shared religious beliefs such as are found in small, agrarian societies, and *organic solidarity,* characterized by interdependence based on the elaborate division of labor found in large, urban societies (see Chapter 4). These early analyses became the foundation for ecological models/functionalist perspectives in urban sociology.

Functionalist Perspectives: Ecological Models

Functionalists examine the interrelations among the parts that make up the whole; therefore, in studying the growth of cities, they emphasize the life cycle of urban growth. Like the social philosophers and sociologists before him, the University of Chicago sociologist Robert Park (1915) based his

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▲ Despite an increase in telecommuting and more diverse employment opportunities in the high-tech economy, our highways have grown increasingly congested. Can we implement measures to reduce the problems of urban congestion and environmental pollution, or will these problems grow worse with each passing year?

- **Recent Events:** "A phenomenon apparently unique to Japan: hundreds of thousands of young people, overwhelmingly male, who have retreated to their bedrooms and refused to come out, sometimes for decades. Neither conventionally depressed, agoraphobic nor schizophrenic, these *hikikomo ri,* or socially withdrawn people, are often highly intelligent and painfully aware of the failings of the society they have rejected. Perhaps they were bullied at school, perhaps unable to keep up with expectations—whatever the reason, they have found themselves incapable of submerging their true selves beneath the surface of Japanese conformity and have turned their backs on it completely" (Michael Zielenziger, *Chicago Sun*).

analysis of the city on *human ecology*—the study of the relationship between people and their physical environment. According to Park (1936), economic competition produces certain regularities in land-use patterns and population distributions. Applying Park's idea to the study of urban land-use patterns, the sociologist Ernest W. Burgess (1925) developed the concentric zone model, an ideal construct that attempted to explain why some cities expand radially from a central business core.

The Concentric Zone Model

Burgess's *concentric zone model* is a description of the process of urban growth that views the city as a series of circular areas or zones, each characterized by a different type of land use, that developed from a central core (see ▶ Figure 15.4a). *Zone 1* is the central business district and cultural center. In *Zone 2*, houses formerly occupied by wealthy families are divided into rooms and rented to recent immigrants and poor persons; this zone also contains light manufacturing and marginal businesses (such as secondhand stores, pawnshops, and taverns). *Zone 3* contains working-class residences and shops and ethnic enclaves. *Zone 4* comprises homes for affluent families, single-family residences of white-collar workers, and shopping centers. *Zone 5* is a ring of small cities and towns populated by persons who commute to the central city to work and by wealthy people living on estates.

Two important ecological processes are involved in the concentric zone theory: invasion and succession. *Invasion* is the process by which a new category of people or type of land use arrives in an area previously occupied by another group or type of land use (McKenzie, 1925). For example, Burgess noted that recent immigrants and low-income individuals "invaded" Zone 2, formerly occupied by wealthy families. *Succession* is the process by which a new category of people or type of land use gradually predominates in an area formerly dominated by another group or activity (McKenzie, 1925). In Zone 2, for example, when some of the single-family residences were sold and subsequently divided into multiple housing units, the remaining single-family owners moved out because the "old" neighborhood had changed. As a result of their move, the process of invasion was complete and succession had occurred.

Invasion and succession theoretically operate in an outward movement: Those who are unable to "move out" of the inner rings are those without upward social mobility, so the central zone ends up being primarily occupied by the poorest residents—except when gentrification occurs. *Gentrification* is the process by which members of the middle and upper-middle classes, especially whites, move into the central-city area and renovate existing properties. Centrally located, naturally attractive areas

a. Concentric Zone Model   **b.** Sector Model   **c.** Multiple Nuclei Model

1. Central business district   **5.** High-class residential
2. Wholesale light manufacturing   **6.** Heavy manufacturing
3. Working-class residential   **7.** Outlying business district
4. Middle-class residential   **8.** Suburb
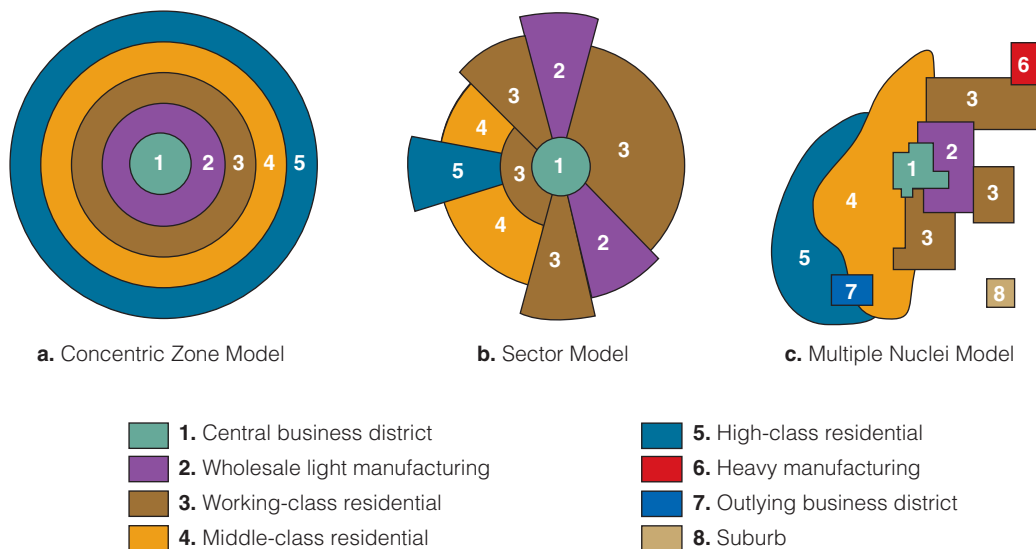
▲ **FIGURE 15.4 THREE MODELS OF THE CITY**

Source: Adapted from Harris and Ullman, 1945.

- **For Discussion:** What do your students do to help create community where they live, work, and learn? Discuss aspects of community that could be taken for granted in preindustrial cities.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **For Discussion:** Ask students to brainstorm about the major strengths and weaknesses of functionalist (ecological) models of urban growth.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** Ask students to break into small groups to further research and discuss Ernest Burgess's concentric zone theory.

are the most likely candidates for gentrification. To urban ecologists, gentrification is the solution to revitalizing the central city. To conflict theorists, however, gentrification creates additional hardships for the poor by depleting the amount of affordable housing available and by "pushing" them out of the area (Flanagan, 2002).

The concentric zone model demonstrates how economic and political forces play an important part in the location of groups and activities, and it shows how a large urban area can have internal differentiation (Gottdiener, 1985). However, the model is most applicable to older cities that experienced high levels of immigration early in the twentieth century and to a few midwestern cities such as St. Louis (Queen and Carpenter, 1953). No city, including Chicago (on which the model is based), entirely conforms to this model.

The Sector Model

In an attempt to examine a wider range of settings, urban ecologist Homer Hoyt (1939) studied the configuration of 142 cities. Hoyt's *sector model* emphasizes the significance of terrain and the importance of transportation routes in the layout of cities. According to Hoyt, residences of a particular type and value tend to grow outward from the center of the city in wedge-shaped sectors, with the more-expensive residential neighborhoods located along the higher ground near lakes and rivers or along certain streets that stretch in one direction or another from the downtown area (see Figure 15.4b). By contrast, industrial areas tend to be located along river valleys and railroad lines. Middle-class residential zones exist on either side of the wealthier neighborhoods. Finally, lower-class residential areas occupy the remaining space, bordering the central business area and the industrial areas. Hoyt (1939) concluded that the sector model applied to cities such as Seattle, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Charleston (South Carolina), and Richmond (Virginia).

The Multiple Nuclei Model

According to the *multiple nuclei model* developed by urban ecologists Chauncey Harris and Edward Ullman (1945), cities do not have one center from which all growth radiates, but rather have numerous centers of development based on specific urban needs or activities (see Figure 15.4c). As cities began to grow rapidly, they annexed formerly outlying and independent townships that had been communities in their own right. In addition to the central business district, other nuclei developed around entities such as an educational institution, a medical complex, or a government center. Residential neighborhoods may exist close to or far away from these nuclei. A wealthy residential enclave may be located near a high-priced shopping center, for instance, whereas less-expensive housing must locate closer to industrial and transitional areas of town. This model may be applicable to cities such as Boston. However, critics suggest that it does not provide insights about the uniformity of land-use patterns among cities and relies on an after-the-fact explanation of why certain entities are located where they are (Flanagan, 2002).

Contemporary Urban Ecology

Urban ecologist Amos Hawley (1950) revitalized the ecological tradition by linking it more closely with functionalism. According to Hawley, urban areas are complex and expanding social systems in which growth patterns are based on advances in transportation and communication. For example, commuter railways and automobiles led to the decentralization of city life and the movement of industry from the central city to the suburbs (Hawley, 1981).

Other urban ecologists have continued to refine the methodology used to study the urban environment. *Social area analysis* examines urban populations in terms of economic status, family status, and ethnic classification (Shevky and Bell, 1966). For example, middle- and upper-middle-class parents with school-aged children tend to cluster together in "social areas" with a "good" school district; young single professionals may prefer to cluster in the central city for entertainment and nightlife.

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invasion the process by which a new category of people or type of land use arrives in an area previously occupied by another group or land use.

succession the process by which a new category of people or type of land use gradually predominates in an area formerly dominated by another group or activity.

gentrification the process by which members of the middle and upper-middle classes, especially whites, move into a central-city area and renovate existing properties.

Specifically ask each group to come up with a list describing the dynamic role that invasion and succession play in his model.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Sociological Imagination:** Students should write an essay describing examples of gentrification in your city (or one with which they are familiar). The essay should focus on whether or not gentrification is a solution to revitalizing the central city in general.

- **Extra Examples:** "Gentrification has been the cause of painful conflict in many American cities, often along racial and economic fault lines. Neighborhood change is often viewed as a miscarriage of social justice, in which wealthy, usually white, newcomers are congratulated for 'improving' a neighborhood whose poor, minority residents are displaced by skyrocketing rents and economic change" (Benjamin Grant).

The influence of human ecology on the field of urban sociology is still very strong today (see Frisbie and Kasarda, 1988). Contemporary research on European and North American urban patterns is often based on the assumption that spatial arrangements in cities conform to a common, most efficient design (Flanagan, 2002). However, some critics have noted that ecological models do not take into account the influence of powerful political and economic elites on the development process in urban areas (Feagin and Parker, 1990).

Conflict Perspectives: Political Economy Models

Conflict theorists argue that cities do not grow or decline by chance. Rather, they are the product of specific decisions made by members of the capitalist class and political elites. These far-reaching decisions regarding land use and urban development benefit the members of some groups at the expense of others (see Castells, 1977/1972). Karl Marx suggested that cities are the arenas in which the intertwined processes of class conflict and capital accumulation take place; class consciousness and worker revolt are more likely to develop when workers are concentrated in urban areas (Flanagan, 2002).

According to the sociologists Joe R. Feagin and Robert Parker (1990), three major themes prevail in political economy models of urban growth. First, both economic *and* political factors affect patterns of urban growth and decline. Economic factors include capitalistic investments in production, workers, workplaces, land, and buildings. Political factors include governmental protection of the right to own and dispose of privately held property as owners see fit and the role of government officials in promoting the interests of business elites and large corporations.

Second, urban space has both an exchange value and a use value. *Exchange value* refers to the profits that industrialists, developers, bankers, and others make from buying, selling, and developing land and buildings. By contrast, *use value* is the utility of space, land, and buildings for everyday life, family life, and neighborhood life. In other words, land has purposes other than simply for generating profits—for example, for homes, open spaces, and recreational areas (see ▶ Figure 15.5). Today, class conflict exists over the use of urban space, as is evident in battles over the rental costs, safety, and development of large-scale projects (see Tabb and Sawers, 1984).

Third, both structure and agency are important in understanding how urban development takes place. *Structure* refers to institutions such as state bureaucracies and capital investment circuits that are involved in the urban development process. *Agency* refers to human actors, including developers,

Exchange Value

Profits from buying, selling, and developing urban land

Examples of who profits

- Industrialists
- Developers
- Bankers
- Tax collectors

Use Value

Utility of urban land, space, and buildings for everyday personal and community life

Examples of uses

- Affordable housing
- Open spaces
- Recreational areas
- Public services

▲ FIGURE 15.5 THE VALUE OF URBAN SPACE

- **Extra Examples:** "In 1900, 150 million people lived in cities. By 2000, it was 2.9 billion people, a 19-fold increase. In 2007, more than half of us lived in cities, making us, for the first time, an urban species. In 1900 there were only a handful of cities with a million people. Today 408 cities have at least that many inhabitants. And there are 20 megacities with 10 million or more residents" (Lester Brown).

- **Media Coverage:** "This year's Sustained Excellence award winner from the Environmental Protection Agency went to New York City's Downtown Marriott. Marriott plans to cut energy consumption (not just costs) by 25% by 2017; they've also debuted 'spudware,' biodegradable cutlery made from potato and soy, and turned golf courses into Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries" (*Forbes*, 9/2008).

business elites, and activists protesting development, who are involved in decisions about land use.

Capitalism and Urban Growth in the United States

According to political economy models, urban growth is influenced by capital investment decisions, power and resource inequality, class and class conflict, and government subsidy programs. Members of the capitalist class choose corporate locations, decide on sites for shopping centers and factories, and spread the population that can afford to purchase homes into sprawling suburbs located exactly where the capitalists think they should be located (Feagin and Parker, 1990).

Today, a few hundred financial institutions and developers finance and construct most major and many smaller urban development projects around the country, including skyscrapers, shopping malls, and suburban housing projects. These decision makers set limits on the individual choices of the ordinary citizen with regard to real estate, just as they do with regard to other choices (Feagin and Parker, 1990). They can make housing more affordable or totally unaffordable for many people. Ultimately, their motivation rests not in benefiting the community, but rather in making a profit; the cities that they produce reflect this mindset.

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▲ According to conflict theorists, exploitation by the capitalist class impoverishes poor whites and low-income minority-group members. Increasing rates of homelessness have made scenes such as this a recurring sight in many cities.

One of the major results of these urban development practices is *uneven development*—the tendency of some neighborhoods, cities, or regions to grow and prosper whereas others stagnate and decline (Perry and Watkins, 1977). Conflict theorists argue that uneven development reflects inequalities of wealth and power in society. The problem not only affects areas in a state of decline but also produces external costs, even in "boom" areas, that are paid by the entire community. Among these costs are increased pollution, increased traffic congestion, and rising rates of crime and violence. According to the sociologist Mark Gottdiener (1985: 214), these costs are "intrinsic to the very core of capitalism, and those who profit the most from development are not called upon to remedy its side effects."

The Gated Community in the Capitalist Economy

The growth of *gated communities*—subdivisions or neighborhoods surrounded by barriers such as walls, fences, gates, or earth banks covered with bushes and shrubs, along with a secured entrance—is an example to many people of how developers, builders, and municipalities have encouraged an increasing division between public and private property in capitalist societies. Many gated communities are created by developers who hope to increase their profits by offering potential residents a semblance of safety, privacy, and luxury that they might not have in nongated residential areas. Other gated communities have been developed after the fact in established neighborhoods by adding walls, gates, and sometimes security guard stations. For example, a recent study noted situations in which residents of elite residential enclaves, such as the River Oaks area of Houston or the "Old Enfield" area of Austin, Texas, were able to gain approval from the city to close certain streets and create cul-de-sacs, or to erect other barriers to discourage or prevent outsiders

- **Extra Examples:** Introduce your students to the three major themes in political economy models of urban growth. Provide examples from your city (if applicable). Differentiate between exchange value and use value, using examples from current events. You may also want to discuss the origins of these concepts in Marx's economic philosophy.

- **Recent Events:** "Like nearly all U.S. cities, D.C. has requirements for off-street parking. Whenever anything new is built—be it a single-family home, an apartment building, a store or a doctor's office—a minimum number of parking spaces must be included. . . . D.C. is now considering scrapping those requirements—part of a growing national trend. Officials hope that offering the freedom to

from driving through the neighborhood (Kendall, 2002). Gated communities for upper-middle-class and upper-class residents convey the idea of exclusivity and privilege, whereas such communities for middle- and lower-income residents typically focus on such features as safety for children and the ability to share amenities such as a "community" swimming pool or recreational center with other residents.

Regardless of the social and economic reasons given for the development of gated communities, many analysts agree that these communities reflect a growing divide between public and private space in urban areas. According to a recent qualitative study by the anthropologist Setha Low (2003), gated communities do more than simply restrict access to the residents' homes: They also limit the use of public spaces, making it impossible for others to use the roads, parks, and open space contained within the enclosed community. Low (2003) refers to this phenomenon as the "fortressing of America."

Gender Regimes in Cities   Feminist perspectives have only recently been incorporated in urban studies (Garber and Turner, 1995). From this perspective, urbanization reflects the workings not only of the political economy but also of patriarchy. According to the sociologist Lynn M. Appleton (1995), different kinds of cities have different *gender regimes*—prevailing ideologies of how women and men should think, feel, and act; how access to social positions and control of resources should be managed; and how relationships between men and women should be conducted. The higher density and greater diversity found in central cities such as New York City serve as a challenge to the private patriarchy found in the home and workplace in lower-density, homogeneous areas such as suburbs and rural areas. *Private patriarchy* is based on a strongly gendered division of labor in the home, gender-segregated paid employment, and women's dependence on men's income. At the same time, cities may foster *public patriarchy* in the form of women's increasing dependence on paid work and the state for income and their decreasing emotional interdependence with men. At this point, gender often intersects with class and race as a form of oppression because lower-income women of color often reside in central cities. Public patriarchy may be perpetuated by cities through policies that limit women's access to paid work and public transportation. However, such cities may also be a forum for challenging patriarchy; all residents who differ in marital status, paternity, sexual orientation, class, and/or race/ethnicity tend to live close to one another and may hold a common belief that both public and private patriarchy should be eliminated (Appleton, 1995).

Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives: The Experience of City Life

Symbolic interactionists examine the *experience* of urban life. How does city life affect the people who live in a city? Some analysts answer this question positively; others are cynical about the effects of urban living on the individual.

Simmel's View of City Life   According to the German sociologist Georg Simmel (1950/1902–1917), urban life is highly stimulating, and it shapes people's thoughts and actions. Urban residents are influenced by the quick pace of the city and the pervasiveness of economic relations in everyday life. Due to the intensity of urban life, people have no choice but to become somewhat insensitive to events and individuals around them. Many urban residents avoid emotional involvement with one another and try to ignore events taking place around them. Urbanites feel wary toward other people because most interactions in the city are economic rather than social. Simmel suggests that attributes such as punctuality and exactness are rewarded but that friendliness and warmth in interpersonal relations are viewed as personal weaknesses. Some people act reserved to cloak their deeper feelings of distrust or dislike toward others. However, Simmel did not view city life as completely negative; he also pointed out that urban living could have a liberating effect on people because they had opportunities for individualism and autonomy (Flanagan, 2002).

Urbanism as a Way of Life   Based on Simmel's observations on social relations in the city, the early Chicago School sociologist Louis Wirth (1938) suggested that urbanism is a "way of life." *Urbanism* refers to the distinctive social and psychological patterns of life typically found in the city. According to Wirth, the size, density, and heterogeneity of urban

populations typically result in an elaborate division of labor and in spatial segregation of people by race/ethnicity, social class, religion, and/or lifestyle. In the city, primary-group ties are largely replaced by secondary relationships; social interaction is fragmented, impersonal, and often superficial. Even though people gain some degree of freedom and privacy by living in the city, they pay a price for their autonomy, losing the group support and reassurance that come from primary-group ties.

From Wirth's perspective, people who live in urban areas are alienated, powerless, and lonely. A sense of community is obliterated and replaced by the "mass society"—a large-scale, highly institutionalized society in which individuality is supplanted by mass messages, faceless bureaucrats, and corporate interests.

Gans's Urban Villagers   In contrast to Wirth's gloomy assessment of urban life, the sociologist Herbert Gans (1982/1962) suggested that not everyone experiences the city in the same way. Based on

research in the west end of Boston in the late 1950s, Gans concluded that many residents develop strong loyalties and a sense of community in central-city areas that outsiders may view negatively. According to Gans, there are five major categories of adaptation among urban dwellers. *Cosmopolites* are students, artists, writers, musicians, entertainers, and professionals who choose to live in the city because they want to be close to its cultural facilities. *Unmarried people* and *childless couples* live in the city because they want to be close to work and entertainment. *Ethnic villagers* live in ethnically segregated neighborhoods; some are recent immigrants who feel most comfortable within their own group. The *deprived* are poor individuals with dim future prospects; they have very limited education and few, if any, other resources. The *trapped* are urban dwellers who can find no escape from the city; this group includes persons left behind by the process of invasion and succession, downwardly mobile individuals who have lost their former position in society, older persons who have nowhere else to go, and

▲ Festive occasions such as this street fair provide opportunities for urban villagers to mingle with others, enjoying entertainment and social interaction.

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- **Popular Culture:** "One of the best examples of an urban neighborhood has pedestrians milling about the street, retail on the first floor of buildings and 'Mickey and Minnie Mouse living in an apartment above the retail.' Silly as it might sound, Disney World is a prime example of New Urbanism concepts, joked John Norquist, president and CEO of the New Urbanism. And it even

has Cinderella's Castle at the end of the street to draw pedestrians along" (*San Antonio Express News,* 9/2008).
- **Active Learning:** Divide your class into small groups of three to four students. Ask them to create a list of the most important differences among the perspectives of Georg Simmel, Louis Wirth, and Herbert Gans on urban life. Next, ask each group to decide which is the most significant difference. Share ideas with the whole class.

sociology works!

Herbert Gans and Twenty-First-Century Urban Villagers

I moved to Austin because it's a high-tech city with a small-town feel. Kinda my own "urban village" where I can cycle around town when I want but still own a nice car to go out in. I chose my neighborhood because it's centrally located to downtown eating and live entertainment. Austin calls itself the "Live Music Capital of the World," and I have plenty of opportunities to hear the music I like. Overall, I'd say that I'm compatible with Austin, and Austin's compatible with me.

> —"Brad," a twenty-four-year-old college graduate, explaining why he chose to become an "urban villager" in Austin, Texas (author's files, 2007)

In the more than five decades since the urban sociologist Herbert J. Gans examined life in Boston's west end and identified five major categories of adaptation among urban dwellers, we continue to find that many residents think of themselves as living in an "urban village" despite the differences in high-rise buildings and the smaller settings in which the Boston west enders lived. Today, many younger urban residents think of themselves as having strong loyalties to a specific segment of their community with which they share interests and common experiences. Although many contemporary studies of urban life have emphasized the problems of poverty, crime, racial and ethnic discrimination, inadequate health care, and poor schools in our nation's major cities, it is useful for us to examine positive aspects of urban life as well. We can also gain important insights from examining the experiences of middle- and upper-income residents of our cities.

Herbert Gans believed that the people he referred to as *cosmopolites* chose to live in the city so that they could be close to cultural facilities, while he thought that *unmarried people and childless couples* chose to live there because they wanted to be close to work and entertainment. Among some affluent residents in high-tech cities such as Austin, Texas, married people and families with children have increasingly joined the ranks of individuals who live in or near the city's downtown area. According to contemporary urban villagers such as "Brad," they can find other people who are like themselves, who participate in activities they enjoy, and who support one another much like the members of an extended family when they need friendship or assistance. From this perspective, Gans's ideas about the urban village work because they show us that an important way to understand city life is through the experiences of people who live there. In the final analysis, of course, all people—including lower-income individuals, who have been further disadvantaged or even displaced by gentrification, and the poor and homeless—must be included in any thorough sociological examination of city life in the twenty-first century. However, "urban villagers," as coined by Gans, has staying power as a concept because it encourages us to look at urban life as a kaleidoscope of diversity that includes the wealthy and the merely affluent, as well as those who are "just getting by" or who are poor, because they live near to one another as contemporary urban dwellers.

reflect & analyze

Can you identify categories of urban villagers in a city with which you are familiar? To what extent do people live in certain areas of the city based on personal choice? What factors appear to be beyond their control?

individuals addicted to alcohol or other drugs. Gans concluded that the city is a pleasure and a challenge for some urban dwellers and an urban nightmare for others (see "Sociology Works!").

Gender and City Life   In their everyday lives, do women and men experience city life differently? According to the scholar Elizabeth Wilson (1991), some men view the city as *sexual space* in which women, based on their sexual desirability and accessibility, are categorized as prostitutes, lesbians, temptresses, or virtuous women in need of protection. Wilson suggests that more-affluent, dominant-group women are more likely to be viewed as virtuous women in need of protection by their own men or police officers. Cities offer a paradox for women: On the one hand, cities offer more freedom than is found in comparatively isolated rural, suburban, and domestic settings; on the other, women may be in greater physical danger in the city. For

- **For Discussion:** "A city building, you experience when you walk; a suburban building, you experience when you drive" (Helmut Jahn). Does Jahn's comment reflect your students' experience? Have them explain why or why not.
- **Box Note:** Use the "Reflect & Analyze" question as a writing assignment for your class. It can either be a brief in-class write-and-share activity or a more elaborate essay or term paper using other sources from the library.
- **Extra Examples:** "Despite the frequent equation of 'prostitution' with the 'oldest profession,' what many of us typically think of as prostitution has not existed for very long at all: large-scale, commercialized prostitution in the West is a recent phenomenon,

Wilson, the answer to women's vulnerability in the city is not found in offering protection for them, but rather in changing people's perceptions that they can treat women as sexual objects because of the impersonality of city life (Wilson, 1991).

Cities and Persons with a Disability

Chapter 14 describes how disability rights advocates believe that structural barriers create a "disabling" environment for many people, particularly in large urban settings. Many cities have made their streets and sidewalks more user-friendly for persons in wheelchairs and for individuals with visual disability by constructing concrete ramps with slide-proof surfaces at intersections or installing traffic lights with sounds designating when to "Walk." However, both urban and rural areas have a long way to go before many persons with disabilities will have the access to the things they need to become productive members of the community: educational and employment opportunities. Some persons with disabilities cannot navigate the streets and sidewalks of their communities, and some face obstacles getting into buildings that marginally, at best, meet the accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act; thus, many persons with a disability are unemployed.

Political scientist Harlan Hahn (1997: 177–178) traces the problem of lack of access to the beginnings of industrialism:

> The rise of industrialism produced extensive changes in the lives of disabled as well as nondisabled people. As factories replaced private dwellings as the primary sites of production, routines and architectural configurations were standardized to suit nondisabled workers. Both the design of worksites and of the products that were manufactured gave virtually no attention to the needs of people with disabilities. As a result, patterns of aversion and avoidance toward disabled persons were embedded in the construction of commodities, landscapes, and buildings that would remain for centuries. . . .
>
> The social and economic changes fostered by industrialization may have been exacerbated by the accompanying process of urbanization. As workers increasingly moved from farms and rural villages to live near the institutions of mass production, the character of community life appeared to shift perceptibly. Deviant or atypical personal characteristics

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▲ Most U.S. cities are laid out for motorized vehicles, not people. Traveling urban areas via wheelchair can be a daunting proposition.

that may have gradually become familiar in a small community seemed bizarre or disturbing in an urban milieu.

As Hahn's statement suggests, historical patterns in the dynamics of industrial capitalism contributed to discrimination against persons with disabilities, and this legacy remains evident in contemporary cities. Structural barriers are further intensified when other people do not respond favorably toward persons with disabilities. Scholar and disability rights advocate Sally French (1999: 25–26), who is visually disabled, describes her own experience:

> I have lived in the same house for 16 years and yet I cannot recognize my neighbors. I know nothing about them at all; which children belong to whom, who has come and gone, who is old or young, ill or well, black or white. . . . On moving to my present house I informed several neighbors that, because of

my inability to recognize them, I would doubtless pass them by in the street without greeting them. One neighbor, who had previously seen me striding confidently down the road, refused to believe me, but the others said they understood and would talk to me if our paths crossed. For the first couple of weeks it worked and I was surprised how often we met, but after that their greetings rapidly decreased and then ceased altogether. Why this happened I am not sure, but I suspect that my lack of recognition strained the interaction and limited the social reward they received from the encounter.

The Concept Quick Review examines the multiple perspectives on urban growth and urban living.

Problems in Global Cities

As we have seen, although people have lived in cities for thousands of years, the time is rapidly approaching when more people worldwide will live in or near a city than live in a rural area. In the middle-income and low-income regions of the world, Latin America is becoming the most urbanized: Four megacities—Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Lima, and Santiago—already contain more than half of the region's population and continue to grow rapidly. Within the next ten years, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo are expected to have a combined population of about 40 million people living in a 350-mile-long megalopolis. By 2015, New York

[concept quick review 15.1]

Perspectives on Urbanism and the Growth of Cities

Functionalist Perspectives: Ecological Models	Concentric zone model	Due to invasion, succession, and gentrification, cities are a series of circular zones, each characterized by a particular land use.
	Sector model	Cities consist of wedge-shaped sectors, based on terrain and transportation routes, with the most-expensive areas occupying the best terrain.
	Multiple nuclei model	Cities have more than one center of development, based on specific needs and activities.
Conflict Perspectives: Political Economy Models	Capitalism and urban growth	Members of the capitalist class choose locations for skyscrapers and housing projects, limiting individual choices by others.
	Gender regimes in cities	Different cities have different prevailing ideologies regarding access to social positions and resources for men and women.
	Global patterns of growth	Capital investment decisions by core nations result in uneven growth in peripheral and semiperipheral nations.
Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives: The Experience of City Life	Simmel's view of city life	Due to the intensity of city life, people become somewhat insensitive to individuals and events around them.
	Urbanism as a way of life	The size, density, and heterogeneity of urban population result in an elaborate division of labor and space.
	Gans's urban villagers	Five categories of adaptation occur among urban dwellers, ranging from cosmopolites to trapped city dwellers.
	Gender and city life	Cities offer women a paradox: more freedom than in more isolated areas, yet greater potential danger.

- **Table Note:** Use the Concept Quick Review to prepare your class for a quiz or exam. See if your students can think of examples from cities they may have lived in. It's very important for students to think of concrete examples for each of these abstract concepts.
- **Research:** "More than half of the global population now lives in urban areas and that figure may rise to two-thirds—or about six billion people—by 2050. And the number of slum-dwellers is set to exceed one billion by next year. The UN accepted there was a 'brain drain' on poorer countries but noted that money sent home by migrants could exceed development aid or investment. In 2005, the UN said, such remittances exceeded $230 billion" (*BBC News*, 10/2006). Have students research these problems further.

City will be the only U.S. city among the world's ten most populous.

Today, some social analysts look beyond the city proper, which is defined as a locality with legally fixed boundaries and an administratively recognized urban status that is usually characterized by some form of local government, to see the larger picture of what takes place in urban agglomerations. An urban agglomeration is defined as comprising the city or town proper and also the suburban fringe or thickly settled territory lying outside of, but adjacent to, the city boundaries, as a more accurate reflection of population composition and density in a given region. ▶ Figure 15.6 shows the populations of the world's ten largest urban agglomerations.

Natural increases in population (higher birth rates than death rates) account for two-thirds of new urban growth, and rural-to-urban migration accounts for the rest. Some people move from rural areas to urban areas because they have been displaced from their land. Others move because they are looking for a better life. No matter what the reason, migration has caused rapid growth in cities in sub-Saharan Africa, India, Algeria, and Egypt. At the same time that the population is growing rapidly, the amount of farmland available for growing crops to feed people is decreasing. In Egypt, for example, land that was previously used for growing crops is now used for petroleum refineries, food-processing plants, and other factories (Kaplan, 1996).

Rapid global population growth in Latin America and other regions is producing a wide variety of urban problems, including overcrowding, environmental pollution, and the disappearance of farmland. In fact, many cities in middle- and low-income nations are quickly reaching the point at which food, housing, and basic public services are available to only a limited segment of the population (Crossette, 1996). With urban populations growing at a rate of 170,000 people per day in the late 1990s and even faster today, cities such as Cairo, Lagos, Dhaka, Beijing, and São Paulo are experiencing water shortages; Mexico City is already experiencing a chronic water shortage.

As global urbanization has increased over the past three decades, differences in urban areas based on economic development at the national level have become apparent. Some cities in what Immanuel Wallerstein's (1984) world systems theory describes as core nations (see Chapter 8) are referred to as *global cities*—interconnected urban areas that are centers of political, economic, and cultural activity.
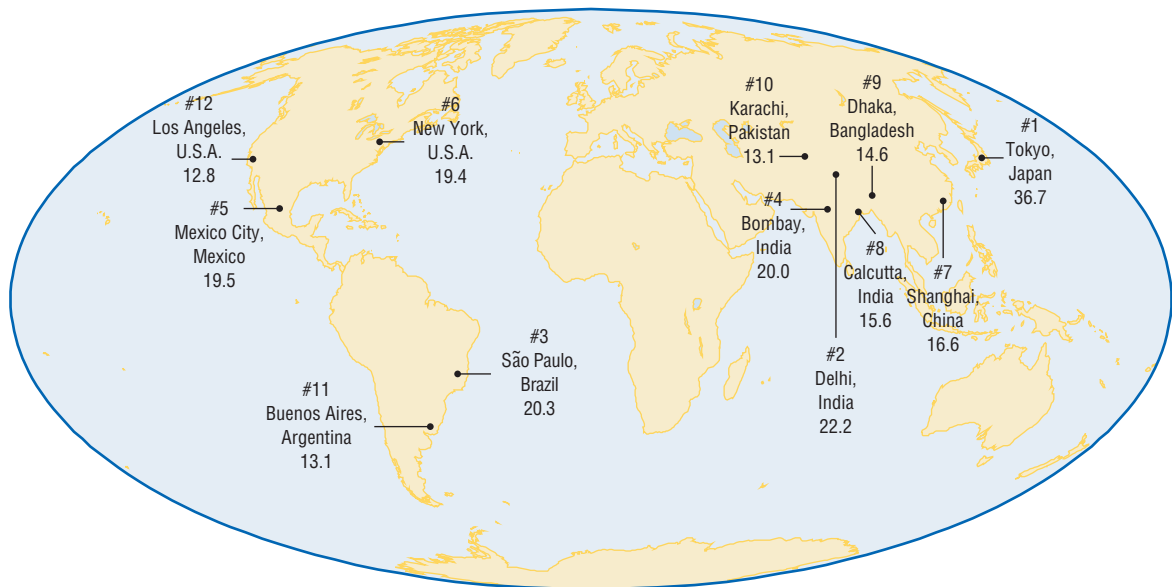
▲ FIGURE 15.6 THE WORLD'S 12 LARGEST AGGLOMERATIONS

Note: 2009 populations in millions.

Source: United Nations World Urbanization Prospects Report, 2009.

- **Global Perspective:** "The world is growing gray fast. The elderly population is expanding at a rate of 2% a year; by 2050 there will be more people over the age of 60 than under 15. Nowhere is the trend more pronounced than in developed countries, where increasing life expectancy and decreasing fertility rates will elevate the median age from 39 to 46 in the next several decades" (*Forbes,* 6/2005).

New York, Tokyo, and London are generally considered the largest global cities. These cities are the sites of new and innovative product development and marketing, and they are often the "command posts" for the world economy (Sassen, 2001). But economic prosperity is not shared equally by all of the people in the core-nation global cities. Sometimes the living conditions of workers in low-wage service-sector jobs or in assembly production jobs more closely resemble the living conditions of workers in semiperipheral nations than they resemble the conditions of middle-class workers in their own country.

Most African countries and many countries in South America and the Caribbean are *peripheral* nations, previously defined as nations that depend on core nations for capital, have little or no industrialization (other than what may be brought in by core nations), and have uneven patterns of urbanization. According to Wallerstein (1984), the wealthy in peripheral nations support the exploitation of poor workers by core-nation capitalists in return for maintaining their own wealth and position. Poverty is thus perpetuated, and the problems worsen because of the unprecedented population growth in these countries.

In regard to the semiperipheral nations, only two cities are considered to be global cities: São Paulo, Brazil, the center of the Brazilian economy, and Singapore, the economic center of a multicountry region in Southeast Asia (Friedmann, 1995). Like peripheral nations, semiperipheral nations—such as India, Iran, and Mexico—are confronted with unprecedented population growth. In addition, a steady flow of rural migrants to large cities is creating enormous urban problems.

Urban Problems in the United States

Even the most optimistic of observers tends to agree that cities in the United States have problems brought on by years of neglect and deterioration. As we have seen in previous chapters, poverty, crime, racism, sexism, homelessness, inadequate public school systems, alcoholism and other drug abuse, gangs and guns, and other social problems are most visible and acute in urban settings. Issues of urban growth and development are intertwined with many of these problems.

Divided Interests: Cities, Suburbs, and Beyond

Since World War II, a dramatic population shift has occurred in this country as thousands of families have moved from cities to suburbs. Even though some people lived in suburban areas prior to the twentieth century, it took the involvement of the federal government and large-scale development to spur the dramatic shift that began in the 1950s (Palen, 1995). According to urban historian Kenneth T. Jackson (1985), postwar suburban growth was fueled by aggressive land developers, inexpensive real estate and construction methods, better transportation, abundant energy, government subsidies, and racial stress in the cities. However, the sociologist J. John Palen (1995) suggests that the Baby Boom following World War II and the liberalization of lending policies by federal agencies such as the Veterans Administration (VA) and the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) were significant factors in mass suburbanization.

Regardless of its causes, mass suburbanization has created a territorial division of interests between cities and suburban areas (Flanagan, 2002). Although many suburbanites rely on urban centers for their employment, entertainment, and other services, they pay their property taxes to suburban governments and school districts. Some affluent suburbs have state-of-the-art school districts, police and fire departments, libraries, and infrastructures (such as roads, sewers, and water treatment plants). By contrast, central-city services and school districts languish for lack of funds. Affluent families living in "gentrified" properties typically send their children to elite private schools, whereas the children of poor families living in racially segregated public housing projects attend underfunded (and often substandard) public schools.

Race, Class, and Suburbs The intertwining impact of race and class is visible in the division between central cities and suburbs. About 41 percent of central-city residents are persons of color, although they constitute a substantially smaller portion of the nation's population; just 27 percent

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- **For Discussion:** Lead a class discussion in which students list the most significant effects of mass suburbanization on cities and suburban areas.

- **Active Learning:** Have students attend a city council meeting in a suburban city and make a record of the issues being discussed. If possible, have them interview people who work for city government in order to achieve a better understanding of managing these communities.

of all African Americans live in suburbs. For most African American suburbanites, class is more important than race in determining one's neighbors. According to Vincent Lane, chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority, "Suburbanization isn't about race now; it's about class. Nobody wants to be around poor people, because of all the problems that go along with poor people: poor schools, unsafe streets, gangs" (qtd. in De Witt, 1994: A12).

Nationally, most suburbs are predominantly white, and many upper-middle-class and upper-class suburbs remain virtually white. For example, only 5 percent of the population in northern Fulton County (adjoining Atlanta, Georgia) is African American. Likewise, in Plano (adjoining Dallas, Texas), nearly nine out of ten students in the public schools are white, whereas the majority of students in the Dallas Independent School District are African American, Latina/o, or Asian American. In the suburbs, people of color (especially African Americans) often become resegregated (see Feagin and Sikes, 1994). An example is Chicago, which

remains one of the most-segregated metropolitan areas in the country in spite of its fair-housing ordinance. African Americans who have fled the high crime of Chicago's South Side primarily reside in nearby suburbs, such as Country Club Hill and Chicago Heights, whereas suburban Asian Americans are most likely to live in Skokie and Naperville and suburban Latinos/as to reside in Maywood, Hillside, and Bellwood (De Witt, 1994). Similarly, suburban Latinas/os are highly concentrated in eight metropolitan areas in California, Texas, and Florida; by far, the largest such racial–ethnic concentration is found in the Los Angeles–Long Beach metropolitan area, with over 1.7 million Latinas/os. Like other groups, affluent Latinas/os live in affluent suburbs, whereas poorer Latinas/os remain segregated in less-desirable central-city areas (Palen, 1995).

Some analysts argue that the location of one's residence is a matter of personal choice. However, other analysts suggest that residential segregation reflects discriminatory practices by landlords, homeowners, and white realtors and their agents,

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▲ Affluent gated communities and enclaves of million-dollar homes stand in sharp contrast to low-income housing when we see them on the urban landscape. What sociological theories help us describe the disparity of lifestyles and life chances shown in these two settings?

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who engage in *steering* people of color to different neighborhoods from those shown to their white counterparts. Lending practices of banks (including the *redlining* of certain properties so that acquiring a loan is virtually impossible) and the behavior of neighbors further intensify these problems (see Feagin and Sikes, 1994). In a study of suburban property taxes, the sociologist Andrew A. Beveridge found that African American homeowners are taxed more than whites on comparable homes in 58 percent of the suburban regions and in 30 percent of the cities (cited in Schemo, 1994). Some analysts suggest that African Americans are more likely to move to suburbs with declining tax bases because they have limited finances, because they are steered there by real estate agents, or because white flight occurs as African American homeowners move in, leaving a heavier tax burden for the newcomers and those who remain behind. Longer-term residents may not see their property reassessed or their taxes go up for some period of time; in some cases, reassessment does not occur until the house is sold (Schemo, 1994).

Beyond the Suburbs: Edge Cities

New urban fringes (referred to as *edge cities*) have been springing up beyond central cities and suburbs in recent years (Garreau, 1991). The Massachusetts Turnpike corridor west of Boston and the Perimeter area north of Atlanta are examples. Edge cities initially develop as residential areas; then retail establishments and office parks move into the area, creating the unincorporated edge city. Commuters from the edge city are able to travel around (rather than in and out of) the metropolitan region's center and can avoid its rush-hour traffic quagmires. Edge cities may not have a governing body or correspond to municipal boundaries; however, they drain taxes from central cities and older suburbs. Many businesses and industries have moved physical plants and tax dollars to these areas: Land is cheaper, and utility rates and property taxes are lower.

Lower taxes are a contributing factor to another recent development in the United States—the growth of Sunbelt cities in the southern and western states. In the 1970s, millions of people moved from the north-central and northeastern states to this area. Four reasons are generally given for this population shift: (1) more jobs and higher wages; (2) lower taxes; (3) pork-barrel programs that funneled federal money into projects in the Sunbelt, creating jobs and encouraging industry; and (4) easier transition to new industry because most industry in the northern states was based on heavy manufacturing rather than high technology.

The Continuing Fiscal Crises of the Cities

The largest cities in the United States have faced periodic fiscal crises for many years; however, in the 2000s, cities of all sizes are experiencing even greater financial problems partially linked to a major downturn in national and international economic trends. It is estimated that U.S. cities may experience a collective budget shortfall of $56 billion by 2012 (Lambert, 2010). Economic recoveries in cities take at least two years longer than a national recovery, which means that financial problems brought about by the Great Recession may last for years to come.

Why have national and international economic downturns hurt U.S. cities so drastically? What are cities doing about it? Cities have experienced extensive shortfalls in revenue because states have reduced the amount of money that they provide for cities, and the cities have had decreased revenue from sales taxes, corporate taxes, and personal income taxes. Funds from the federal government to states and cities have also been limited and are often earmarked for specific projects rather than for use in the general operating budget. These budget crises have forced states to cut funding to already cash-strapped cities. Vital services, including police, firefighting, and public works, have been cut drastically, and some analysts believe that the slashing of city budgets and programs will continue for some time in the future (Dougherty and Merrick, 2008). As cities lose revenue, officials must decide to lay off or furlough employees, charge higher fees for services, and cancel major projects such as street repairs or infrastructure improvements (building a new water treatment facility, for example).

City officials continue to urge leaders at the state and federal levels to create new programs that will help cities meet their residents' needs. Demands specifically are being made for more federal aid through job creation programs and other economic stimulus packages. Some analysts believe that

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- **Media Coverage:** "The term 'edge cities' was coined by *Washington Post* journalist and author Joel Garreau in his 1991 book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. Garreau equates the growing edge cities at major suburban freeway interchanges around America as the latest transformation of how we live and work. These new suburban cities have sprung up like dandelions across the fruited plain . . ." (Matt Rosenberg, About.com).

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** "The car has become the carapace, the protective and aggressive shell, of urban and suburban man" (Marshall McLuhan). Have students restate and evaluate this perspective on "car culture."

inaction at the state and federal levels may create even greater financial chaos by forcing some cities into bankruptcy. Local officials emphasize that the state of America's cities continues to threaten the long-term national economic recovery (National League of Cities, 2010). It remains to be seen what the eventual effects of these continuing fiscal crises will be on various cities throughout the nation.

Rural Community Issues in the United States

Although most people think of the United States as highly urbanized, about 20 percent of the U.S. population resides in rural areas, identified as communities of 2,500 people or less by the U.S. Census Bureau. Sociologists typically identify *rural communities* as small, sparsely settled areas that have a relatively homogeneous population of people who primarily engage in agriculture (Johnson, 2000).

However, rural communities today are more diverse than this definition suggests.

Unlike the standard migration patterns from rural to urban places in the past, recently more people have moved from large urban areas and suburbs into rural areas. Many of those leaving urban areas today want to escape the high cost of living, crime, traffic congestion, and environmental pollution that make daily life difficult. Technological advances make it easier for people to move to outlying rural areas and still be connected to urban centers if they need to be. The proliferation of computers, cell phones, commuter airlines, and highway systems has made previously remote areas seem much more accessible to many people. However, many recent immigrants to rural areas do not face some traditional problems experienced by long-term rural residents, particularly farmers, small-business owners, teachers, doctors, and medical personnel in these rural communities.

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▲ Areas with escalating unemployment frequently also have an increase in the use of illegal drugs. High unemployment in some rural areas of the United States has been accompanied by an explosion in the production and use of methamphetamines (meth).

For many people in rural areas who have made their livelihood through farming and other agricultural endeavors, recent decades have been very difficult, both financially and emotionally. Rural crises such as droughts, crop failures, and the loss of small businesses in the community have had a negative effect on many adults and their children. Like their urban counterparts, rural families have experienced problems of divorce, alcoholism, abuse, and other crises, but these issues have sometimes been exacerbated by such events as the loss of the family farm or business (Pitzer, 2003). Because home is also the center of work in farming families, the loss of the farm may also mean the loss of family and social life, and the loss of things dear to children such as their 4-H projects—often an animal that a child raises to show and sell (Pitzer, 2003). Some rural children and adolescents are also subject to injuries associated with farm work, such as livestock kicks or crushing, falling out of a tractor or pickup, and operating machinery designed for adults, that are not typically experienced by their urban counterparts (Schutske, 2002).

Economic opportunities are limited in many rural areas, and average salaries are typically lower than in urban areas, based on the assumption that a family can live on less money in rural communities than in cities. An example is rural teachers, who earn substantially less than their urban and suburban counterparts. Some rural areas have lost many teachers and administrators to higher-paying districts in other cities.

Although many of the problems we have examined in this book are intensified in rural areas, one of the most pressing is the availability of health services and doctors. Recently, some medical schools have established clinics and practices in outlying rural regions of the states in which they are located in an effort to increase the number of physicians available to rural residents. Typically, physicians who have just started to practice medicine have chosen to work in large urban centers with accessible high-tech medical facilities. Because of the pressing time constraints of tending to patients with life-threatening problems, the availability of community clinics and hospitals in rural areas may be a life-or-death matter for some residents. Loss of these facilities can have a devastating effect on people's health and life chances.

In addition to the movement of some urban dwellers to rural areas, two other factors have changed the face of rural America in some regions. One is the proliferation of superstores, such as Wal-Mart, PetSmart, Lowe's, and Home Depot. In some cases, these superstores have effectively put small businesses such as hardware stores and pet shops out of business, because local merchants cannot meet the prices established by these large-volume discount chains. The development of superstores and outlet malls along the rural highways of this country has raised new concerns about environmental issues such as air and water pollution, and has brought about new questions regarding whether these stores benefit the rural communities where they are located.

A second factor that has changed the face of some rural areas (and is sometimes related to the growth of mega-stores and outlet malls) is an increase in tourism in rural America (Brown, 2003). According to one study, about 87 million people (nearly two-thirds of all U.S. adults) have taken a trip to a rural destination, usually for leisure purposes, over the past few years. Tourism produces jobs; however, many of the positions are for food servers, retail clerks, and hospitality workers, which are often low-paying, seasonal jobs that have few benefits. Tourism may improve a community's tax base, but this does not occur when the outlet malls, hotels, and fast-food restaurants are located outside of the rural community's taxing authority, as frequently occurs when developers decide where to locate malls and other tourist amenities.

Population and Urbanization in the Future

In the future, rapid global population growth is inevitable. Although death rates have declined in many low-income nations, there has not been a corresponding decrease in birth rates. Between 1985 and 2025, 93 percent of all global population growth will have occurred in Africa, Asia, and Latin America; 83 percent of the world's population will live in those regions by 2025. Perhaps even more amazing is the fact that in the five-year span between 1995 and 2000, 21 percent of the entire world's population increase occurred in two countries: China and India. ▶ Figure 15.7a shows the net annual additions to the populations of six countries during that five-year period. Figure 15.7b shows the growth of

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India	16.0
China	11.4
Pakistan	4.0
Indonesia	2.9
Nigeria	2.5
U.S.A.	2.3

a. Population increase in selected countries, 1995–2000, in millions of people

Year	Billions
2050	9.15
2040	8.8
2025	8
2013	7
1999	6
1987	5
1974	4
1960	3
1927	2

b. Increase in the world's population, in billions of people

▲ **FIGURE 15.7 GROWTH OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION**

Sources: United Nations Population Division, 1999, 2008.

the world's population from 1927 to 1999 and the expected growth to eight billion by the year 2025.

In the future, low-income countries will have an increasing number of poor people. While the world's population will *double,* the urban population will *triple* as people migrate from rural to urban areas in search of food, water, and jobs.

One of the many effects of urbanization is greater exposure of people to the media. Increasing numbers of poor people in less-developed nations will see images from the developed world that are beamed globally by news networks such as CNN. As futurist John L. Petersen (1994: 119) notes, "For the first time in history, the poor are beginning to understand how relatively poor they are compared to the rich nations. They see, in detail, how the rest of the world lives and feel their increasing disenfranchisement."

By the 2020s, in a worst-case scenario, central cities and nearby suburbs in the United States will have experienced bankruptcy exacerbated by sporadic race- and class-oriented violence. The infrastructure will be beyond the possibility of repair. Families and businesses with the ability to do so will have long since moved to "new cities," where they will inevitably diminish the quality of life that they originally sought there. Areas that we currently think of as being relatively free from such problems will be characterized by depletion of natural resources and by greater air and water pollution (see Ehrlich, Ehrlich, and Daily, 1995).

By contrast, in a best-case scenario, the problems brought about by rapid population growth in low-income nations will be remedied by new technologies that make goods readily available to people. International trade agreements are removing trade barriers and making it possible for all nations to fully engage in global trade. People in low-income nations will benefit by gaining jobs and opportunities to purchase goods at lower prices. Of course, the opposite may also occur: People may be exploited as inexpensive labor, and their country's natural resources may be depleted as transnational corporations buy up raw materials without contributing to the long-term economic stability of the nation.

In the United States, a best-case scenario for the future might include improvements in how taxes are collected and spent. Some analysts suggest that regional governments should be developed that would be responsible for water, wastewater (sewage), transportation, schools, and other public services over a wider area.

At the macrolevel, we may be able to do little about population and urbanization; however, at the microlevel, we may be able to exercise some degree of control over our communities and our lives. In both cases, futurists suggest that as we approach the future, we must "leave the old ways and invent new ones" (Petersen, 1994: 340). What aspects of our "old ways" do you think we should discard? Can you help invent new ones?

bring a better quality of life—for 8 billion or more people—without wrecking the environment entirely in the attempt" (Edward O. Wilson, scientist, Pulitzer-Prize–winning author, and father of biodiversity).

• **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disc also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.

chapter review

● **What are the processes that produce population changes?**

Populations change as the result of fertility (births), mortality (deaths), and migration.

● **What is the Malthusian perspective?**

Over two hundred years ago, Thomas Malthus warned that overpopulation would result in poverty, starvation, and other major problems that would limit the size of the population. According to Malthus, the population would increase geometrically while the food supply would increase only arithmetically, resulting in a critical food shortage and poverty.

● **What are the views of Karl Marx and the neo-Malthusians on overpopulation?**

According to Karl Marx, poverty is the result of capitalist greed, not overpopulation. More recently, neo-Malthusians have reemphasized the dangers of overpopulation and encouraged zero population growth—the point at which no population increase occurs from year to year.

● **What are the stages in demographic transition theory?**

Demographic transition theory links population growth to four stages of economic development: (1) the preindustrial stage, with high birth rates and death rates; (2) early industrialization, with relatively high birth rates and a decline in death rates; (3) advanced industrialization and urbanization, with low birth rates and death rates; and (4) postindustrialization, with additional decreases in the birth rate coupled with a stable death rate.

● **What are the three functionalist models of urban growth?**

Functionalists view urban growth in terms of ecological models. The concentric zone model sees the city as a series of circular areas, each characterized by a different type of land use. The sector model describes urban growth in terms of terrain and transportation routes. The multiple nuclei model views cities as having numerous centers of development from which growth radiates.

● **What is the political economy model/conflict perspective on urban growth?**

According to political economy models/conflict perspectives, urban growth is influenced by capital investment decisions, class and class conflict, and government subsidy programs. At the global level, capitalism also influences the development of cities in core, peripheral, and semiperipheral nations.

● **How do symbolic interactionists view urban life?**

Symbolic interactionist perspectives focus on how people experience urban life. Some analysts view the urban experience positively; others believe that urban dwellers become insensitive to events and to people around them.

key terms

crude birth rate 503

crude death rate 503

demographic transition 513

demography 502

fertility 502

gentrification 520

invasion 520

migration 505

mortality 503

population composition 506

population pyramid 507

sex ratio 506

succession 520

zero population growth 513

Along with my daughter Mariah and a team of human rights experts from the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, I spent the last several days in Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama speaking with commercial fishermen, deck hands, restaurateurs, ecologists, farmers, service providers, marina workers, hoteliers, kids and more whose lives are directly affected by BP's toxic tsunami swamping the Gulf Coast and wiping out the fishing and tourism industries which have been the mainstays of these communities for decades. "Oil will be all that's left," lamented one long-time resident. "And with the politicians in the pockets of the oil companies, there will be more pressure than ever to drill, baby, drill." . . . Eleven of us motored a small boat eight miles out from shore. Though far from shore, the water there appeared as though we had pulled up to a gargantuan gas dock, with a rainbow sheen covering the ocean, horizon to horizon. Our eyes stung, our throats closed and our heads ached despite the respirators we wore. . . . It may take decades for BP to make the Gulf "whole." In the aftermath of this oil tsunami, concrete actions that respect residents' right are the next step.

—Kerry Kennedy (2010), a prominent environmental activist, describing what she saw in the tragic aftermath of an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon rig that began spewing massive amounts of oil endlessly from a 5,000-foot-deep puncture in the Gulf of Mexico

© ROGER L. WOLLENBERG/UPI/Landov

▲ **Environmental activism is a powerful type of social movement that seeks to call public attention to pressing social concerns, such as the environmental impacts of offshore drilling. Activists often stage public events, such as the one shown here, in an attempt to gain the attention of political leaders and everyday citizens.**

One of the by-products of having grown up alongside the Houston Ship Channel was very nearly becoming desensitized to the vast amounts of pollutants the oil and chemical industry poured into East Houston's air and waterways. I once fell in the Ship Channel while working on a crew that built launching pads for a new supertanker. The resulting kidney infection took nine months to heal. I urinated blood for three weeks. No one can tell me that the current state of global consumerism does not impact the world's climate adversely. To [people] who pooh pooh the notion of global warming, I say this: Go take a swim in the Houston Ship Channel.

—Grammy-winning songwriter and recording artist Rodney Crowell explaining why he joined the virtual march against global warming (qtd. in StopGlobalWarming.org, 2006)

When I circled the moon and looked back at Earth, my outlook on life and my viewpoint on Earth changed. You don't see Las Vegas, Boston or even New York. You don't see boundaries or people. No whites, blacks, French, Greeks, Christians or Jews. The Earth looks completely uninhabited, and you know that on Spaceship Earth, there live over six billion astronauts, all seeking the same things from life.

> In this chapter
> - Collective Behavior
> - Social Movements
> - Social Movement Theories
> - Social Change in the Future

When viewed in total, Earth is a spaceship just like Apollo. We are all the crew of Spaceship Earth; and just like Apollo, the crew must learn to live and work together. We must learn to manage the resources of this world with new imagination. The future is up to you.

—Jim Lovell, a retired NASA astronaut, describing how his experience in space gave him a new perspective on environmental problems such as global warming—the process that occurs when carbon dioxide stays in the atmosphere and acts like a blanket that holds in the heat. Over time, global warming results in higher temperatures, rises in sea levels, and catastrophic weather such as powerful hurricanes (qtd. in StopGlobalWarming.org, 2006).

Chapter Focus Question

How might collective behavior and social movements make people more aware of important social issues, such as environmental destruction and global warming?

Sometimes it seems like environmental crises and other people-made disasters occur routinely in the twenty-first century. Almost daily, the Internet, TV, and newspapers inform us of new or unresolved problems associated with environmental problems such as massive oil leaks, global warming, air pollution, or other disasters. As this chapter's opening narratives indicate, a number of well-known people such as Kerry Kennedy, Rodney Crowell, and Jim Lovell are deeply concerned about the crises that threaten our environment and want to encourage others to become part of the environmental movement. The message of the environmental movement is that we must act collectively and immediately to reduce environmental hazards before havoc comes to the Earth: Social change is essential. Sociologists define *social change* **as the alteration, modification, or transformation of public policy, culture, or social institutions over time.** Social change is usually brought about by collective behavior and social movements.

In this chapter, we will examine collective behavior, social movements, and social change from a sociological perspective. We will use environmental activism as an example of how people may use social movements as a form of mass mobilization and social transformation (Buechler, 2000). Before reading on, test your knowledge about collective behavior and environmental issues by taking the Sociology and Everyday Life quiz that follows.

Collective Behavior

Collective behavior **is voluntary, often spontaneous activity that is engaged in by a large number of people and typically violates dominant-group norms and values.** Unlike the *organizational behavior* found in corporations and voluntary associations (such as labor unions and environmental organizations), collective behavior lacks an official division of labor, hierarchy of authority, and established rules and procedures. Unlike *institutional behavior* (in education, religion, or politics, for example), it lacks institutionalized norms to govern behavior. Collective behavior can take various forms, including crowds, mobs, riots, panics, fads, fashions, and public opinion.

According to the sociologist Steven M. Buechler (2000), early sociologists studied collective behavior because they lived in a world that was responding to the processes of modernization, including urbanization, industrialization, and the proletarianization of workers. Contemporary forms of collective behavior, particularly social protests, are variations on the themes that originated during the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the rise of modernity in Europe (Buechler, 2000). Today, some forms of collective behavior and social movements are directed toward public issues such as air pollution, water pollution, and the exploitation of workers in global sweatshops by transnational corporations (see Shaw, 1999).

Conditions for Collective Behavior

Collective behavior occurs as a result of some common influence or stimulus that produces a response from a collectivity. A *collectivity* is a number of people who act together and may mutually transcend, bypass, or subvert established institutional patterns and structures. Three major factors contribute to the likelihood that collective behavior will occur: (1) structural factors that increase the chances of people responding in a particular way, (2) timing, and (3) a breakdown in social control mechanisms and a corresponding feeling of normlessness (McPhail, 1991; Turner and Killian, 1993).

A common stimulus is an important factor in collective behavior. For example, the publication of *Silent Spring* (1962) by former Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Rachel Carson is credited with triggering collective behavior directed at demanding a clean environment and questioning how much power large corporations should have. Carson described the dangers of pesticides such as DDT, which was then being promoted by the chemical industry as the miracle that could give the United States the unchallenged position as food supplier to the world (Cronin and Kennedy, 1999). Carson's activism has been described in this way:

> Carson was not a wild-eyed reformer intent on bringing the industrial age to a grinding halt. She wasn't even opposed to pesticides per se. She was a careful scientist and brilliant writer whose painstaking research on pesticides proved that the "miraculous" bursts of agricultural productivity had long-term costs undisclosed in the chemical industry's exaggerated puffery. Americans were

- **For Discussion:** Have the class restate and evaluate the following: "In an age when man has forgotten his origins and is blind even to his most essential needs for survival, water along with other resources has become the victim of his indifference" (Rachel Carson).

- **PowerLecture:** The PowerLecture disc provides numerous teaching resources for this chapter, including PowerPoint® slides, videos, PowerPoint® and JPEG image libraries, and JoinIn clicker questions.

sociology and everyday life

How Much Do You Know About Collective Behavior and Environmental Issues?

True	False		
T	**F**	1.	Scientists are forecasting a global warming of between 2 and 11 degrees Fahrenheit over the next century.
T	**F**	2.	The environmental movement in the United States started in the 1960s.
T	**F**	3.	People who hold strong attitudes regarding the environment are very likely to be involved in social movements to protect the environment.
T	**F**	4.	Environmental groups may engage in civil disobedience or use symbolic gestures to call attention to their issue.
T	**F**	5.	People are most likely to believe rumors when no other information is readily available on a topic.
T	**F**	6.	Influencing public opinion is a very important activity for many social movements.
T	**F**	7.	Most social movements in the United States seek to improve society by changing some specific aspect of the social structure.
T	**F**	8.	Sociologists have found that people in a community respond very similarly to natural disasters and to disasters caused by technological failures.

Answers on page 542.

losing things—their health, many birds and fishes, and the purity of their waterways—that they should value more than modest savings at the grocery store. (Cronin and Kennedy, 1999: 151)

Timing is another significant factor in bringing about collective behavior. For example, in the 1960s smog had started staining the skies in this country; in Europe, birds and fish were dying from environmental pollution; and oil spills from tankers were provoking public outrage worldwide (Cronin and Kennedy, 1999). People in this country were ready to acknowledge that problems existed. By writing *Silent Spring,* Carson made people aware of the hazards of chemicals in their foods and the destruction of wildlife. However, that is not all she produced: As a consequence of her careful research and writing, she also produced anger in people at a time when they were beginning to wonder if they were being deceived by the very industries that they had entrusted with their lives and their resources. Once aroused to action, many people began demanding an honest, comprehensive accounting of where pollution was occurring and how it might be endangering public health and environmental resources. Public outcries also led to

investigations in courts and legislatures throughout the United States as people began to demand legal recognition of the right to a clean environment (Cronin and Kennedy, 1999).

A breakdown in social control mechanisms has been a powerful force in triggering collective behavior regarding environmental protection and degradation. During the 1970s, people in the "Love Canal" area of Niagara Falls, New York, became aware that their neighborhood and their children's school had been built over a canal where tons of poisonous waste had been dumped by a chemical company between 1930 and 1950. After the company closed the site, covered it with soil, and sold it (for $1) to the city of Niagara Falls, homes and a school were

> **social change** the alteration, modification, or transformation of public policy, culture, or social institutions over time.
>
> **collective behavior** voluntary, often spontaneous activity that is engaged in by a large number of people and typically violates dominant-group norms and values.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** Have students answer the Sociology and Everyday Life questions on their own. Then ask students to compare their answers with two other students. Circle answers where there is no consensus. Share with the entire class questions that were most frequently missed. Talk about why.

- **For Discussion:** Ask students to reflect on their own participation in social movements and to evaluate the following statement: "Social movements are at once the symptoms and the instruments of progress. Ignore them and statesmanship is irrelevant; fail to use them and it is weak" (Walter Lippman).

sociology and everyday life

1. **True.** Global surface temperatures have increased about 0.4 degrees Fahrenheit during the past 25 years, and scientists believe that this trend will grow more pronounced during the next 100 years.

2. **False.** The environmental movement in the United States is the result of more than 100 years of collective action. The first environmental organization, the American Forestry Association (now American Forests), originated in 1875.

3. **False.** Since the 1980s, public opinion polls have shown that the majority of people in the United States have favorable attitudes regarding protection of the environment and banning nuclear weapons; however, far fewer individuals are actually involved in collective action to further these causes.

4. **True.** Environmental groups have held sit-ins, marches, boycotts, and strikes, which sometimes take the form of civil disobedience. Others have hanged political leaders in effigy or held officials hostage. Still others have dressed as grizzly bears to block traffic in Yellowstone National Park or created a symbolic "crack" (made of plastic) on the Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River to denounce development in the area.

5. **True.** Rumors are most likely to emerge and circulate when people have very little information on a topic that is important to them. For example, rumors abound in times of technological disasters, when people are fearful and often willing to believe a worst-case scenario.

6. **True.** Many social movements, including grassroots environmental activism, attempt to influence public opinion so that local decision makers will feel obliged to correct a specific problem through changes in public policy.

7. **True.** Most social movements are reform movements that focus on improving society by changing some specific aspect of the social structure. Examples include environmental movements and the disability rights movement.

8. **False.** Most sociological studies have found that people respond differently to natural disasters, which usually occur very suddenly, than to technological disasters, which may occur gradually. One of the major differences is the communal bonding that tends to occur following natural disasters, as compared with the extreme social conflict that may follow technological disasters.

Sources: Based on Adams, 1991; Gamson, 1990; Hynes, 1990; Worster, 1985; and Young, 1990.

built on the sixteen-acre site. Over the next two decades, an oily black substance began oozing into the homes in the area and killing the trees and grass on the lots; schoolchildren reported mysterious illnesses and feelings of malaise. Tests indicated that the dump site contained more than two hundred different chemicals, many of which could cause cancer or other serious health problems. Upon learning this information, Lois Gibbs, a mother of one of the schoolchildren, began a grassroots campaign to force government officials to relocate community members injured by seepages from the chemical dump. The collective behavior of neighborhood volunteers was not only successful in eventually bringing about social change but also inspired others to

engage in collective behavior regarding environmental problems in their communities.

Dynamics of Collective Behavior

To better understand the dynamics of collective behavior, let's briefly examine several questions. First, how do people come to transcend, bypass, or subvert established institutional patterns and structures? Some environmental activists have found that they cannot get their point across unless they go outside established institutional patterns and organizations. For example, Lois Gibbs and other Love Canal residents initially tried to work within established means through the school administration and

- **Active Learning:** What are the rumors that are currently circulating around your campus? What facts can you find that are at the heart of these? Ask your students to discuss their beliefs about global warming. What facts are they basing their beliefs upon? What role does the media play in framing issues such as global warming?

- **Sociological Imagination:** Have students research and write about the difficulties that Lois Gibbs and other Love Canal residents experienced in trying to work within established organizations to bring about social change. Would these difficulties be the same today?

state health officials to clean up the problem. However, they quickly learned that their problems were not being solved through "official" channels. As the problem appeared to grow worse, organizational responses became more defensive and obscure. Accordingly, some residents began acting outside of established norms by holding protests and strikes (Gibbs, 1982). Some situations are more conducive to collective behavior than others. When people can communicate quickly and easily with one another, spontaneous behavior is more likely (Turner and Killian, 1993). When people are gathered together in one general location (whether lining the streets or assembled in a massive stadium), they are more likely to respond to a common stimulus.

Second, how do people's actions compare with their attitudes? People's attitudes (as expressed in public opinion surveys, for instance) are not always reflected in their political and social behavior. Issues pertaining to the environment are no exception. For example, people may indicate in survey research that they believe the quality of the environment is very important, but the same people may not turn out on election day to support propositions that protect the environment or candidates who promise

to focus on environmental issues. Likewise, individuals who indicate on a questionnaire that they are concerned about increases in ground-level ozone—the primary component of urban smog—often drive single-occupant, oversized vehicles which government studies have shown to be "gas guzzlers" that contribute to lowered air quality in urban areas. As a result, smog levels increase, contributing to human respiratory problems and dramatically reduced agricultural crop yields (Voynick, 1999).

Third, why do people act collectively rather than singly? As the sociologists Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian (1993: 12) note, people believe that there is strength in numbers: "the rhythmic stamping of feet by hundreds of concert-goers in unison is different from isolated, individual cries of 'bravo.'" Likewise, people may act as a collectivity when they believe it is the only way to fight those with greater power and resources. Collective behavior is not just the sum total of a large number of individuals acting at the same time; rather, it reflects people's joint response to some common influence or stimulus.

Distinctions Regarding Collective Behavior

People engaging in collective behavior may be divided into crowds and masses. A *crowd* is a relatively large number of people who are in one another's immediate vicinity (Lofland, 1993). Examples of crowds include the audience in a movie theater or people at a pep rally for a sporting event. By contrast, a *mass* is a number of people who share an interest in a specific idea or issue but who are not in one another's immediate vicinity (Lofland, 1993). An example is the popularity of blogging on the Internet. A *blog*, which is short for "web log," is an online journal maintained by an individual who frequently records entries that are maintained in a chronological order. People who self-publish blogs are widely diverse in their interests. Some may include poetry, diary entries, or discussions of such

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▲ The Love Canal area of Niagara Falls, New York, has been the site of protests and other forms of collective behavior because of hazardous environmental pollution. Original protests in the 1970s, demanding a cleanup of the site, were followed in the 1990s by new protests, this time over the proposed resettlement of the area.

> **crowd** a relatively large number of people who are in one another's immediate vicinity.
>
> **mass** a number of people who share an interest in a specific idea or issue but who are not in one another's immediate vicinity.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **For Discussion:** Have students answer the following, using the text and specific examples from their own experience: What are dominant emotions, and what effect do they have on collective behavior?
- **Active Learning:** Have students work in small groups to address these questions: How do conventional crowds differ from casual

crowds? What are some examples of each in which you have participated?
- **Quote, Unquote:** "Whoever knows he is deep, strives for clarity; whoever would like to appear deep to the crowd, strives for obscurity. For the crowd considers anything deep if only it cannot see to the bottom: the crowd is so timid and afraid of going into the water" (Frederick Nietzsche). Have students examine evidence

activities as body piercings. However, others express their beliefs about social issues such as the environment, terrorism, and war, and their concerns about the future. Readers often share a common interest with the blogger on the topics the person is writing about, but these individuals have never met—and probably will never meet—each other in a face-to-face encounter.

Collective behavior may also be distinguished by the dominant emotion expressed. According to the sociologist John Lofland (1993: 72), the *dominant emotion* refers to the "publicly expressed feeling perceived by participants and observers as the most prominent in an episode of collective behavior." Lofland suggests that fear, hostility, and joy are three fundamental emotions found in collective behavior; however, grief, disgust, surprise, or shame may also predominate in some forms of collective behavior.

Types of Crowd Behavior

When we think of a crowd, many of us think of *aggregates,* previously defined as a collection of people who happen to be in the same place at the same time but who share little else in common. Think, for example, of thousands of people waiting to board airplanes at London's Heathrow Airport and other facilities throughout the world when the 2010 Icelandic volcano spewed forth smoke and ash for a number of days, making air travel not only extremely dangerous but ultimately impossible. Many individuals and families were stranded in hotels and airports throughout Western and Northern Europe for days. Although they were referred to collectively as "stranded tourists," they did not necessarily share anything else in common with other weary air passengers. Moreover, the presence of a relatively large number of people in the same location does not necessarily produce collective behavior. Sociologist Herbert Blumer (1946) developed a typology in which crowds are divided into four categories: casual, conventional, expressive, and acting. Other scholars have added a fifth category, protest crowds.

Casual and Conventional Crowds   *Casual crowds* are relatively large gatherings of people who happen to be in the same place at the same time; if they interact at all, it is only briefly. People in a shopping mall or a subway car are examples of casual crowds. Other than sharing a momentary interest, such as a clown's performance or a small child's fall, a casual crowd has nothing in common. The casual crowd plays no active part in the event—such as the child's fall—which likely would have occurred whether or not the crowd was present; the crowd simply observes.

Conventional crowds are made up of people who come together for a scheduled event and thus share a common focus. Examples include religious services, graduation ceremonies, concerts, and college lectures. Each of these events has preestablished schedules and norms. Because these events occur regularly, interaction among participants is much more likely; in turn, the events would not occur without the crowd, which is essential to the event.

Expressive and Acting Crowds   *Expressive crowds* provide opportunities for the expression of some strong emotion (such as joy, excitement, or grief). People release their pent-up emotions in conjunction with other persons experiencing similar emotions. Examples include worshippers at religious revival services; mourners lining the streets when a celebrity, public official, or religious leader

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▲ Crowds of people come together for a variety of reasons. The people pictured here wanted to be near the front of the line to purchase an iPad on the first day the new device became available. How does a crowd such as this differ from other types of crowds?

for Nietzsche's perspective from the 2010 midterm election campaigns.
- **Recent Events:** "Uzbekistan began setting up camps Sunday for tens of thousands of refugees fleeing ethnic rioting in southern Kyrgyzstan, as armed Kyrgyz gangs continued to rampage through Uzbek villages and human rights groups called on the United Nations to intervene. . . . The fragile interim government of Kyrgyzstan announced the death toll in the nation's worst ethnic clashes in two decades had climbed to 97, with more than 1,200 others wounded. But officials said the actual casualties are far higher because many people are too frightened to go to hospitals" (*Washington Post,* 6/13/2010).
- **Historical Perspective:** "A riot is the language of the unheard" (Martin Luther King, Jr.).

has died; and revelers assembled at Mardi Gras or on New Year's Eve at Times Square in New York.

Acting crowds are collectivities so intensely focused on a specific purpose or object that they may erupt into violent or destructive behavior. Mobs, riots, and panics are examples of acting crowds, but casual and conventional crowds may become acting crowds under some circumstances. A *mob* is a highly emotional crowd whose members engage in, or are ready to engage in, violence against a specific target—a person, a category of people, or physical property. Mob behavior in this country has included lynchings, fire bombings, effigy hangings, and hate crimes. Mob violence tends to dissipate relatively quickly once a target has been injured, killed, or destroyed. Sometimes, actions such as an effigy hanging are used symbolically by groups that are not otherwise violent. For example, Lois Gibbs and other Love Canal residents called attention to their problems with the chemical dump site by staging a protest in which they "burned in effigy" the governor and the health commissioner to emphasize their displeasure with the lack of response from these public officials (A. Levine, 1982).

Compared with mob actions, riots may be of somewhat longer duration. A *riot* is violent crowd behavior that is fueled by deep-seated emotions but not directed at one specific target. Riots are often triggered by fear, anger, and hostility; however, not all riots are caused by deep-seated hostility and hatred—people may be expressing joy and exuberance when rioting occurs. Examples include celebrations after sports victories such as those that occurred in Montreal, Canada, following a Stanley Cup win and in Vancouver following a playoff victory (Kendall, Lothian Murray, and Linden, 2004).

A *panic* is a form of crowd behavior that occurs when a large number of people react to a real or perceived threat with strong emotions and self-destructive behavior. The most common type of panic occurs when people seek to escape from a perceived danger, fearing that few (if any) of them will be able to get away from that danger. Panics can also arise in response to events that people believe are beyond their control—such as a major disruption in the economy. Although panics are relatively rare, they receive massive media coverage because they provoke strong feelings of fear in readers and viewers, and the number of casualties may be large.

Protest Crowds Sociologists Clark McPhail and Ronald T. Wohlstein (1983) added protest crowds to the four types of crowds identified by Blumer. *Protest crowds* engage in activities intended to achieve specific political goals. Examples include sit-ins, marches, boycotts, blockades, and strikes. Some protests take the form of *civil disobedience—nonviolent action that seeks to change a policy or law by refusing to comply with it.* Acts of civil disobedience may become violent, as in a confrontation between protesters and police officers; in this case, a protest crowd becomes an *acting crowd.* In the 1960s, African American students and sympathetic whites used sit-ins to call attention to racial injustice and demand social change (see Morris, 1981; McAdam, 1982). Some of these protests can escalate into violent confrontations even when violence was not the intent of the organizers.

Explanations of Crowd Behavior

What causes people to act collectively? How do they determine what types of action to take? One of the earliest theorists to provide an answer to these questions was Gustave Le Bon, a French scholar who focused on crowd psychology in his contagion theory.

Contagion Theory *Contagion theory* focuses on the social–psychological aspects of collective behavior; it attempts to explain how moods, attitudes, and behavior are communicated rapidly and why they are accepted by others (Turner and Killian,

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mob a highly emotional crowd whose members engage in, or are ready to engage in, violence against a specific target—a person, a category of people, or physical property.

riot violent crowd behavior that is fueled by deep-seated emotions but is not directed at one specific target.

panic a form of crowd behavior that occurs when a large number of people react to a real or perceived threat with strong emotions and self-destructive behavior.

civil disobedience nonviolent action that seeks to change a policy or law by refusing to comply with it.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **Sociological Imagination:** Have the class research whether most sociologists believe that collective action is produced by a "herd mentality." Explore the various approaches presented in the text in order to help students make comparisons and contrasts.

▲ In Thailand, the Red Shirt movement was organized to protest against what it saw as the antidemocratic policies of the current Thai government. As shown above, the group prefers to be seen as a nonviolent opposition, but many of its activities have escalated into bloody confrontations with government soldiers and police.

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1993). Le Bon (1841–1931) argued that people are more likely to engage in antisocial behavior in a crowd because they are anonymous and feel invulnerable. Le Bon (1960/1895) suggested that a crowd takes on a life of its own that is larger than the beliefs or actions of any one person. Because of its anonymity, the crowd transforms individuals from rational beings into a single organism with a collective mind. In essence, Le Bon asserted that emotions such as fear and hate are contagious in crowds because people experience a decline in personal responsibility; they will do things as a collectivity that they would never do when acting alone.

Le Bon's theory is still used by many people to explain crowd behavior. However, critics argue that the "collective mind" has not been documented by systematic studies.

Social Unrest and Circular Reaction Sociologist Robert E. Park was the first U.S. sociologist to investigate crowd behavior. Park believed that Le Bon's analysis of collective behavior lacked several important elements. Intrigued that people could break away from the powerful hold of culture and their established routines to develop a new social order, Park added the concepts of social unrest and circular reaction to contagion theory. According to Park, social unrest is

transmitted by a process of *circular reaction*—the interactive communication between persons such that the discontent of one person is communicated to another, who, in turn, reflects the discontent back to the first person (Park and Burgess, 1921).

Convergence Theory *Convergence theory* focuses on the shared emotions, goals, and beliefs that many people may bring to crowd behavior. Because of their individual characteristics, many people have a predisposition to participate in certain types of activities (Turner and Killian, 1993). From this perspective, people with similar attributes find a collectivity of like-minded persons with whom they can express their underlying personal tendencies. Although people may reveal their "true selves" in crowds, their behavior is not irrational; it is highly predictable to those who share similar emotions or beliefs.

Convergence theory has been applied to a wide array of conduct, from lynch mobs to environmental movements. In social psychologist Hadley Cantril's (1941) study of one lynching, he found that the participants shared certain common attributes: They were poor and working-class whites who felt that their status was threatened by the presence of successful African Americans. Consequently, the characteristics of these individuals made them susceptible to joining a lynch mob even if they did not know the target of the lynching.

Convergence theory adds to our understanding of certain types of collective behavior by pointing out how individuals may have certain attributes—such as racial hatred or fear of environmental problems that directly threaten them—that initially bring them together. However, this theory does not explain how the attitudes and characteristics of individuals who take some collective action differ from those who do not.

Emergent Norm Theory Unlike contagion and convergence theories, *emergent norm theory*

▲ Convergence theory is based on the assumption that crowd behavior involves shared emotions, goals, and beliefs, such as the importance of protecting the environment. An example is the Earth Day events that brought together these children carrying this banner to foster environmental causes.

emphasizes the importance of social norms in shaping crowd behavior. Drawing on the symbolic interactionist perspective, the sociologists Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian (1993: 12) asserted that crowds develop their own definition of a situation and establish norms for behavior that fit the occasion:

> Some shared redefinition of right and wrong in a situation supplies the justification and coordinates the action in collective behavior. People do what they would not otherwise have done when they panic collectively, when they riot, when they engage in civil disobedience, or when they launch terrorist campaigns, because they find social support for the view that what they are doing is the right thing to do in the situation.

According to Turner and Killian (1993: 13), emergent norms occur when people define a new situation as highly unusual or see a long-standing situation in a new light. Sociologists using the emergent norm approach seek to determine how individuals in a given collectivity develop an understanding of what is going on, how they construe these activities, and what type of norms are involved. For example,

in a study of audience participation, the sociologist Steven E. Clayman (1993) found that members of an audience listening to a speech applaud promptly and independently but wait to coordinate their booing with other people; they do not wish to "boo" alone.

Some emergent norms are permissive—that is, they give people a shared conviction that they may disregard ordinary rules, such as waiting in line, taking turns, or treating a speaker courteously. Collective activity such as mass looting may be defined (by participants) as taking what rightfully belongs to them and punishing those who have been exploitative. For example, following the Los Angeles riots of 1992, some analysts argued that Korean Americans were targets of rioters because they were viewed by Latinos/as and African Americans as "callous and greedy invaders" who became wealthy at the expense of members of other racial–ethnic groups (Cho, 1993). Thus, rioters who used this rationalization could view looting and burning as a means of "paying back" Korean Americans or of gaining property (such as TV sets and microwave ovens) from those who had already taken from them. Once a crowd reaches some agreement on the norms, the collectivity is supposed to adhere to them. If crowd members develop a norm that condones looting or vandalizing property, they will proceed to cheer for those who conform and ridicule those who are unwilling to abide by the collectivity's new norms.

Emergent norm theory points out that crowds are not irrational. Rather, new norms are developed in a rational way to fit the immediate situation. However, critics note that proponents of this perspective fail to specify exactly what constitutes a norm, how new ones emerge, and how they are so quickly disseminated and accepted by a wide variety of participants. One variation of this theory suggests that no single dominant norm is accepted by everyone in a crowd; instead, norms are specific to the various categories of actors rather than to the collectivity as a whole (Snow, Zurcher, and Peters, 1981). For example, in a study of football victory celebrations, the sociologists David Snow, Louis Zurcher, and Robert Peters (1981) found that each week, behavioral patterns were changed in the postgame revelry, with some being modified, some added, and some deleted.

Mass Behavior

Not all collective behavior takes place in face-to-face collectivities. *Mass behavior* is collective behavior that takes place when people (who often are geographically separated from one another) respond to the same event in much the same way. For people to respond in the same way, they typically have common sources of information that provoke their collective behavior. The most frequent types of mass behavior are rumors, gossip, mass hysteria, public opinion, fashions, and fads. Under some circumstances, social movements constitute a form of mass behavior. However, we will examine social movements separately because they differ in some important ways from other types of dispersed collectivities.

Rumors and Gossip

Rumors are unsubstantiated reports on an issue or subject (Rosnow and Fine, 1976). Whereas a rumor may spread through an assembled collectivity, rumors may also be transmitted among people who are dispersed geographically, including people spreading rumors on Twitter or posting messages on Facebook or talking by cell phone. Although rumors may initially contain a kernel of truth, they may be modified as they spread to serve the interests of those repeating them. Rumors thrive when tensions are high and when little authentic information is available on an issue of great concern. For example, in the aftermath of the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti, rumors quickly spread on Twitter that American Airlines would fly doctors and nurses to that country free of charge and that JetBlue was offering free flights and UPS was shipping packages for free (Griggs, 2010). These rumors were nothing more than a hoax, but they had many people inquiring because they wanted to help with disaster relief or perhaps because they saw the so-called offer as an opportunity for a free trip. Were people on Twitter trying to help the relief effort in Haiti but simply misinformed, or did they intentionally spread a rumor that eventually was proven to be untrue? Social networks such as Twitter provide people with an opportunity to spread "information," both substantiated and unsubstantiated, and the lack of validation can be particularly problematic during natural disasters and other problematic times. In the case of a major

disaster, it is important to know the reliability of information sources: The outcome might be much worse, or at least far different, than in the Haiti situation, where it created confusion and disappointment but was not necessarily life threatening.

As the example regarding free flights on airlines and no-cost mailing services shows, people are willing to give rumors credence when no opposing information is available. Environmental issues are similar. For example, when residents of Love Canal waited for information from health department officials about their exposure to the toxic chemicals and from the government about possible relocation at state expense to another area, new waves of rumors spread through the community daily. By the time a meeting was called by health department officials to provide homeowners with the results of air-sample

▲ When unexpected events such as the massive 2003 power outage in the United States and Canada occur, people frequently rely on rumors to help them know what is going on. Getting accurate information out quickly helped prevent people from panicking as tens of thousands of workers in Manhattan sought to get home any way they could while electricity was unavailable in the city.

- **Sociological Imagination:** "Thousands of bodies are floating in the Gulf of Mexico, dangling from trees or otherwise obscured by debris and unaccounted for, these people insist in online forums and posted reader comments. A government conspiracy and media blackout are afoot, they say, which explains why those images remain unseen. Coast Guard rescuers, law enforcement agencies and government officials all say otherwise, but they're part of the conspiracy, right?" (*Houston Chronicle,* 9/2008). Have students discuss these rumors surrounding the aftermath of Hurricane Ike. Point out that this, like other conspiracy theories, *could never be proved false*—one of the hallmarks of an irrational opinion.

- **Popular Culture:** "Best friends Oprah Winfrey and Gayle King recently made headlines by saying during an interview with

tests for hazardous chemicals (such as chloroform and benzene) performed on their homes, already fearful residents were ready to believe the worst, as Lois Gibbs (1982: 25) describes:

> Next to the names [of residents] were some numbers. But the numbers had no meaning. People stood there looking at the numbers, knowing nothing of what they meant but suspecting the worst.
>
> One woman, divorced and with three sick children, looked at the piece of paper with numbers and started crying hysterically: "No wonder my children are sick. Am I going to die? What's going to happen to my children?" No one could answer. . . .
>
> The night was very warm and humid, and the air was stagnant. On a night like that, the smell of Love Canal is hard to describe. It's all around you. It's as though it were about to envelop you and smother you. By now, we were outside, standing in the parking lot. The woman's panic caught on, starting a chain reaction. Soon, many people there were hysterical.

Once a rumor begins to circulate, it seldom stops unless compelling information comes to the forefront that either proves the rumor false or makes it obsolete.

In industrialized societies with sophisticated technology, rumors come from a wide variety of sources and may be difficult to trace. Print media (newspapers and magazines) and electronic media (radio and television), fax machines, cellular networks, satellite systems, and the Internet aid the rapid movement of rumors around the globe. In addition, modern communications technology makes anonymity much easier. In a split second, messages (both factual and fictitious) can be disseminated to thousands of people through e-mail, computerized bulletin boards, and Internet newsgroups. Whereas rumors deal with an issue or a subject, *gossip* refers to rumors about the personal lives of individuals. Charles Horton Cooley (1963/1909) viewed gossip as something that spread among a small group of individuals who personally knew the person who was the object of the rumor. Today, this is frequently not the case; many people enjoy gossiping about people whom they have never met. Tabloid newspapers and magazines such as the *National Enquirer* and *People,* along with television "news" programs that purport to provide "inside"

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▲ Although a spokesperson for CBS Radio stated to listeners that they were hearing a dramatization of a novel, the 1938 presentation of H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds,* as presented by Orson Welles and his Mercury Theatre, terrified untold numbers of people. Here Welles talks to interviewers the day after the event caused a nationwide panic.

information on the lives of celebrities, are sources of contemporary gossip, much of which has not been checked for authenticity.

Mass Hysteria and Panic *Mass hysteria* is a form of dispersed collective behavior that occurs when a large number of people react with strong emotions and self-destructive behavior to a real or perceived threat. Does mass hysteria actually occur? Although the term has been widely used, many sociologists believe that this behavior is best described as a panic with a dispersed audience.

An example of mass hysteria or a panic with a widely dispersed audience was actor Orson Welles's 1938 Halloween eve radio dramatization of H. G. Wells's science fiction classic *The War of the Worlds.* A CBS radio dance music program was interrupted suddenly by a news bulletin informing the audience

> **mass behavior** collective behavior that takes place when people (who often are geographically separated from one another) respond to the same event in much the same way.
>
> **rumor** an unsubstantiated report on an issue or subject.
>
> **gossip** rumors about the personal lives of individuals.

O magazine that they were not lesbians. But Oprah did say she understood why people might think they're gay, because 'there isn't a definition in our culture for this kind of bond between women'" (*ABC News,* 7/2007).

• **For Discussion:** Describe the ways that a radio or television program could create a panic today. Ask students to come up with contemporary examples.

that Martians had landed in New Jersey and were in the process of conquering Earth. Some listeners became extremely frightened even though an announcer had indicated before, during, and after the performance that the broadcast was a fictitious dramatization. According to some reports, as many as one million of the estimated ten million listeners believed that this astonishing event had occurred. Thousands were reported to have hidden in their storm cellars or to have gotten in their cars so that they could flee from the Martians (see Brown, 1954). In actuality, the program probably did not generate mass hysteria, but rather a panic among gullible listeners. Others switched stations to determine if the same "news" was being broadcast elsewhere. When they discovered that it was not, they merely laughed at the joke being played on listeners by CBS. In 1988, on the fiftieth anniversary of the broadcast, a Portuguese radio station rebroadcast the program; once again, a panic ensued.

Fads and Fashions As you will recall from Chapter 2, a *fad* is a temporary but widely copied activity enthusiastically followed by large numbers of people. Fads can be embraced by widely dispersed collectivities; news networks such as CNN and Internet websites may bring the latest fad to the attention of audiences around the world.

Unlike fads, fashions tend to be longer lasting. In Chapter 2, *fashion* is defined as a currently valued style of behavior, thinking, or appearance. Fashion also applies to art, music, drama, literature, architecture, interior design, and automobiles, among other things. However, most sociological research on fashion has focused on clothing, especially women's apparel (Davis, 1992).

In preindustrial societies, clothing styles remained relatively unchanged. With the advent of industrialization, items of apparel became readily available at low prices because of mass production. Fashion became more important as people embraced the "modern" way of life and as advertising encouraged "conspicuous consumption."

Georg Simmel, Thorstein Veblen, and Pierre Bourdieu have all viewed fashion as a means of status differentiation among members of different social classes. Simmel (1957/1904) suggested a classic "trickle-down" theory (although he did not use those exact words) to describe the process by which members of the lower classes emulate the fashions of the upper class. As the fashions descend through the status hierarchy, they are watered down and "vulgarized" so that they are no longer recognizable to members of the upper class, who then regard them as unfashionable and in bad taste (Davis, 1992). Veblen (1967/1899) asserted that fashion serves mainly to institutionalize conspicuous consumption among the wealthy. Almost eighty years later, Bourdieu (1984) similarly (but more subtly) suggested that "matters of taste," including fashion sensibility, constitute a large share of the "cultural capital" possessed by members of the dominant class.

Herbert Blumer (1969) disagreed with the trickle-down approach, arguing that "collective selection" best explains fashion. Blumer suggested that people in the middle and lower classes follow fashion because it is *fashion,* not because they desire to emulate members of the elite class. Blumer thus shifted the focus on fashion to collective mood, tastes, and choices: "Tastes are themselves a product of experience. . . . They are formed in the context of social interaction, responding to the definitions and affirmation given by others. People thrown into areas of common interaction and having similar runs of experience develop common tastes" (qtd. in Davis, 1992: 116). Perhaps one of the best refutations of the trickle-down approach is the way in which fashion today often originates among people in the lower social classes and is mimicked by the elites. In the mid-1990s, the so-called grunge look was a prime example of this.

Public Opinion *Public opinion* consists of the attitudes and beliefs communicated by ordinary citizens to decision makers (Greenberg and Page, 2002). It is measured through polls and surveys, which use research methods such as interviews and questionnaires, as described in Chapter 1. Many people are not interested in all aspects of public policy but are concerned about issues they believe are relevant to themselves. Even on a single topic, public opinion will vary widely based on race/ethnicity, religion, region, social class, education level, gender, age, and so on.

Scholars who examine public opinion are interested in the extent to which the public's attitudes are communicated to decision makers and the effect (if any) that public opinion has on policy making (Turner and Killian, 1993). Some political scientists

• **Popular Culture:** "Businesses have an incentive to expand sales by broadening the age range of their products' consumers. Marketers have created the 'tween,' appealing across age gaps to 'kidsults,' 'middle youth,' and 'adultescents.' This is obvious in the cultural distance between G- and R-rated movies that accelerated with the rise of the profitable PG-13 feature" (Gary Cross, *Men to Boys: The Making of Modern Immaturity*).

• **Media Coverage:** "Low carbohydrate diets, including the popular but controversial Atkins diet, have encouraged slimmers to shun pasta and bread in favor of high-protein foods. Domestic use of flour in the US has dropped for two years running, something that has not happened since the 1950s, according to government figures" (*BBC News,* 4/2003).

argue that public opinion has a substantial effect on decisions at all levels of government (see Greenberg and Page, 2002); others strongly disagree.

Today, people attempt to influence elites, and vice versa. Consequently, a two-way process occurs with the dissemination of *propaganda*—information provided by individuals or groups that have a vested interest in furthering their own cause or damaging an opposing one. Although many of us think of propaganda in negative terms, the information provided can be correct and can have a positive effect on decision making.

In recent decades, grassroots environmental activists (including the Love Canal residents) have attempted to influence public opinion. In a study of public opinion on environmental issues, the sociologist Riley E. Dunlap (1992) found that public awareness of the seriousness of environmental problems and public support for environmental protection increased dramatically between the late 1960s and the 1990s. However, it is less clear that public opinion translates into action by either decision makers in government and industry or by individuals (such as a willingness to adopt a more ecologically sound lifestyle).

Initially, most grassroots environmental activists attempt to influence public opinion so that local decision makers will feel the necessity of correcting a specific problem through changes in public policy. Although activists usually do not start out seeking broader social change, they often move in that direction when they become aware of how widespread the problem is in the larger society or on a global basis. One of two types of social movements often develops at this point—one focuses on NIMBY ("not in my backyard"), whereas the other focuses on NIABY ("not in anyone's backyard") (Freudenberg and Steinsapir, 1992).

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▲ Martin Luther King, Jr., a leader of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, advocated nonviolent protests that sometimes took the form of civil disobedience. Here he marches alongside his wife, Coretta Scott King, who for many years took over Dr. King's activities after he was assassinated.

Social Movements

Although collective behavior is short-lived and relatively unorganized, social movements are longer lasting, are more organized, and have specific goals. A *social movement* is an organized group that acts consciously to promote or resist change through collective action (Goldberg, 1991). Because social movements have not become institutionalized and are outside the political mainstream, they offer "outsiders" an opportunity to have their voices heard.

Social movements are more likely to develop in industrialized societies than in preindustrial societies, where acceptance of traditional beliefs and practices makes such movements unlikely. Diversity and a lack of consensus (hallmarks of industrialized nations) contribute to demands for social change, and people who participate in social movements typically lack the power and other resources to bring

public opinion the attitudes and beliefs communicated by ordinary citizens to decision makers.

propaganda information provided by individuals or groups that have a vested interest in furthering their own cause or damaging an opposing one.

social movement an organized group that acts consciously to promote or resist change through collective action.

about change without engaging in collective action. Social movements are most likely to spring up when people come to see their personal troubles as public issues that cannot be solved without a collective response.

Social movements make democracy more available to excluded groups (see Greenberg and Page, 2002). Historically, people in the United States have worked at the grassroots level to bring about changes even when elites sought to discourage activism (Adams, 1991). For example, the civil rights movement brought into its ranks African Americans in the South who had never before been allowed to participate in politics (see Killian, 1984). The women's suffrage movement gave voice to women who had been denied the right to vote (Rosenthal et al., 1985). Similarly, a grassroots environmental movement gave the working-class residents of Love Canal a way to "fight city hall" and Hooker Chemicals, as Lois Gibbs (1982: 38–40) explains:

> People were pretty upset. They were talking and stirring each other up. I was afraid there would be violence. We had a meeting at my house to try to put everything together [and] decided to form a homeowners' association. We got out the word as best we could and told everyone to come to the Frontier Fire Hall on 102d Street. . . . The firehouse was packed with people, and more were outside. . . .
>
> I was elected president. . . . I took over the meeting but I was scared to death. It was only the second time in my life I had been in front of a microphone or a crowd. . . . We set four goals right at the beginning— (1) get all the residents within the Love Canal area who wanted to be evacuated, evacuated and relocated, especially during the construction and repair of the canal; (2) do something about propping up property values; (3) get the canal fixed properly; and (4) have air sampling and soil and water testing done throughout the whole area, so we could tell how far the contamination had spread. . . .

Most social movements rely on volunteers like Lois Gibbs to carry out the work. Traditionally, women have been strongly represented in both the membership and the leadership of many grassroots movements (A. Levine, 1982; Freudenberg and Steinsapir, 1992).

The Love Canal activists set the stage for other movements that have grappled with the kind of issues that the sociologist Kai Erikson (1994) refers to as a "new species of trouble." Erikson describes the "new species" as environmental problems that "contaminate rather than merely damage . . . they pollute, befoul, taint, rather than just create wreckage . . . they penetrate human tissue indirectly rather than just wound the surfaces by assaults of a more straightforward kind. . . . And the evidence is growing that they scare human beings in new and special ways, that they elicit an uncanny fear in us" (Erikson, 1991: 15). The chaos that Erikson (1994: 141) describes is the result of technological disasters: "meaning everything that can go wrong when systems fail, humans err, designs prove faulty, engines misfire, and so on." A recent example of such a disaster occurred in Japan, where more than 300,000 residents living within six miles of the nuclear plant at Tokaimura were told to stay indoors in the aftermath of three workers' mishandling of stainless-steel pails full of uranium, causing the worst nuclear accident in Japan's history (Larimer, 1999). Although no lives were immediately lost, workers in the plant soaked up potentially lethal doses of radiation, some of which also leaked from the plant into the community.

Social movements provide people who otherwise would not have the resources to enter the game of politics a chance to do so. We are most familiar with those movements that develop around public policy issues considered newsworthy by the media, ranging from abortion and women's rights to gun control and environmental justice. However, a number of other types of social movements exist as well.

Types of Social Movements

Social movements are difficult to classify; however, sociologists distinguish among movements on the basis of their *goals* and the *amount of change* they seek to produce (Aberle, 1966; Blumer, 1974). Some movements seek to change people, whereas others seek to change society.

Reform Movements Grassroots environmental movements are an example of *reform movements, which seek to improve society by changing some specific aspect of the social structure.* Members of reform movements usually work within the existing system to attempt to change existing public policy so that it more adequately reflects their own value

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- **Historical Perspective:** "I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law" (Martin Luther King, Jr.). Ask students to summarize what King means by "highest respect for the law."

- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to write for ten minutes analyzing what Kai Erikson means by "a new species of trouble."
- **For Discussion:** Ask the class these questions: How have technological disasters produced new social movements? What new movements can you anticipate for the future? What might be potential outcomes of the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico?

system. Examples of reform movements (in addition to the environmental movement) include labor movements, animal rights movements, antinuclear movements, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and the disability rights movement.

Sociologist Lory Britt (1993) suggested that some movements arise specifically to alter social responses to and definitions of stigmatized attributes. From this perspective, social movements may bring about changes in societal attitudes and practices while at the same time causing changes in participants' social emotions. For example, the civil rights and gay rights movements helped replace shame with pride (Britt, 1993). Such a sense of pride may extend beyond current members of a reform movement. The late César Chávez, organizer of a Mexican American farmworkers' movement that developed into the United Farm Workers Union, noted that the "consciousness and pride raised by our union is alive and thriving inside millions of young Hispanics who will never work on a farm!" (qtd. in Ayala, 1993: E4).

Revolutionary Movements Movements seeking to bring about a total change in society are referred to as *revolutionary movements.* These movements usually do not attempt to work within the existing system; rather, they aim to remake the system by replacing existing institutions with new ones. Revolutionary movements range from utopian groups seeking to establish an ideal society to radical terrorists who use fear tactics to intimidate those with whom they disagree ideologically.

Movements based on terrorism often use tactics such as bombings, kidnappings, hostage taking, hijackings, and assassinations (White, 2003). Over the past thirty years, a number of movements in the United States have engaged in terrorist activities or supported a policy of violence. However, the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001, and the events that followed those attacks proved to all of us that terrorism within this country can originate from the activities of revolutionary terrorists from outside the country as well.

▲ The term *netroots*, an update of *grassroots*, used to describe locally grown movements, is now commonly used in reference to Internet-based activism. How do web-based research and information organizations such as Media Matters for America support or undermine the efforts of activist organizations such as MoveOn.org and Americans for Prosperity that rely heavily on the Internet for promoting their causes?

Religious Movements Social movements that seek to produce radical change in individuals are typically based on spiritual or supernatural belief systems. Also referred to as *expressive movements, religious movements* are concerned with renovating or renewing people through "inner change." Fundamentalist religious groups seeking to convert nonbelievers to their belief system are an example of this type of movement. Some religious movements are *millenarian*—that is, they forecast that "the end is near" and assert that an immediate change in behavior is imperative. Relatively new religious movements in industrialized Western societies have included Hare Krishnas, the Unification Church, Scientology, and the Divine Light Mission, all of which tend to appeal to the psychological and social needs of young people seeking meaning in life that mainstream religions have not provided for them.

- **Global Perspective:** "History bears out the proposition that political revolutions have always been preceded by social and religious revolutions. Social reform in India has few friends and many critics" (B. R. Ambedkar, Indian politician and founder of the Indian Constitution). Have students research the history behind Ambedkar's viewpoint.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7: Sociological Literacy
- **Extra Examples:** Distinguish for your class the important differences between reform movements and revolutionary movements. Integrate information about terrorism as a threat to social stability.
- **For Discussion:** Have students brainstorm a list of goals of contemporary religious movements. What are some of the different means they use to pursue these ends?

▲ Yoga has become an increasingly popular activity in recent years as many people have turned to alternative social movements derived from Asian traditions.

Alternative Movements Movements that seek limited change in some aspect of people's behavior are referred to as *alternative movements*. For example, early in the twentieth century the Women's Christian Temperance Union attempted to get people to abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages. Some analysts place "therapeutic social movements" such as Alcoholics Anonymous in this category; however, others do not, due to their belief that people must change their lives completely in order to overcome alcohol abuse (see Blumberg, 1977). More recently, a variety of "New Age" movements have directed people's behavior by emphasizing spiritual consciousness combined with a belief in reincarnation and astrology. Such practices as vegetarianism, meditation, and holistic medicine are often included in the self-improvement category. Beginning in the 1990s, some alternative movements have included the practice of yoga (usually without its traditional background in the Hindu religion) as a means by which the self can be liberated and union can be achieved with the supreme spirit or universal soul.

Resistance Movements Also referred to as *regressive movements, resistance movements* seek to prevent change or to undo change that has already occurred. Virtually all of the social movements previously discussed face resistance from one or more reactive movements that hold opposing viewpoints and want to foster public policies that reflect their own beliefs. Examples of resistance movements are groups organized since the 1950s to oppose school integration, civil rights and affirmative action legislation, and domestic partnership initiatives. However, perhaps the most widely known resistance movement includes many who label themselves "pro-life" advocates—such as Operation Rescue, which seeks to close abortion clinics and make abortion illegal under all circumstances (Gray, 1993; Van Biema, 1993). Protests by some radical antiabortion groups have grown violent, resulting in the deaths of several doctors and clinic workers, and creating fear among health professionals and patients seeking abortions (Belkin, 1994).

Stages in Social Movements

Do all social movements go through similar stages? Not necessarily, but there appear to be identifiable stages in virtually all movements that succeed beyond their initial phase of development.

In the *preliminary* (or *incipiency*) *stage,* widespread unrest is present as people begin to become aware of a problem. At this stage, leaders emerge to agitate others into taking action. In the *coalescence stage,* people begin to organize and to publicize the problem. At this stage, some movements become formally organized at local and regional levels. In the *institutionalization* (or *bureaucratization*) *stage,* an organizational structure develops, and a paid staff (rather than volunteers) begins to lead the group. When the movement reaches this stage, the initial zeal and idealism of members may diminish as administrators take over management of the organization. Early grassroots supporters may become disillusioned and drop out; they may also start another movement to address some as-yet-unsolved aspect of the original problem. For example, some national environmental organizations—such as the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, and the National Parks and Conservation Association—that started as grassroots conservation movements are currently viewed by many people as being unresponsive to local environmental problems (Cable and Cable, 1995). As a result, new movements have arisen.

- **Media Coverage:** "Christian and other religious groups opposed to abortion were allowed to advertise on Google after the search engine capitulated in the face of a legal challenge. Google had banned pro-life religious groups from buying adverts against search terms such as 'abortion' and 'abortion help' but was forced to abandon its policy after it was accused of breaching equalities legislation" (*Times Online,* 9/2008).

- **Active Learning:** Have students work in small groups and match the stages of social movements to historical social movements, such as the civil rights movement or the Indian independence movement.
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

Social Movement Theories

What conditions are most likely to produce social movements? Why are people drawn to these movements? Sociologists have developed several theories to answer these questions.

Relative Deprivation Theory

According to relative deprivation theory, people who are satisfied with their present condition are less likely to seek social change. Social movements arise as a response to people's perception that they have been deprived of their "fair share" (Rose, 1982). Thus, people who suffer relative deprivation are more likely to feel that change is necessary and to join a social movement in order to bring about that change. *Relative deprivation* refers to the discontent that people may feel when they compare their achievements with those of similarly situated persons and find that they have less than they think they deserve (Orum and Orum, 1968). Karl Marx captured the idea of relative deprivation in this description: "A house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are small it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But let a palace arise beside the little house, and it shrinks from a little house to a hut" (qtd. in Ladd, 1966: 24). Movements based on relative deprivation are most likely to occur when an upswing in the standard of living is followed by a period of decline, such that people have *unfulfilled rising expectations*—newly raised hopes of a better lifestyle that are not fulfilled as rapidly as the people expected or are not realized at all.

Although most of us can relate to relative deprivation theory, it does not fully account for why people experience social discontent but fail to join a social movement. Even though discontent and feelings of deprivation may be necessary to produce certain types of social movements, they are not sufficient to bring movements into existence. In fact, the sociologist Anthony Orum (1974) found the best predictor of participation in a social movement to be prior organizational membership and involvement in other political activities.

Value-Added Theory

The value-added theory developed by sociologist Neil Smelser (1963) is based on the assumption that certain conditions are necessary for the development of a social movement. Smelser called his theory the "value-added" approach based on the concept (borrowed from the field of economics) that each step in the production process adds something to the finished product. For example, in the process of converting iron ore into automobiles, each stage "adds value" to the final product (Smelser, 1963). Similarly, Smelser asserted, six conditions are necessary and sufficient to produce social movements when they combine or interact in a particular situation:

1. *Structural conduciveness.* People must become aware of a significant problem and have the opportunity to engage in collective action. According to Smelser, movements are more likely to occur when a person, class, or agency can be singled out as the source of the problem; when channels for expressing grievances either are not available or fail; and when the aggrieved have a chance to communicate among themselves.
2. *Structural strain.* When a society or community is unable to meet people's expectations that something should be done about a problem, strain occurs in the system. The ensuing tension and conflict contribute to the development of a social movement based on people's belief that the problem would not exist if authorities had done what they were supposed to do.
3. *Spread of a generalized belief.* For a movement to develop, there must be a clear statement of the problem and a shared view of its cause, effects, and possible solution.
4. *Precipitating factors.* To reinforce the existing generalized belief, an inciting incident or dramatic event must occur. With regard to technological disasters, some (including Love Canal) gradually emerge from a long-standing environmental threat, whereas others (including the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant) involve a suddenly imposed problem.
5. *Mobilization for action.* At this stage, leaders emerge to organize others and give them a sense of direction.
6. *Social control factors.* If there is a high level of social control on the part of law enforcement officials, political leaders, and others, it becomes more difficult to develop a social movement or engage in certain types of collective action.

- **Active Learning:** Ask your students to apply some of the conditions of value-added theory to what's currently happening on campus, in your city, or across the nation. Try and create a list of examples for the first three.

- **Sociological Imagination:** Ask students to write an essay about the six conditions that Neil Smelser believes must be present for the development of a social movement. Match these to actual social movements.

Value-added theory takes into account the complexity of social movements and makes it possible to test Smelser's assertions regarding the necessary and sufficient conditions that produce such movements. However, critics note that the approach is rooted in the functionalist tradition and views structural strains as disruptive to society.

Resource Mobilization Theory

Smelser's value-added theory tends to underemphasize the importance of resources in social movements. By contrast, *resource mobilization theory* focuses on the ability of members of a social movement to acquire resources and mobilize people in order to advance their cause (Oberschall, 1973; McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Resources include money, people's time and skills, access to the media, and material goods, such as property and equipment. Assistance from outsiders is essential for social movements. For example, reform movements are more likely to succeed when they gain the support of political and economic elites (Oberschall, 1973).

Resource mobilization theory is based on the assumption that participants in social movements are rational people. According to the sociologist Charles Tilly (1973, 1978), movements are formed and dissolved, mobilized and deactivated, based on rational decisions about the goals of the group, available resources, and the cost of mobilization and collective action. Resource mobilization theory also assumes that participants must have some degree of economic and political resources to make the movement a success. In other words, widespread discontent alone cannot produce a social movement; adequate resources and motivated people are essential to any concerted social action (Aminzade, 1973; Gamson, 1990). Based on an analysis of fifty-three U.S. social protest groups (ranging from labor unions to peace movements) between 1800 and 1945, the sociologist William Gamson (1990) concluded that the organization and tactics of a movement strongly influence its chances of success. However, critics note that this theory fails to account for social changes brought about by groups with limited resources.

In the twenty-first century, scholars continue to modify resource mobilization theory and to develop new approaches for investigating the diversity of movements (see Buechler, 2000). For example,

emerging perspectives based on resource mobilization theory emphasize the ideology and legitimacy of movements as well as material resources (see Zald and McCarthy, 1987; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1988). Additional perspectives are also needed on social movements in other nations to determine how activists in those countries acquire resources and mobilize people to advance causes such as environmental protection (see the Sociology in Global Perspective box).

Social Constructionist Theory: Frame Analysis

Recent theories based on a symbolic interactionist perspective focus on the importance of the symbolic presentation of a problem to both participants and the general public (see Snow et al., 1986; Capek, 1993). Social constructionist theory is based on the assumption that a social movement is an interactive, symbolically defined, and negotiated process that

▲ How is the issue of immigration framed in these photos? Research based on frame analysis often investigates how social issues are framed and what names they are given.

- **Research:** "Ecuadorians and Filipinos send, on average, more than 200 text messages a month. Danes and Irish average 100 a month, while Americans fire off fewer than 50. Analysts say Americans text less because they have greater access to other, cheaper options, including e-mail and instant messages" (*Business 2.0,* 8/2006).
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

- **For Discussion:** "The correct rate of speed in innovating changes in long-standing social customs has not yet been determined by even the most expert of the experts. Personally I am beginning to think there is more danger in lagging than in speeding up cultural change to keep pace with mechanical change" (Mary Barnett Gilson). Have students restate this statement in their own words.

involves participants, opponents, and bystanders (Buechler, 2000).

Research based on this perspective often investigates how problems are framed and what names they are given. This approach reflects the influence of the sociologist Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974), in which he suggests that our interpretation of the particulars of events and activities is dependent on the framework from which we perceive them. According to Goffman (1974: 10), the purpose of frame analysis is "to try to isolate some of the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events and to analyze the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject." In other words, various "realities" may be simultaneously occurring among participants engaged in the same set of activities. Sociologist Steven M. Buechler (2000: 41) explains the relationship between frame analysis and social movement theory:

> Framing means focusing attention on some bounded phenomenon by imparting meaning and significance to elements within the frame and setting them apart from what is outside the frame. In the context of social movements, framing refers to the interactive, collective ways that movement actors assign meanings to their activities in the conduct of social movement activism. The concept of framing is designed for discussing the social construction of grievances as a fluid and variable process of social interaction—and hence a much more important explanatory tool than resource mobilization theory has maintained.

Sociologists have identified at least three ways in which grievances are framed. First, *diagnostic framing* identifies a problem and attributes blame or causality to some group or entity so that the social movement has a target for its actions. Second, *prognostic framing* pinpoints possible solutions or remedies, based on the target previously identified. Third, *motivational framing* provides a vocabulary of motives that compel people to take action (Benford, 1993; Snow and Benford, 1988). When successful framing occurs, the individual's vague dissatisfactions are turned into well-defined grievances, and people are compelled to join the movement in an effort to reduce or eliminate those grievances (Buechler, 2000).

Beyond motivational framing, additional frame alignment processes are necessary in order to supply a continuing sense of urgency to the movement. *Frame alignment* is the linking together of interpretive orientations of individuals and social movement organizations so that there is congruence between individuals' interests, beliefs, and values and the movement's ideologies, goals, and activities (Snow et al., 1986). Four distinct frame alignment processes occur in social movements: (1) *frame bridging* is the process by which movement organizations reach individuals who already share the same world view as the organization, (2) *frame amplification* occurs when movements appeal to deeply held values and beliefs in the general population and link those to movement issues so that people's preexisting value commitments serve as a "hook" that can be used to recruit them, (3) *frame extension* occurs when movements enlarge the boundaries of an initial frame to incorporate other issues that appear to be of importance to potential participants, and (4) *frame transformation* refers to the process whereby the creation and maintenance of new values, beliefs, and meanings induce movement participation by redefining activities and events in such a manner that people believe they must become involved in collective action (Buechler, 2000). Some or all of these frame alignment processes are used by social movements as they seek to define grievances and recruit participants.

Frame analysis provides new insights on how social movements emerge and grow when people are faced with problems such as technological disasters, about which greater ambiguity typically exists, and when people are attempting to "name" the problems associated with things such as nuclear or chemical contamination. However, frame analysis has been criticized for its "ideational biases" (McAdam, 1996). According to the sociologist Doug McAdam (1996), frame analyses of social movements have looked almost exclusively at ideas and their formal expression, whereas little attention has been paid to other significant factors, such as movement tactics, mobilizing structures, and changing political opportunities that influence the signifying work of movements. In this context, "political opportunity" means government structure, public policy, and political conditions that set the boundaries for change and political action. These boundaries are crucial variables in explaining why various social

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- **Active Learning:** Demonstrate the idea of framing in practice by addressing some of the urgent issues on campus. What's on your urgent list? What's on your students' list? How might some of these issues be framed more effectively to create momentum or social movements?
- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #6 Empirical and Theoretical Analysis

sociology in global perspective

China: A Nation of Environmental Woes and Emergent Social Activism

News Bulletin:

Estimated number of premature deaths in China each year that are caused by pollution:

- Outdoor Air Pollution: 350,000 to 400,000 people
- Indoor Air Pollution: 300,000 people
- Water Pollution: 60,000 people
  —World Bank data (Kahn and Yardley, 2008: A1)

China is frequently in the international news these days because of its rapid industrial growth and swift rise as a global economic power. Accompanying this nation's double-digit growth rate, however, has been an unprecedented pollution problem. According to some social analysts, "China is choking on its own success" (Kahn and Yardley, 2008: A1). Although the economy is on an upward swing, much of this growth is related to a vast expansion of industry and rapid patterns of urbanization. For this kind of growth to be possible, staggering amounts of energy are needed, and China derives almost all of its energy from coal, one of the dirtiest sources of energy.

If this is China's problem, why should those of us who live in the United States be concerned? For humanitarian reasons, we must be concerned about the effects of deadly pollution

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▲ **Although some people believe that the Chinese government sends mixed messages about care for the environment, China has joined other countries in an effort to limit the use of plastic shopping bags. Other alternatives are shown here.**

on the residents of China. But we must also be concerned about the effects of such environmental degradation because "What happens in China *does not* stay in China." China's pollution problems are not just national problems; they are global

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movements have different outcomes (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996; Gotham, 1999).

Political Opportunity Theory

Why do social protests occur? According to political opportunity theorists, the origins of social protests cannot be explained solely by the fact that people possess a variety of grievances or that they have resources available for mobilization. Instead, social protests are directly related to the political opportunities that potential protesters and movement organizers believe exist within the political system at any given point in time. Political opportunity theory is based on the assumption that social protests that take place *outside* of mainstream political institutions are deeply intertwined with more conventional political activities that take place *inside* these institutions. As used in this context, *opportunity* refers to "options for collective action, with chances and risks attached to them that depend on factors outside the mobilizing group" (Koopmans, 1999: 97). Political opportunity theory states that people will choose those options for collective action that are most readily available to them and those options that will produce the most favorable outcome for their cause.

What are some specific applications of political action theory? Urban sociologists and social movement analysts have found that those cities that provided opportunities for people's protests to be heard within urban governments were less likely to have extensive protests or riots in their communities

problems. According to the *Journal of Geophysical Research,* "Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides spewed by China's coal-fired power plants fall as acid rain on Seoul, South Korea, and Tokyo. Much of the particulate pollution over Los Angeles originates in China" (qtd. in Kahn and Yardley, 2008: A6). Yes, that is correct: Some of the pollution found in Los Angeles, California, may be attributed to what happens in China!

Can anything be done about the problem? Are activists and environmental movements trying to bring about environmental conservation in China? Some environmental activists are indeed attempting to highlight the causes and consequences of the various forms of pollution that are assaulting their nation. For example, environmental activist Wu Lihong repeatedly warned public officials in Wuxi, China, that pollution was strangling Lake Tai, but little attention was paid to his concerns until after the city was forced to shut off its drinking water because a deadly algae bloom was growing rapidly on the lake. Environmental researchers partly attributed this algae bloom to heavy pollution in the area. However, rather than praising Wu Lihong for his efforts to mobilize people and raise awareness of the problem, public officials had him arrested on blackmail and extortion charges, claiming that he demanded money from businesses by threatening that he would expose them for illegal pollution (Bodeen, 2007). Other social movement organizers in China have also found that they risk arrest and prosecution if they publicize their concerns and try to gather resources and mobilize others for environmental causes. As a result, some organizers are hesitant to take action because they fear the consequences.

Indeed, it appears that "China is choking on its own success" and that social movements so far have made few, if any, inroads on addressing the problem. According to the environmental researcher Wang Jinnan, "It is a very awkward situation for the country because our greatest achievement is also our biggest burden. There is pressure for change, but many people refuse to accept that we need a new approach so soon" (qtd. in Kahn and Yardley, 2008: A1, A6).

What will the future hold for environmental protection in China? According to resource mobilization theory, widespread discontent alone cannot produce a social movement: Adequate resources and motivated people are essential for any concerned social action. Some analysts believe that environmental leaders in China will eventually be able to mobilize people for change because more-affluent Chinese residents are becoming very concerned about quality-of-life issues and because cell phones, the Internet, and other methods of rapid communications are making it possible for people to organize quickly and demand governmental intervention on pressing problems such as this one.

reflect & analyze

Do you believe that environmental movements in China might be organized like the most successful ones in the United States? Why or why not?

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because aggrieved people could use more conventional means to make their claims known. By contrast, urban riots were more likely to occur when activists believed that all conventional routes to protest were blocked (Eisinger, 1973). According to Doug McAdam (1982), changes in demography, migration, and the political economy in the United States (factors that were seemingly external to the civil rights movement) all contributed to a belief on the part of African Americans in the late 1960s and early 1970s that they could organize collective action and that their claims regarding the need for racial justice might be more readily heard by government officials. The study by McAdam was conducted over a period of time and looked at a single movement, and therefore was able to identify how certain aspects of the external world affect the development of social movements (Meyer and Minkoff, 2004).

Political opportunity theory has grown in popularity among sociologists who study social movements because this approach highlights the interplay of opportunity, mobilization, and political influence in determining when certain types of behavior may occur (Meyer and Minkoff, 2004). However, like other perspectives, this theory has certain limitations, including the fact that social movement organizations may not always be not completely distinct from, or external to, the existing political system. For example, it is difficult to classify the Tea Party movement, which emerged in the aftermath of the election of President Barack Obama (see Chapter 13). Some supporters were outside the political

- **Box Note:** As your students address the "Reflect & Analyze" question, ask them to conduct some research on the attempts by the Chinese government to present a more environmentally friendly face to the world during the 2008 Summer Olympics and other more recent international events.

mainstream and felt like they had no voice in what was happening in Washington. Keli Carender, who is credited with being one of the first Tea Party campaigners, complained that she tried to call her senators to urge them to vote against the $787-billion stimulus bill, but constantly found that their mailboxes were full. As a result, she decided to protest against "porkulus"; in her words, "I basically thought to myself: 'I have two courses. I can give up, go home, crawl into bed and be really depressed and let it happen, or I can do something different, and I can find a new avenue to have my voice get out'" (qtd. in Zernike, 2010: A1). By contrast, other active supporters of the Tea Party movement are players in the mainstream political process. An example is Sarah Palin, the former Alaska governor and Republican vice presidential candidate, who is a frequent spokesperson at Tea Party rallies across the United States. In political movements, social activists typically *create* their own opportunities rather than wait for them to emerge, and activists often are political entrepreneurs in their own right, much like the state and federal legislators and other governmental officials whom they seek to influence on behalf of their social cause. Political opportunity theory calls our attention to how important the degree of openness of a political system is to the goals and tactics of social movements' organizers.

New Social Movement Theory

New social movement theory looks at a diverse array of collective actions and the manner in which those actions are based on politics, ideology, and culture. It also incorporates factors of identity, including race, class, gender, and sexuality, as sources of collective action and social movements. Examples of "new social movements" include ecofeminism and environmental justice movements.

Ecofeminism emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s out of the feminist, peace, and ecology movements. Prompted by the near-meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant, ecofeminists established World Women in Defense of the Environment. *Ecofeminism* is based on the belief that patriarchy is a root cause of environmental

▲ Referred to as "Cancer Alley," this area of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is home to a predominantly African American population and also to many refineries that heavily pollute the region. Sociologists suggest that environmental racism is a significant problem in the United States and other nations. What do you think?

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- **For Discussion:** Ask the class this: How can social movements deal simultaneously with quality-of-life and economic issues? What are some successful examples?
- **Historical Perspective:** "Robert Bullard says he was 'drafted' into environmental justice while working as an environmental sociologist in Houston in the late 1970s. His work there on the siting of garbage dumps in black neighborhoods identified

systematic patterns of injustice. . . . [His 1990 book] *Dumping in Dixie* is widely regarded as the first to fully articulate the concept of environmental justice" (Gregory Dicum, *Grist* magazine, 3/2006).
- **Extra Examples:** Relate lessons learned about racism in Chapter 9 to the concept of environmental racism. Ask students how the two practices are interconnected. What about institutional racism?

problems. According to ecofeminists, patriarchy not only results in the domination of women by men but also contributes to a belief that nature is to be possessed and dominated, rather than treated as a partner (see Ortner, 1974; Merchant, 1983, 1992; Mies and Shiva, 1993).

Another "new social movement" focuses on environmental justice and the intersection of race and class in the environmental struggle (see "Sociology Works!"). Sociologist Stella M. Capek (1993) investigated a contaminated landfill in the Carver Terrace neighborhood of Texarkana, Texas, and found that residents were able to mobilize for change and win a federal buyout and relocation by symbolically linking their issue to a larger *environmental justice* framework. Since the 1980s, the emerging environmental justice movement has focused on the issue of *environmental racism*—the belief that a disproportionate number of hazardous facilities (including industries such as waste disposal/treatment and chemical plants) are placed in low-income areas populated primarily by people of color (Bullard and Wright, 1992). These areas have been left out of most of the environmental cleanup that has taken place in the last two decades (Schneider, 1993). Capek concludes that linking Carver Terrace with environmental justice led to it being designated as a cleanup site. She also views this as an important turning point in new social movements: "Carver Terrace is significant not only as a federal buyout and relocation of a minority community, but also as a marker of the emergence of environmental racism as a major new component of environmental social movements in the United States" (Capek, 1993: 21).

Sociologist Steven M. Buechler (2000) has argued that theories pertaining to twenty-first-century social movements should be oriented toward the structural, macrolevel contexts in which movements arise. These theories should incorporate both political and cultural dimensions of social activism:

Social movements are historical products of the age of modernity. They arose as part of a sweeping social, political, and intellectual change that led a significant number of people to view society as a social construction that was susceptible to social reconstruction through concerted collective effort. Thus, from their inception, social movements have had a dual focus. Reflecting the political, they have always involved some form of challenge to prevailing forms of authority. Reflecting the cultural, they have always operated as symbolic laboratories in which reflexive actors pose questions of meaning, purpose, identity, and change. (Buechler, 2000: 211)

This chapter's Concept Quick Review (p. 561) summarizes the main theories of social movements.

As we have seen, social movements may be an important source of social change. Throughout this text, we have examined a variety of social problems that have been the focus of one or more social movements during the past hundred years. In the process of bringing about change, most movements initially develop innovative ways to get their ideas across to decision makers and the public. Some have been successful in achieving their goals; others have not. As the historian Robert A. Goldberg (1991) has suggested, gains made by social movements may be fragile, acceptance brief, and benefits minimal and easily lost. For this reason, many groups focus on preserving their gains while simultaneously fighting for those that they believe they still desire.

Social Change in the Future

In this chapter, we have focused on collective behavior and social movements as potential forces for social change in contemporary societies. A number of other factors also contribute to social change, including the physical environment, population trends, technological development, and social institutions.

The Physical Environment and Change

Changes in the physical environment often produce changes in the lives of people; in turn, people can make dramatic changes in the physical environment, over which we have only limited control. Throughout history, natural disasters have taken their toll on individuals and societies. Major natural disasters—including hurricanes, floods, and

> **environmental racism** the belief that a disproportionate number of hazardous facilities (including industries such as waste disposal/treatment and chemical plants) are placed in low-income areas populated primarily by people of color.

- **Media Coverage:** "The reopening of Angelo Brocato's Italian Ice Cream Parlor, a century-old shop that had been closed since Hurricane Katrina, has brought an outpouring of relief and euphoria. On the shop's first day back in business, for which a band was hired, people drove for miles and stood for three hours in a line that stretched far around the block" (*New York Times,* 10/2006).

- **Media Coverage:** "Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff told lawmakers that when you talk about Katrina that this was a swarm of events of unprecedented magnitude, noting that 90,000 square miles of land was impacted—an area larger than Great Britain—and more than 300,000 homes were destroyed" (Foxnews.com, 2/2006).

sociology works!

Fine-Tuning Theories and Data Gathering on Environmental Racism

Throughout *Sociology in Our Times,* we have examined social theories that help us understand the interplay of factors such as race, class, and gender in the everyday lives of millions of people. In the "Sociology Works!" feature, we have focused on specific theories and how applications of those theories can help us understand the world and sometimes make it a better place in which to live.

In this chapter, we have looked at the work of new social movement theorists who have demonstrated the intersection of environmental justice with race and class: the belief that hazardous-waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities are more likely to be located near low-income, nonwhite neighborhoods than to higher-income, predominantly white neighborhoods. This is an important issue because of the potential health risks that such sites may pose for people who live nearby. However, critics have scoffed at the suggestion that race- or class-based discrimination is involved in decisions about where hazardous-waste-materials facilities are located. Can more accurate data be gathered to help determine the nature and extent to which environmental racism exists?

During the 1980s and 1990s, the most frequently used method employed in national-level studies documenting the location of waste sites and other polluting industrial facilities was referred to as "unit-hazard coincidence" methodology. Based on this approach, researchers selected a predefined geographic unit (such as certain ZIP code areas or census tracts). Then they identified subsets of the units (areas located within a specific ZIP code or census tract) that had, or did not have, the hazard present. The researchers then compared the demographic characteristics of people living within each of the subsets to see if a larger minority population was present near the hazardous facility (see Mohai and Saha, 2007). Unit-hazard coincidence methodology assumes that the people who live within the predefined geographic units included in a study are located closer to the hazard than those individuals who do not live in those geographic units (Mohai and Saha, 2007). The problem with this approach is that the hazardous site is usually not located at the center of the ZIP code or census tract and that the geographic area being examined may be large or small, making it difficult to know for sure the racial and class characteristics of the people who live the closest to the waste facility.

In recent years, sociologists and other social scientists have begun to use other methods such as GIS (a computer system for capturing, storing, checking, integrating, manipulating, analyzing, and displaying data related to positions on the Earth's surface) to more adequately determine the distance between environmentally hazardous sites and nearby populations. By using distance-based methods to control for proximity around environmentally hazardous sites, those researchers have demonstrated that nonwhites, who made up about 25 percent of the nation's population in 1990, constituted over 40 percent of the population living within one mile of hazardous-waste facilities, meaning that racial disparities in the distribution of hazardous sites are much greater than what had been previously reported. According to social scientists Paul Mohai and Robin Saha (2007: 343), "We [find that] these disparities persist even when controlling for economic and sociopolitical variables, suggesting that factors uniquely associated with race, such as racial targeting, housing discrimination, or other race-related factors, are associated with the location of the nation's hazardous waste facilities."

Sociological theories and research pertaining to environmental racism have raised public awareness that the location of hazardous facilities is not purely coincidental in communities throughout our nation. Clearly, proximity to hazardous sites is related to the cost of the land on which the facilities are located, but the issue of proximity based on the racial/ethnic composition of residents raises an even more challenging social and ethical dilemma. But it is also clear that the vast quantity of data available today—and the methods for obtaining that data—make it possible for us to fine-tune previous theories and obtain a better understanding of the social world in which we live.

reflect & analyze

New technology can cause problems for society—for example, nuclear weapons—but it can also improve people's lives. Can you think of another way that current technology could be used to help correct a social problem in your community?

- **Media Coverage:** "A chemical company has averted a national test case over 'environmental racism' by suspending plans to build a plastics plant in a poor, black community. The Congressional Black Caucus had asked the E.P.A. to keep the company out of the neighborhood. But the project enjoyed support from some area residents because of the jobs it would provide. The local chapter of the NAACP also backed the plant" (*New York Times,* 9/2008).
- **Box Note:** Ask your class to either write a brief essay or break into discussion groups and tackle the "Reflect & Analyze" question.

[concept quick review 16.1]

Social Movement Theories

	Key Components
Relative Deprivation	People who are discontent when they compare their achievements with those of others consider themselves relatively deprived and join social movements in order to get what they view as their "fair share," especially when there is an upswing in the economy followed by a decline.
Value-Added	Certain conditions are necessary for a social movement to develop: (1) structural conduciveness, such that people are aware of a problem and have the opportunity to engage in collective action; (2) structural strain, such that society or the community cannot meet people's expectations for taking care of the problem; (3) growth and spread of a generalized belief as to causes and effects of and possible solutions to the problem; (4) precipitating factors, or events that reinforce the beliefs; (5) mobilization of participants for action; and (6) social control factors, such that society comes to allow the movement to take action.
Resource Mobilization	A variety of resources (money, members, access to media, and material goods such as equipment) are necessary for a social movement; people participate only when they feel the movement has access to these resources.
Social Construction Theory: Frame Analysis	Based on the assumption that social movements are an interactive, symbolically defined, and negotiated process involving participants, opponents, and bystanders, frame analysis is used to determine how people assign meaning to activities and processes in social movements.
Political Opportunity	People will choose the options for collective action (i.e., "opportunities") that are most readily available to them and those options that will produce the most favorable outcome for their cause.
New Social Movement	The focus is on sources of social movements, including politics, ideology, and culture. Race, class, gender, sexuality, and other sources of identity are also factors in movements such as ecofeminism and environmental justice.

tornadoes—can devastate an entire population. In September 2005, the United States experienced the worst natural disaster in its history when Hurricane Katrina left a wide path of death and destruction through Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. However, damage from the hurricane itself was just the beginning of how the physical environment abruptly changed, how this disaster altered the lives of millions of people, and how it raised serious questions about our national priorities and the future of the environment. People who did not lose family members or suffer extensive property loss in this disaster may still have experienced trauma that will remain with them in the future. Even comparatively "small" natural disasters change the lives of many people. As the sociologist Kai Erikson (1976, 1994) has suggested, the trauma that people experience from disasters

may outweigh the actual loss of physical property—memories of such events can haunt people for many years.

Some natural disasters are exacerbated by human decisions. For example, floods are viewed as natural disasters, but excessive development may contribute to a flood's severity. As office buildings, shopping malls, industrial plants, residential areas, and highways are developed, less land remains as groundcover to absorb rainfall. When heavier-than-usual rains occur, flooding becomes inevitable; some regions of the United States—such as in and around New Orleans—have remained under water for days or even weeks in recent years. Clearly, humans cannot control the rain, but human decisions can worsen the consequences.

The destruction of large sections of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina and the flooding that followed

- **Media Coverage:** "Ever since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita pummeled the state's coastal regions last year, crab prices have plummeted by 20–30 percent. Many of the high-end restaurants in New Orleans haven't reopened, stifling local demand. But public perception across the country has also affected demand. For several months after the storm, out-of-state buyers believed the entire Gulf Coast had turned into 'toxic soup'" (St.Tammany.com,

10/2006). Have students research how these problems have been further exacerbated by the 2010 Gulf oil spill.
- **Recent Events:** "One noteworthy aspect of President Bush's visit to the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Ike was that most of the folks in need of comfort and reassurance probably had no idea he stopped by. The day Mr. Bush visited, three-fourths of customers

is an example of how human decisions may worsen the consequences of a natural disaster. If Hurricane Katrina's first wave was the storm itself, the second wave was a *man-made disaster* resulting in part from human decisions relating to planning and budgetary priorities, allocation of funds for maintaining infrastructure, and the importance of emergency preparedness. For many years it was widely known that New Orleans had a great risk of taking a direct hit from a major hurricane and that, in a worst-case scenario, the city might be flooded, badly damaged, and portions of the city rendered uninhabitable. However, despite the city's unique topography (some sections are located below sea level) and its vulnerability to harsh storms, these concerns simply were not a top priority in urban planning or allocation of resources. Weak components of the infrastructure also contributed to the city's problems when water pumps and several levees on Lake Pontchartrain failed, allowing millions of gallons of polluted water to pour out onto the city's already-flooded streets, thereby forcing residents to leave their homes. *Infrastructure* refers to a framework of systems, such as transportation and utilities, that makes it possible to have specific land uses (commercial, residential, and recreational, for example) and a built environment (buildings, houses, and highways) that support people's daily activities and the nation's economy. It takes money and commitment to make sure that the components of the infrastructure remain strong so that cities can withstand natural disasters and other catastrophes.

Hurricane Katrina was a massive lesson in sociology, bringing to the public's attention so many of the issues discussed in this text. By way of example, many of the people most affected by Hurricane Katrina were low-income African Americans whose residences were located in the low-lying areas of the city; the homes of many of the wealthier white residents of the city were located on higher ground and were spared the brunt of the flooding. Apparently, no adequate disaster evacuation plans had been developed for individuals without vehicles or sufficient money to leave on their own.

Both the evacuation process before the hurricane and the relief efforts after the hurricane and flooding have been widely criticized because of the length of time it took for political leaders, the military, and officials in other governmental agencies to mobilize and actively begin to rescue victims, care for the ill and dying, and bring order to the city—again, a lesson in sociology. In essence, this natural disaster brought profound changes to the lives of many individuals, and it also revealed how much remains to be done if we are to overcome the deep divisions of race and class that affect everyone's identity, life chances, and opportunities. Finally, this dramatic change in the physical environment (the damage and destruction caused directly or indirectly by the hurricane) of the region revealed to our nation that it potentially lacks preparedness for massive disasters, such as terrorist attacks, hurricanes, and floods.

Because flooding is one of the many problems that face the world today, it may seem strange that one of the major concerns in the twenty-first century is the availability of water. Many experts warn that water is a finite resource that is necessary for both human survival and the production of goods. However, water is being wasted and polluted, and the supply of *potable* (drinkable) water is limited. People contribute to changes in the Earth's physical condition. Through soil erosion and other degradation of grazing land, often at the hands of people, an estimated 24 billion tons of topsoil is lost annually. As people clear forests to create farmland and pastures and to acquire lumber and firewood, the Earth's tree cover continues to diminish. As millions of people drive motor vehicles, the amount of carbon dioxide in the environment continues to rise each year, contributing to global warming.

Just as people contribute to changes in the physical environment, human activities must also be adapted to changes in the environment. For example, we are being warned to stay out of the sunlight because of increases in ultraviolet rays, a cause of skin cancer, as a result of the accelerating depletion of the ozone layer. If the ozone warnings are accurate, the change in the physical environment will dramatically affect those who work or spend their leisure time outside.

Population and Change

Changes in population size, distribution, and composition affect the culture and social structure of a society and change the relationships among nations. As discussed in Chapter 15, the countries

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in the nation's fourth largest city still lacked electricity" (*Dallas Morning News*, 9/2008).
- **Table Note:** Break your class into small groups, and ask them to use this table and brainstorm for specific examples from current events or history that correspond to each theory.

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Active Learning:** Have your students work in small groups to brainstorm and come up with categories of social change that are related to changes in population and technology.

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▲ Natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina can not only produce flooding and devastation in cities such as New Orleans and in less populated areas, but they also may make us acutely aware of vast racial and economic inequalities that persist in the United States and other nations. A significant part of the recovery work in New Orleans was done by volunteers.

experiencing the most rapid increases in population have a less-developed infrastructure to deal with those changes. How will nations of the world deal with population growth as the global population continues to move toward seven billion? Only time will provide a response to this question.

In the United States, a shift in population distribution from central cities to suburban and exurban areas has produced other dramatic changes. Central cities have experienced a shrinking tax base as middle-income and upper-middle-income residents and businesses have moved to suburban

and outlying areas. As a result, schools and public services have declined in many areas, leaving those people with the greatest needs with the fewest public resources and essential services. The changing composition of the U.S. population has resulted in children from more diverse cultural backgrounds entering school, producing a demand for new programs and changes in curricula. An increase in the birth rate has created a need for more child care; an increase in the older population has created a need for services such as medical care, placing greater demands on programs such as Social Security.

As we have seen in previous chapters, population growth and the movement of people to urban areas have brought profound changes to many regions and intensified existing social problems. Among other factors, growth in the global population is one of the most significant driving forces behind environmental concerns, such as the availability and use of natural resources.

Technology and Change

Technology is an important force for change; in some ways, technological development has made our lives much easier. Advances in communication and transportation have made instantaneous world-wide communication possible but have also brought

old belief systems and the status quo into question as never before. Today, we are increasingly moving information instead of people—and doing it almost instantly. Advances in science and medicine have made significant changes in people's lives in high-income countries.

Scientific advances will continue to affect our lives, from the foods we eat to our reproductive capabilities. Genetically engineered plants have been developed and marketed in recent years, and biochemists are creating potatoes, rice, and cassava with the same protein value as meat (Petersen, 1994). Advances in medicine have made it possible for those formerly unable to have children to procreate; women well beyond menopause are now able to become pregnant with the assistance of medical technology. Advances in medicine have also increased the human life span, especially for white and middle- or upper-class individuals in high-income nations; medical advances have also contributed to the declining death rate in low-income nations, where birth rates have not yet been curbed.

Just as technology has brought about improvements in the quality and length of life for many, it has also created the potential for new disasters, ranging from global warfare to localized technological disasters at toxic waste sites. As the sociologist William Ogburn (1966) suggested, when a change in the material culture occurs in society, a period of *cultural lag* follows in which the nonmaterial (ideological) culture has not yet caught up with material development. The rate of technological advance at the level of material culture today is mind-boggling. Many of us can never hope to understand technological advances in the areas of artificial intelligence, holography, virtual reality, biotechnology, cold fusion, and robotics.

One of the ironies of twenty-first-century high technology is the increased vulnerability that results from the

▼ As the very large Baby Boom generation enters retirement age, the health care needs of people in this age bracket will strain the capabilities of federal programs such as Medicare.

© Ted Foxx/Alamy

- **ASA Task Force Recommendation:** #7 Sociological Literacy
- **Historical Perspective:** "Bluetooth went from being an 11th century Danish king with gum disease to the wireless standard loved by all those with hand-held gadgets. Spam left the pantry and enraged millions of e-mail users. Burning suddenly had nothing to do with fires but with recording data on CDs. The developments witnessed so far will, for the large part, be magnified

this year. The effects on business will be largely beneficial, though pressure on IT budgets will intensify and there will be more confusion in some areas of the market" (*Sunday Times,* 1/2005).
- **For Discussion:** Have students discuss the concept of cultural lag and the ways in which it will affect the future. How might the following statement apply to their own communities? "It is the

▲ Would you like to eat a sandwich containing meat from a cloned animal? California State Senator Carole Migden has advocated the passage of legislation that would require clear labeling of such content. According to Migden, cloning has not yet been perfected, and not enough data exist to indicate whether cloned meat could have harmful effects on humans who consume it.

increasing complexity of such systems. As futurist John L. Petersen (1994: 70) notes, "The more complex a system becomes, the more likely the chance of system failure. There are unknown secondary effects and particularly vulnerable nodes." He also asserts that most of the world's population will not participate in the technological revolution that is occurring in high-income nations.

Social Institutions and Change

Many changes occurred in the family, religion, education, the economy, and the political system during the twentieth century and early in the twenty-first century. As discussed in Chapter 11, the size and composition of families in the United States changed with the dramatic increase in the number of single-person and single-parent households. Changes in families produced changes in the socialization of children, many of whom spend large amounts of time in front of a television set or in child-care facilities outside their own homes. Although some political and religious leaders advocate a return to "traditional" family life, numerous scholars argue that such families never worked quite as well as some might wish to believe.

Public education changed dramatically in the United States during the twentieth century. This country was one of the first to provide "universal" education for students regardless of their ability to pay. As a result, at least until recently, the United States has had one of the most highly educated populations in the world. Today, the United States still has one of the best public education systems in the world for the top 15 percent of the students, but it badly fails the bottom 25 percent. As the nature of the economy changes, schools almost inevitably will have to change, if for no other reason than demands from leaders in business and industry for an educated workforce that allows U.S. companies to compete in a global economic environment.

A new concept of world security is emerging, requiring the cooperation of high-income countries in halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and combating terrorism. That concept also requires the cooperation of *all* nations in reducing the plight of the poorest people in the low-income countries of the world.

Although we have examined changes in the physical environment, population, technology, and social institutions separately, they all operate together in a complex relationship, sometimes producing large, unanticipated consequences. As we move further into the twenty-first century, we need new ways of conceptualizing social life at both the macrolevel and the microlevel. The sociological imagination

▲ Pollution of lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water has an adverse effect on food supplies, air quality, and the entire environment. What influence does a "business as usual" approach have on environmental quality in your area?

land of perpetual pubescence, where cultural lag is mistaken for renaissance" (Ashley Montagu, about California).
• **For Discussion:** Ask students to rephrase the following statement in their own words and then evaluate it based on their own experiences in this course and beyond: "Social movements are at once the symptoms and the instruments of progress. Ignore them

and statesmanship is irrelevant; fail to use them and it is weak" (Walter Lippman).
• **PowerLecture:** Among its many multimedia teaching resources, this disc also includes the text's full Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank, both in Microsoft® Word.

you can make a difference

College Students Are Taking the Lead in the "Go-Green" Movement

We feel like we have a social responsibility not to leave the next generation's environment in a worse way than it is.
—Adam Yarnell, a Brown University student, discussing why sustainability is an important issue to many college students (qtd. in Riley, 2009)

There is a huge youth movement, at least in my school, Colorado College. And I have witnessed it across a lot of schools, [the] back to earth movement of organic farming.
—Sophia Maravell, a student whose father owns an organic farm in Maryland, describing how students are becoming involved in green movements, ranging from organic farming to the development of clean energy (qtd. in Palacio, 2009)

These comments are supported by recent studies that show college students are leading the way in the green movement (Palacio, 2009). A National Wildlife Federation study, "Generation E: Students Leading for a Sustainable, Clean Energy Future," looked at 160 college campuses where students are active in the greening of campus operations and concluded that students frequently are at the forefront, encouraging faculty and administrators to organize green gatherings and help their school become a green campus.

Would you like to become involved in making your school a green campus? Here are suggestions from students working toward eco-friendly campuses:

- Recycle everything, especially paper! Look for recycling bins, and if they are not available, encourage officials to have them placed near dorms, classrooms, and cafeterias and food courts.
- Use your printer wisely. Ask professors if printing on both sides of the paper is acceptable for class assignments. Use low-quality print settings for rough drafts, and limit the number of items printed from the Internet if you are unlikely to reuse them.
- Limit the use of disposable cups, plates, and napkins.
- Recycle cans, bottles, plastic bags, newspapers, and other items (recycling helps diminish waste-disposal problems by reducing the amount of waste hauled off to landfills).
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs. Turn off lights, televisions, and computers when you are not using them.
- Walk, bike, and limit the use of your car.
- Buy green products that have been recycled, such as paper goods and cleaning products.
- Use refillable binders instead of notebooks, or use your laptop to take notes.
- Carry a water bottle and refill it at water fountains or drink dispensers.
- Buy used clothing. (based on CollegeUniversity.suite11.com, 2010)

If you are already involved in the green movement and are helping to reduce global warming, keep up the good work! If you would like additional information on the green movement or global warming, many websites are available to help you take the first steps toward making a difference on your campus and in the world where you live. A famous statement by the author Mark Twain is often quoted: "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody ever does anything about it." In the case of environmental issues, if nobody does anything to stop it, we may face dire consequences now, and future generations truly may be imperiled.

helps us think about how personal troubles—regardless of our race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, or physical abilities and disabilities—are intertwined with the public issues of our society and the global community of which we are a part. As one analyst noted regarding Lois Gibbs and Love Canal,

If Love Canal has taught Lois Gibbs—and the rest of us—anything, it is that ordinary people become very smart very quickly when their lives are threatened.

They become adept at detecting absurdity, even when it is concealed in bureaucratese and scientific jargon. Lois Gibbs learned that one cannot always rely on government to act in the best interests of ordinary citizens—at least, not without considerable prodding. She determined that she would prod them until her objectives were attained. She led one of the most successful, single-purpose grass roots efforts of our time. (M. Levine, 1982: xv)

- **Active Learning:** Divide your class up into smaller discussion groups. Ask each group to come up with a list of some of the most important lessons learned in this course. Each group should then rank these lessons. Use these lists to talk with your class about the goals of sociology and to reiterate the learning objectives of your own course.

Taking care of the environment is an example of something that government and each of us as individuals can do to help (see the You Can Make a Difference box). And it is vitally important that we all do everything that we can in order to protect the environment.

A Few Final Thoughts

In this text, we have covered a substantial amount of material, examined different perspectives on a wide variety of social issues, and suggested different methods by which to deal with them. The purpose of this text is not to encourage you to take any particular point of view; rather, it is to allow you to understand different viewpoints and ways in which they may be helpful to you and to society in dealing with the issues of the twenty-first century. Possessing that understanding, we can hope that the future will be something we can all look forward to—producing a better way of life, not only in this country but worldwide as well.

chapter review

● **What is the relationship between social change and collective behavior?**

Social change—the alteration, modification, or transformation of public policy, culture, or social institutions over time—is usually brought about by collective behavior, which is defined as relatively spontaneous, unstructured activity that typically violates established social norms.

● **When is collective behavior likely to occur?**

Collective behavior occurs when some common influence or stimulus produces a response from a relatively large number of people.

● **What is a crowd?**

A crowd is a relatively large number of people in one another's immediate presence. Sociologist Herbert Blumer divided crowds into four categories: (1) casual crowds, (2) conventional crowds, (3) expressive crowds, and (4) acting crowds (including mobs, riots, and panics). A fifth type of crowd is a protest crowd.

● **What causes crowd behavior?**

Social scientists have developed several theories to explain crowd behavior. Contagion theory asserts that a crowd takes on a life of its own as people are transformed from rational beings into part of an organism that acts on its own. A variation on this is social unrest and circular reaction—people express their discontent to others, who communicate back similar feelings, resulting in a conscious effort to engage in the crowd's behavior. Convergence theory asserts that people with similar attributes find other like-minded persons with whom they can release underlying personal tendencies. Emergent norm theory asserts that as a crowd develops, it comes up with its own norms that replace more conventional norms of behavior.

● **What are the primary forms of mass behavior?**

Mass behavior is collective behavior that occurs when people respond to the same event in the same way even if they are not in geographic proximity to one another. Rumors, gossip, mass hysteria, fads and fashions, and public opinion are forms of mass behavior.

● **What are the major types of social movements, and what are their goals?**

A social movement is an organized group that acts consciously to promote or resist change through collective action. Reform, revolutionary, religious, and alternative movements are the major types identified by sociologists. Reform movements seek to improve society by changing some specific aspect of the social structure. Revolutionary movements seek to bring about a total change in society—sometimes by the use of terrorism. Religious movements seek to produce radical change in individuals based on spiritual or supernatural belief systems. Alternative movements seek limited change of some aspect

of people's behavior. Resistance movements seek to prevent change or to undo change that has already occurred.

● How do social movements develop?

Social movements typically go through three stages: (1) a preliminary stage (unrest results from a perceived problem), (2) coalescence (people begin to organize), and (3) institutionalization (an organization is developed, and paid staff replaces volunteers in leadership positions).

● How do relative deprivation theory, value-added theory, and resource mobilization theory explain social movements?

Relative deprivation theory asserts that if people are discontented when they compare their accomplishments with those of others similarly situated, they are more likely to join a social movement than are people who are relatively content with their status. According to value-added theory, six conditions are required for a social movement: (1) a perceived problem, (2) a perception that the authorities are not resolving the problem, (3) a spread of the belief to an adequate number of people, (4) a precipitating incident, (5) mobilization of other people by leaders, and (6) a lack of social control. By contrast, resource mobilization theory asserts that successful social movements can occur only when they gain the support of political and economic elites, who provide access to the resources necessary to maintain the movement.

● What is the primary focus on research based on frame analysis, political opportunity theory, and new social movement theory?

Research based on frame analysis often highlights the social construction of grievances through the process of social interaction. Various types of framing occur as problems are identified, remedies are sought, and people feel compelled to take action. Political opportunity theory focuses on how social protests are directly related to the political opportunities that potential protesters and movement organizers believe exist within the political system at any given point in time. Research based on new social movement theory has examined factors of identity, such as race, class, gender and sexuality, as sources of collective action and social movements (for example, environmental racism).

key terms

civil disobedience 545	**mass** 543	**public opinion** 550
collective behavior 540	**mass behavior** 548	**riot** 545
crowd 543	**mob** 545	**rumor** 548
environmental racism 561	**panic** 545	**social change** 540
gossip 549	**propaganda** 551	**social movement** 551

questions for critical thinking

1. What types of collective behavior in the United States do you believe are influenced by inequalities based on race/ethnicity, class, gender, age, or disabilities? Why?
2. Which of the four explanations of crowd behavior (contagion theory, social unrest and circular reaction, convergence theory, and emergent norm theory) do you believe best explains crowd behavior? Why?
3. In the text, the Love Canal environmental movement is analyzed in terms of the value-added theory. How would you analyze that movement under (a) the relative deprivation theory and (b) the resource mobilization theory?
4. Using the sociological imagination that you have gained in this course, what are some positive steps that you believe might be taken in the United States to make our society a better place for everyone? What types of collective behavior and/or social movements might be required in order to take those steps?

turning to video

Watch the CBS video *Powered by Coal* (running time 11:12), available through **CengageBrain.com**. This video investigates the United States' significant dependency on coal and other fossil fuels and the enormous task of regulating and cleaning up carbon emissions. As you watch the video, think about not only carbon emissions from processed and burned fossil fuels but humans' efforts such as off-shore drilling to maintain current supplies of these fuels. After you watch the video, answer these questions: Should the development and use of alternative forms of energy such as solar and wind be a back-up plan for the United States–or the main plan? Which, and why?

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glossary

absolute poverty   a level of economic deprivation that exists when people do not have the means to secure the most basic necessities of life.

achieved status   a social position that a person assumes voluntarily as a result of personal choice, merit, or direct effort.

acute diseases   illnesses that strike suddenly and cause dramatic incapacitation and sometimes death.

ageism   prejudice and discrimination against people on the basis of age, particularly against older people.

agents of socialization   the persons, groups, or institutions that teach us what we need to know in order to participate in society.

aggregate   a collection of people who happen to be in the same place at the same time but share little else in common.

alienation   a feeling of powerlessness and estrangement from other people and from oneself.

animism   the belief that plants, animals, or other elements of the natural world are endowed with spirits or life forces having an effect on events in society.

anomie   Emile Durkheim's designation for a condition in which social control becomes ineffective as a result of the loss of shared values and of a sense of purpose in society.

anticipatory socialization   the process by which knowledge and skills are learned for future roles.

ascribed status   a social position conferred at birth or received involuntarily later in life based on attributes over which the individual has little or no control, such as race/ethnicity, age, and gender.

assimilation   a process by which members of subordinate racial and ethnic groups become absorbed into the dominant culture.

authoritarian leaders   people who make all major group decisions and assign tasks to members.

authoritarian personality   a personality type characterized by excessive conformity, submissiveness to authority, intolerance, insecurity, a high level of superstition, and rigid, stereotypic thinking.

authoritarianism   a political system controlled by rulers who deny popular participation in government.

authority   power that people accept as legitimate rather than coercive.

beliefs   the mental acceptance or conviction that certain things are true or real.

bilateral descent   a system of tracing descent through both the mother's and father's sides of the family.

blended families   families consisting of a husband and wife, children from previous marriages, and children (if any) from the new marriage.

body consciousness   a term that describes how a person perceives and feels about his or her body.

bureaucracy   an organizational model characterized by a hierarchy of authority, a clear division of labor, explicit rules and procedures, and impersonality in personnel matters.

bureaucratic personality   a psychological construct that describes those workers who are more concerned with following correct procedures than they are with getting the job done correctly.

capitalism   an economic system characterized by private ownership of the means of production, from which personal profits can be derived through market competition and without government intervention.

capitalist class (or **bourgeoisie**)   Karl Marx's term for the class that consists of those who own and control the means of production.

caste system   a system of social inequality in which people's status is permanently determined at birth based on their parents' ascribed characteristics.

category   a number of people who may never have met one another but share a similar characteristic, such as education level, age, race, or gender.

charismatic authority   power legitimized on the basis of a leader's exceptional personal qualities or the demonstration of extraordinary insight and accomplishment that inspire loyalty and obedience from followers.

chronic diseases   illnesses that are long term or lifelong and that develop gradually or are present from birth.

church   a large, bureaucratically organized religious organization that tends to seek accommodation with the larger society in order to maintain some degree of control over it.

civil disobedience   nonviolent action that seeks to change a policy or law by refusing to comply with it.

civil religion   the set of beliefs, rituals, and symbols that makes sacred the values of the society and places the nation in the context of the ultimate system of meaning.

class conflict   Karl Marx's term for the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class.

class system   a type of stratification based on the ownership and control of resources and on the type of work that people do.

cohabitation   a situation in which two people live together, and think of themselves as a couple, without being legally married.

collective behavior   voluntary, often spontaneous activity that is engaged in by a large number of people and typically violates dominant-group norms and values.

comparable worth (or **pay equity**)   the belief that wages ought to reflect the worth of a job, not the gender or race of the worker.

conflict perspectives   the sociological approach that views groups in society as engaged in a continuous power struggle for control of scarce resources.

conformity   the process of maintaining or changing behavior to comply with the norms established by a society, subculture, or other group.

conglomerate   a combination of businesses in different commercial areas, all of which are owned by one holding company.

content analysis   the systematic examination of cultural artifacts or various forms of communication to extract thematic data and draw conclusions about social life.

contingent work   part-time work, temporary work, or subcontracted work that offers advantages to employers but that can be detrimental to the welfare of workers.

control group   in an experiment, the group that contains the subjects who are not exposed to the independent variable.

core nations   according to world systems theory, dominant capitalist centers characterized by high levels of industrialization and urbanization.

corporate crime   illegal acts committed by corporate employees on behalf of the corporation and with its support.

corporations   large-scale organizations that have legal powers, such as the ability to enter into contracts and buy and sell property, separate from their individual owners.

correlation   a relationship that exists when two variables are associated more frequently than could be expected by chance.

counterculture   a group that strongly rejects dominant societal values and norms and seeks alternative lifestyles.

credentialism   a process of social selection in which class advantage and social status are linked to the possession of academic qualifications.

crime   behavior that violates criminal law and is punishable with fines, jail terms, and other sanctions.

criminal justice system   the more than 55,000 local, state, and federal agencies that enforce laws, adjudicate crimes, and treat and rehabilitate criminals.

criminology   the systematic study of crime and the criminal justice system, including the police, courts, and prisons.

crowd   a relatively large number of people who are in one another's immediate vicinity.

crude birth rate   the number of live births per 1,000 people in a population in a given year.

crude death rate   the number of deaths per 1,000 people in a population in a given year.

cult   a religious group with practices and teachings outside the dominant

cultural and religious traditions of a society.

cultural capital Pierre Bourdieu's term for people's social assets, including values, beliefs, attitudes, and competencies in language and culture.

cultural imperialism the extensive infusion of one nation's culture into other nations.

cultural lag William Ogburn's term for a gap between the technical development of a society (material culture) and its moral and legal institutions (nonmaterial culture).

cultural relativism the belief that the behaviors and customs of any culture must be viewed and analyzed by the culture's own standards.

cultural universals customs and practices that occur across all societies.

culture the knowledge, language, values, customs, and material objects that are passed from person to person and from one generation to the next in a human group or society.

culture shock the disorientation that people feel when they encounter cultures radically different from their own and believe they cannot depend on their own taken-for-granted assumptions about life.

deinstitutionalization the practice of rapidly discharging patients from mental hospitals into the community.

demedicalization the process whereby a problem ceases to be defined as an illness or a disorder.

democracy a political system in which the people hold the ruling power either directly or through elected representatives.

democratic leaders leaders who encourage group discussion and decision making through consensus building.

democratic socialism an economic and political system that combines private ownership of some of the means of production, governmental distribution of some essential goods and services, and free elections.

demographic transition the process by which some societies have moved from high birth rates and death rates to relatively low birth rates and death rates as a result of technological development.

demography a subfield of sociology that examines population size, composition, and distribution.

denomination a large, organized religion characterized by accommodation to society but

frequently lacking in ability or intention to dominate society.

dependency theory the belief that global poverty can at least partially be attributed to the fact that the low-income countries have been exploited by the high-income countries.

dependent variable in an experiment, the variable assumed to be caused by the independent variable(s).

deviance any behavior, belief, or condition that violates significant social norms in the society or group in which it occurs.

differential association theory the proposition that individuals have a greater tendency to deviate from societal norms when they frequently associate with persons who are more favorable toward deviance than conformity.

disability a physical or health condition that stigmatizes or causes discrimination.

discrimination actions or practices of dominant-group members (or their representatives) that have a harmful effect on members of a subordinate group.

division of labor how the various tasks of a society are divided up and performed.

domestic partnerships household partnerships in which an unmarried couple lives together in a committed, sexually intimate relationship and is granted the same rights and benefits as those accorded to married heterosexual couples.

dominant group a group that is advantaged and has superior resources and rights in a society.

dramaturgical analysis the study of social interaction that compares everyday life to a theatrical presentation.

drug any substance—other than food and water—that, when taken into the body, alters its functioning in some way.

dual-earner marriages marriages in which both spouses are in the labor force.

dyad a group composed of two members.

ecclesia a religious organization that is so integrated into the dominant culture that it claims as its membership all members of a society.

economy the social institution that ensures the maintenance of society through the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

education the social institution responsible for the systematic

transmission of knowledge, skills, and cultural values within a formally organized structure.

egalitarian family a family structure in which both partners share power and authority equally.

ego according to Sigmund Freud, the rational, reality-oriented component of personality that imposes restrictions on the innate pleasure-seeking drives of the id.

elite model a view of society that sees power in political systems as being concentrated in the hands of a small group of elites whereas the masses are relatively powerless.

endogamy cultural norms prescribing that people marry within their social group or category.

environmental racism the belief that a disproportionate number of hazardous facilities (including industries such as waste disposal/treatment and chemical plants) are placed in low-income areas populated primarily by people of color.

ethnic group a collection of people distinguished, by others or by themselves, primarily on the basis of cultural or nationality characteristics.

ethnic pluralism the coexistence of a variety of distinct racial and ethnic groups within one society.

ethnocentrism the practice of judging all other cultures by one's own culture.

ethnography a detailed study of the life and activities of a group of people by researchers who may live with that group over a period of years.

ethnomethodology the study of the commonsense knowledge that people use to understand the situations in which they find themselves.

exogamy cultural norms prescribing that people marry outside their social group or category.

experiment a research method involving a carefully designed situation in which the researcher studies the impact of certain variables on subjects' attitudes or behavior.

experimental group in an experiment, the group that contains the subjects who are exposed to an independent variable (the experimental condition) to study its effect on them.

expressive leadership an approach to leadership that provides emotional support for members.

extended family a family unit composed of relatives in addition to parents and children who live in the same household.

face-saving behavior Erving Goffman's term for the strategies we use to rescue our performance when we experience a potential or actual loss of face.

families relationships in which people live together with commitment, form an economic unit and care for any young, and consider their identity to be significantly attached to the group.

family of orientation the family into which a person is born and in which early socialization usually takes place.

family of procreation the family that a person forms by having or adopting children.

feminism the belief that all people—both women and men—are equal and that they should be valued equally and have equal rights.

feminization of poverty the trend in which women are disproportionately represented among individuals living in poverty.

fertility the actual level of childbearing for an individual or a population.

folkways informal norms or everyday customs that may be violated without serious consequences within a particular culture.

formal organization a highly structured group formed for the purpose of completing certain tasks or achieving specific goals.

functionalist perspectives the sociological approach that views society as a stable, orderly system.

Gemeinschaft (guh-MINE-shoft) a traditional society in which social relationships are based on personal bonds of friendship and kinship and on intergenerational stability.

gender the culturally and socially constructed differences between females and males found in the meanings, beliefs, and practices associated with "femininity" and "masculinity."

gender bias behavior that shows favoritism toward one gender over the other.

gender identity a person's perception of the self as female or male.

gender role the attitudes, behavior, and activities that are socially defined as appropriate for each sex and are learned through the socialization process.

gender socialization the aspect of socialization that contains specific messages and practices concerning the nature of being female or male in a specific group or society.

gendered racism   the interactive effect of racism and sexism on the exploitation of women of color.

generalized other   George Herbert Mead's term for the child's awareness of the demands and expectations of the society as a whole or of the child's subculture.

genocide   the deliberate, systematic killing of an entire people or nation.

gentrification   the process by which members of the middle and upper-middle classes, especially whites, move into a central-city area and renovate existing properties.

Gesellschaft   (guh-ZELL-shoft) a large, urban society in which social bonds are based on impersonal and specialized relationships, with little long-term commitment to the group or consensus on values.

global stratification   the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and prestige on a global basis, resulting in people having vastly different lifestyles and life chances both within and among the nations of the world.

goal displacement   a process that occurs in organizations when the rules become an end in themselves rather than a means to an end, and organizational survival becomes more important than achievement of goals.

gossip   rumors about the personal lives of individuals.

government   the formal organization that has the legal and political authority to regulate the relationships among members of a society and between the society and those outside its borders.

groupthink   the process by which members of a cohesive group arrive at a decision that many individual members privately believe is unwise.

health   a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.

health care   any activity intended to improve health.

health maintenance organization (HMO)   a company that provides, for a set monthly fee, total care with an emphasis on prevention to avoid costly treatment later.

hermaphrodite   a person in whom sexual differentiation is ambiguous or incomplete.

hidden curriculum   the transmission of cultural values and attitudes, such as conformity and obedience to authority, through implied demands found in rules, routines, and regulations of schools.

high culture   classical music, opera, ballet, live theater, and other activities usually patronized by elite audiences.

high-income countries (sometimes referred to as **industrial countries)**   nations with highly industrialized economies; technologically advanced industrial, administrative, and service occupations; and relatively high levels of national and personal income.

holistic medicine   an approach to health care that focuses on prevention of illness and disease and is aimed at treating the whole person—body and mind—rather than just the part or parts in which symptoms occur.

homogamy   the pattern of individuals marrying those who have similar characteristics, such as race/ethnicity, religious background, age, education, or social class.

homophobia   extreme prejudice directed at gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and others who are perceived as not being heterosexual.

hypothesis   a statement of the expected relationship between two or more variables.

id   Sigmund Freud's term for the component of personality that includes all of the individual's basic biological drives and needs that demand immediate gratification.

ideal type   an abstract model that describes the recurring characteristics of some phenomenon (such as bureaucracy).

illegitimate opportunity structures   circumstances that provide an opportunity for people to acquire through illegitimate activities what they cannot achieve through legitimate channels.

impression management (presentation of self)   Erving Goffman's term for people's efforts to present themselves to others in ways that are most favorable to their own interests or image.

income   the economic gain derived from wages, salaries, income transfers (governmental aid), and ownership of property.

independent variable   in an experiment, the variable assumed to be the cause of the relationship between variables.

individual discrimination   behavior consisting of one-on-one acts by members of the dominant group that harm members of the subordinate group or their property.

industrial society   a society based on technology that mechanizes production.

industrialization   the process by which societies are transformed from dependence on agriculture and handmade products to an emphasis on manufacturing and related industries.

infant mortality rate   the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births in a given year.

informal side of a bureaucracy   those aspects of participants' day-to-day activities and interactions that ignore, bypass, or do not correspond with the official rules and procedures of the bureaucracy.

ingroup   a group to which a person belongs and with which the person feels a sense of identity.

institutional discrimination   the day-to-day practices of organizations and institutions that have a harmful impact on members of subordinate groups.

instrumental leadership   goal- or task-oriented leadership.

intergenerational mobility   the social movement (upward or downward) experienced by family members from one generation to the next.

interlocking corporate directorates   members of the board of directors of one corporation who also sit on the board(s) of other corporations.

internal colonialism   according to conflict theorists, a practice that occurs when members of a racial or ethnic group are conquered or colonized and forcibly placed under the economic and political control of the dominant group.

interview   a research method using a data-collection encounter in which an interviewer asks the respondent questions and records the answers.

intragenerational mobility   the social movement (upward or downward) of individuals within their own lifetime.

invasion   the process by which a new category of people or type of land use arrives in an area previously occupied by another group or land use.

iron law of oligarchy   according to Robert Michels, the tendency of bureaucracies to be ruled by a few people.

job deskilling   a reduction in the proficiency needed to perform a specific job that leads to a corresponding reduction in the wages for that job.

juvenile delinquency   a violation of law or the commission of a status offense by young people.

kinship   a social network of people based on common ancestry, marriage, or adoption.

labeling theory   the proposition that deviants are those people who have been successfully labeled as such by others.

laissez-faire leaders   leaders who are only minimally involved in decision making and who encourage group members to make their own decisions.

language   a set of symbols that expresses ideas and enables people to think and communicate with one another.

latent functions   unintended functions that are hidden and remain unacknowledged by participants.

laws   formal, standardized norms that have been enacted by legislatures and are enforced by formal sanctions.

life chances   Max Weber's term for the extent to which individuals have access to important societal resources such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care.

life expectancy   an estimate of the average lifetime of people born in a specific year.

looking-glass self   Charles Horton Cooley's term for the way in which a person's sense of self is derived from the perceptions of others.

low-income countries (sometimes referred to as **underdeveloped countries)**   nations with little industrialization and low levels of national and personal income.

macrolevel analysis   an approach that examines whole societies, large-scale social structures, and social systems.

managed care   any system of cost containment that closely monitors and controls health care providers' decisions about medical procedures, diagnostic tests, and other services that should be provided to patients.

manifest functions   functions that are intended and/or overtly recognized by the participants in a social unit.

marginal jobs   jobs that differ from the employment norms of the society in which they are located.

marriage   a legally recognized and/or socially approved arrangement between two or more individuals that carries certain rights and obligations and usually involves sexual activity.

mass   a number of people who share an interest in a specific idea or issue but who are not in one another's immediate vicinity.

mass behavior   collective behavior that takes place when people (who often are geographically separated from one another) respond to the same event in much the same way.

mass media   large-scale organizations that use print or electronic means (such as radio, television, film, and the Internet) to communicate with large numbers of people.

master status   the most important status that a person occupies.

material culture   a component of culture that consists of the physical or tangible creations (such as clothing, shelter, and art) that members of a society make, use, and share.

matriarchal family   a family structure in which authority is held by the eldest female (usually the mother).

matriarchy   a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political, and economic structures are controlled by women.

matrilineal descent   a system of tracing descent through the mother's side of the family.

matrilocal residence   the custom of a married couple living in the same household (or community) as the wife's parents.

mechanical solidarity   Emile Durkheim's term for the social cohesion in preindustrial societies, in which there is minimal division of labor and people feel united by shared values and common social bonds.

medical–industrial complex   local physicians, local hospitals, and global health-related industries such as insurance companies and pharmaceutical and medical supply companies that deliver health care today.

medicalization   the process whereby nonmedical problems become defined and treated as illnesses or disorders.

medicine   an institutionalized system for the scientific diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of illness.

meritocracy   a hierarchy in which all positions are rewarded based on people's ability and credentials.

microlevel analysis   sociological theory and research that focus on small groups rather than on large-scale social structures.

middle-income countries (sometimes referred to as **developing countries)**   nations with industrializing economies, particularly in urban areas, and moderate levels of national and personal income.

migration   the movement of people from one geographic area to another for the purpose of changing residency.

military–industrial complex   the mutual interdependence of the military establishment and private military contractors.

mixed economy   an economic system that combines elements of a market economy (capitalism) with elements of a command economy (socialism).

mob   a highly emotional crowd whose members engage in, or are ready to engage in, violence against a specific target—a person, a category of people, or physical property.

modernization theory   a perspective that links global inequality to different levels of economic development and suggests that low-income economies can move to middle- and high-income economies by achieving self-sustained economic growth.

monarchy   a political system in which power resides in one person or family and is passed from generation to generation through lines of inheritance.

monogamy   a marriage between two partners, usually a woman and a man.

mores   strongly held norms with moral and ethical connotations that may not be violated without serious consequences in a particular culture.

mortality   the incidence of death in a population.

neolocal residence   the custom of a married couple living in their own residence apart from both the husband's and the wife's parents.

nonmaterial culture   a component of culture that consists of the abstract or intangible human creations of society (such as attitudes, beliefs, and values) that influence people's behavior.

nonverbal communication   the transfer of information between persons without the use of speech.

norms   established rules of behavior or standards of conduct.

nuclear family   a family composed of one or two parents and their dependent children, all of whom live apart from other relatives.

occupational (white-collar) crime   illegal activities committed by people in the course of their employment or financial affairs.

occupations   categories of jobs that involve similar activities at different work sites.

official poverty line   the federal income standard that is based on what

is considered to be the minimum amount of money required for living at a subsistence level.

oligopoly   a condition existing when several companies overwhelmingly control an entire industry.

organic solidarity   Emile Durkheim's term for the social cohesion found in industrial societies, in which people perform very specialized tasks and feel united by their mutual dependence.

organized crime   a business operation that supplies illegal goods and services for profit.

outgroup   a group to which a person does not belong and toward which the person may feel a sense of competitiveness or hostility.

panic   a form of crowd behavior that occurs when a large number of people react to a real or perceived threat with strong emotions and self-destructive behavior.

participant observation   a research method in which researchers collect data while being part of the activities of the group being studied.

patriarchal family   a family structure in which authority is held by the eldest male (usually the father).

patriarchy   a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political, and economic structures are controlled by men.

patrilineal descent   a system of tracing descent through the father's side of the family.

patrilocal residence   the custom of a married couple living in the same household (or community) as the husband's family.

pay gap   a term used to describe the disparity between women's and men's earnings.

peer group   a group of people who are linked by common interests, equal social position, and (usually) similar age.

peripheral nations   according to world systems theory, nations that are dependent on core nations for capital, have little or no industrialization (other than what may be brought in by core nations), and have uneven patterns of urbanization.

personal space   the immediate area surrounding a person that the person claims as private.

pink-collar occupations   relatively low-paying, nonmanual, semiskilled positions primarily held by women,

such as day-care workers, checkout clerks, cashiers, and waitpersons.

pluralist model   an analysis of political systems that views power as widely dispersed throughout many competing interest groups.

political action committees   organizations of special interest groups that solicit contributions from donors and fund campaigns to help elect (or defeat) candidates based on their stances on specific issues.

political crime   illegal or unethical acts involving the usurpation of power by government officials, or illegal/unethical acts perpetrated against the government by outsiders seeking to make a political statement, undermine the government, or overthrow it.

political party   an organization whose purpose is to gain and hold legitimate control of government.

political socialization   the process by which people learn political attitudes, values, and behavior.

politics   the social institution through which power is acquired and exercised by some people and groups.

polyandry   the concurrent marriage of one woman with two or more men.

polygamy   the concurrent marriage of a person of one sex with two or more members of the opposite sex.

polygyny   the concurrent marriage of one man with two or more women.

popular culture   the component of culture that consists of activities, products, and services that are assumed to appeal primarily to members of the middle and working classes.

population composition   the biological and social characteristics of a population, including age, sex, race, marital status, education, occupation, income, and size of household.

population pyramid   a graphic representation of the distribution of a population by sex and age.

positivism   a term describing Auguste Comte's belief that the world can best be understood through scientific inquiry.

postindustrial society   a society in which technology supports a service- and information-based economy.

postmodern perspectives   the sociological approach that attempts to explain social life in modern societies that are characterized by postindustrialization, consumerism, and global communications.

power   according to Max Weber, the ability of people or groups to achieve

their goals despite opposition from others.

prejudice a negative attitude based on faulty generalizations about members of selected racial and ethnic groups.

prestige the respect or regard with which a person or status position is regarded by others.

primary deviance the initial act of rule-breaking.

primary group Charles Horton Cooley's term for a small, less specialized group in which members engage in face-to-face, emotion-based interactions over an extended period of time.

primary labor market the sector of the labor market that consists of high-paying jobs with good benefits that have some degree of security and the possibility of future advancement.

primary sector production the sector of the economy that extracts raw materials and natural resources from the environment.

primary sex characteristics the genitalia used in the reproductive process.

profane the everyday, secular, or "worldly" aspects of life.

professions high-status, knowledge-based occupations.

propaganda information provided by individuals or groups that have a vested interest in furthering their own cause or damaging an opposing one.

property crimes burglary (breaking into private property to commit a serious crime), motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft (theft of property worth $50 or more), and arson.

public opinion the attitudes and beliefs communicated by ordinary citizens to decision makers.

punishment any action designed to deprive a person of things of value (including liberty) because of some offense the person is thought to have committed.

qualitative research sociological research methods that use interpretive description (words) rather than statistics (numbers) to analyze underlying meanings and patterns of social relationships.

quantitative research sociological research methods that are based on the goal of scientific objectivity and that focus on data that can be measured numerically.

race a category of people who have been singled out as inferior or superior, often on the basis of physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape.

racial socialization the aspect of socialization that contains specific messages and practices concerning the nature of one's racial or ethnic status.

racism a set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices that is used to justify the superior treatment of one racial or ethnic group and the inferior treatment of another racial or ethnic group.

rationality the process by which traditional methods of social organization, characterized by informality and spontaneity, are gradually replaced by efficiently administered formal rules and procedures.

rational–legal authority power legitimized by law or written rules and regulations.

reference group a group that strongly influences a person's behavior and social attitudes, regardless of whether that individual is an actual member.

relative poverty a condition that exists when people may be able to afford basic necessities but are still unable to maintain an average standard of living.

reliability in sociological research, the extent to which a study or research instrument yields consistent results when applied to different individuals at one time or to the same individuals over time.

religion a system of beliefs, symbols, and rituals, based on some sacred or supernatural realm, that guides human behavior, gives meaning to life, and unites believers into a community.

representative democracy a form of democracy whereby citizens elect representatives to serve as bridges between themselves and the government.

research methods specific strategies or techniques for systematically conducting research.

resocialization the process of learning a new and different set of attitudes, values, and behaviors from those in one's background and experience.

riot violent crowd behavior that is fueled by deep-seated emotions but is not directed at one specific target.

role a set of behavioral expectations associated with a given status.

role conflict a situation in which incompatible role demands are placed on a person by two or more statuses held at the same time.

role exit a situation in which people disengage from social roles that have been central to their self-identity.

role expectation a group's or society's definition of the way that a specific role *ought* to be played.

role performance how a person *actually* plays a role.

role strain a condition that occurs when incompatible demands are built into a single status that a person occupies.

role-taking the process by which a person mentally assumes the role of another person in order to understand the world from that person's point of view.

routinization of charisma the process by which charismatic authority is succeeded by a bureaucracy controlled by a rationally established authority or by a combination of traditional and bureaucratic authority.

rumor an unsubstantiated report on an issue or subject.

sacred those aspects of life that are extraordinary or supernatural.

sanctions rewards for appropriate behavior or penalties for inappropriate behavior.

Sapir–Whorf hypothesis the proposition that language shapes the view of reality of its speakers.

scapegoat a person or group that is incapable of offering resistance to the hostility or aggression of others.

second shift Arlie Hochschild's term for the domestic work that employed women perform at home after they complete their workday on the job.

secondary analysis a research method in which researchers use existing material and analyze data that were originally collected by others.

secondary deviance the process that occurs when a person who has been labeled a deviant accepts that new identity and continues the deviant behavior.

secondary group a larger, more specialized group in which members engage in more-impersonal, goal-oriented relationships for a limited period of time.

secondary labor market the sector of the labor market that consists of low-paying jobs with few benefits and very little job security or possibility for future advancement.

secondary sector production the sector of the economy that processes raw materials (from the primary sector) into finished goods.

secondary sex characteristics the physical traits (other than reproductive organs) that identify an individual's sex.

sect a relatively small religious group that has broken away from another religious organization to renew what it views as the original version of the faith.

secularization the process by which religious beliefs, practices, and institutions lose their significance in sectors of society and culture.

segregation the spatial and social separation of categories of people by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and/or religion.

self-concept the totality of our beliefs and feelings about ourselves.

self-fulfilling prophecy the situation in which a false belief or prediction produces behavior that makes the originally false belief come true.

semiperipheral nations according to world systems theory, nations that are more developed than peripheral nations but less developed than core nations.

sex the biological and anatomical differences between females and males.

sex ratio a term used by demographers to denote the number of males for every hundred females in a given population.

sexism the subordination of one sex, usually female, based on the assumed superiority of the other sex.

sexual orientation a person's preference for emotional–sexual relationships with members of the opposite sex (heterosexuality), the same sex (homosexuality), or both (bisexuality).

shared monopoly a condition that exists when four or fewer companies supply 50 percent or more of a particular market.

sick role the set of patterned expectations that defines the norms and values appropriate for individuals who are sick and for those who interact with them.

significant others those persons whose care, affection, and approval are especially desired and who are most important in the development of the self.

slavery an extreme form of stratification in which some people are owned by others.

small group a collectivity small enough for all members to be acquainted with one another and to interact simultaneously.

social bond theory the proposition that the probability of deviant

behavior increases when a person's ties to society are weakened or broken.

social change the alteration, modification, or transformation of public policy, culture, or social institutions over time.

social construction of reality the process by which our perception of reality is shaped largely by the subjective meaning that we give to an experience.

social control systematic practices developed by social groups to encourage conformity to norms, rules, and laws and to discourage deviance.

social Darwinism Herbert Spencer's belief that those species of animals, including human beings, best adapted to their environment survive and prosper, whereas those poorly adapted die out.

social devaluation a situation in which a person or group is considered to have less social value than other individuals or groups.

social epidemiology the study of the causes and distribution of health, disease, and impairment throughout a population.

social facts Emile Durkheim's term for patterned ways of acting, thinking, and feeling that exist *outside* any one individual but that exert social control over each person.

social group a group that consists of two or more people who interact frequently and share a common identity and a feeling of interdependence.

social institution a set of organized beliefs and rules that establishes how a society will attempt to meet its basic social needs.

social interaction the process by which people act toward or respond to other people; the foundation for all relationships and groups in society.

social mobility the movement of individuals or groups from one level in a stratification system to another.

social movement an organized group that acts consciously to promote or resist change through collective action.

social stratification the hierarchical arrangement of large social groups based on their control over basic resources.

social structure the stable pattern of social relationships that exists within a particular group or society.

socialism an economic system characterized by public ownership of the means of production, the pursuit of collective goals, and centralized decision making.

socialization the lifelong process of social interaction through which individuals acquire a self-identity and the physical, mental, and social skills needed for survival in society.

socialized medicine a health care system in which the government owns the medical care facilities and employs the physicians.

society a large social grouping that shares the same geographical territory and is subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations.

sociobiology the systematic study of how biology affects social behavior.

socioeconomic status (SES) a combined measure that, in order to determine class location, attempts to classify individuals, families, or households in terms of factors such as income, occupation, and education.

sociological imagination C. Wright Mills's term for the ability to see the relationship between individual experiences and the larger society.

sociology the systematic study of human society and social interaction.

sociology of family the subdiscipline of sociology that attempts to describe and explain patterns of family life and variations in family structure.

split labor market a term used to describe the division of the economy into two areas of employment, a primary sector or upper tier, composed of higher-paid (usually dominant-group) workers in more-secure jobs, and a secondary sector or lower tier, composed of lower-paid (often subordinate-group) workers in jobs with little security and hazardous working conditions.

state the political entity that possesses a legitimate monopoly over the use of force within its territory to achieve its goals.

status a socially defined position in a group or society characterized by certain expectations, rights, and duties.

status set all the statuses that a person occupies at a given time.

status symbol a material sign that informs others of a person's specific status.

stereotypes overgeneralizations about the appearance, behavior, or other characteristics of members of particular categories.

strain theory the proposition that people feel strain when they are exposed to cultural goals that they

are unable to obtain because they do not have access to culturally approved means of achieving those goals.

subcontracting an agreement in which a corporation contracts with other (usually smaller) firms to provide specialized components, products, or services to the larger corporation.

subculture a group of people who share a distinctive set of cultural beliefs and behaviors that differs in some significant way from that of the larger society.

subordinate group a group whose members, because of physical or cultural characteristics, are disadvantaged and subjected to unequal treatment by the dominant group and who regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.

succession the process by which a new category of people or type of land use gradually predominates in an area formerly dominated by another group or activity.

superego Sigmund Freud's term for the conscience, consisting of the moral and ethical aspects of personality.

survey a poll in which the researcher gathers facts or attempts to determine the relationships among facts.

symbol anything that meaningfully represents something else.

symbolic interactionist perspectives the sociological approach that views society as the sum of the interactions of individuals and groups.

taboos mores so strong that their violation is considered to be extremely offensive and even unmentionable.

technology the knowledge, techniques, and tools that allow people to transform resources into a usable form and the knowledge and skills required to use what is developed.

terrorism the calculated unlawful use of physical force or threats of violence against persons or property in order to intimidate or coerce a government, organization, or individual for the purpose of gaining some political, religious, economic, or social objective.

tertiary deviance deviance that occurs when a person who has been labeled a deviant seeks to normalize the behavior by relabeling it as nondeviant.

tertiary sector production the sector of the economy that is involved in the provision of services rather than goods.

theory a set of logically interrelated statements that attempts to describe,

explain, and (occasionally) predict social events.

theory of racial formation the idea that actions of the government substantially define racial and ethnic relations in the United States.

total institution Erving Goffman's term for a place where people are isolated from the rest of society for a set period of time and come under the control of the officials who run the institution.

totalitarianism a political system in which the state seeks to regulate all aspects of people's public and private lives.

tracking the assignment of students to specific curriculum groups and courses on the basis of their test scores, previous grades, or both.

traditional authority power that is legitimized on the basis of long-standing custom.

transnational corporations large corporations that are headquartered in one country but sell and produce goods and services in many countries.

transsexual a person who believes that he or she was born with the body of the wrong sex.

transvestite a male who lives as a woman or a female who lives as a man but does not alter the genitalia.

triad a group composed of three members.

underclass those who are poor, seldom employed, and caught in long-term deprivation that results from low levels of education and income and high rates of unemployment.

unemployment rate the percentage of unemployed persons in the labor force actively seeking jobs.

universal health care a health care system in which all citizens receive medical services paid for by tax revenues.

urbanization the process by which an increasing proportion of a population lives in cities rather than in rural areas.

validity in sociological research, the extent to which a study or research instrument accurately measures what it is supposed to measure.

value contradictions values that conflict with one another or are mutually exclusive.

values collective ideas about what is right or wrong, good or bad, and desirable or undesirable in a particular culture.

variable in sociological research, any concept with measurable traits or characteristics that can change or vary from one person, time, situation, or society to another.

victimless crimes crimes involving a willing exchange of illegal goods or services among adults.

violent crime actions—murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—involving force or the threat of force against others.

wealth the value of all of a person's or family's economic assets, including income, personal property, and income-producing property.

welfare state a state in which there is extensive government action to provide support and services to the citizens.

working class (or **proletariat**) those who must sell their labor to the owners in order to earn enough money to survive.

zero population growth the point at which no population increase occurs from year to year.

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INSTRUCTIONS: Try answering the questions below to get yourself thinking sociologically. While responding, the more often you find yourself considering other people's experience, whether those experiences are the same as your own or different, and the more you find yourself considering possible relationships between your and others' experience and the social circumstances in which our lives occur, the more you're using your sociological imagination.

CHAPTER 1 The Sociological Perspective and Research Process

Quick-start question: *Do you think a personal act like suicide is also a social issue?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- What three values are most important to you?
- How are these values reinforced and challenged?

CHAPTER 2 Culture

Quick-start question: *When you think of food, what comes to mind first—a particular dish, meals with family or friends, grocery shopping, gardening or doing farm work, being hungry, or something else?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- What activities associated with cultures other than your own can you not see yourself doing?
- Do you believe that cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings between people? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 3 Socialization

Quick-start question: *Whether you are taking college courses for the first time or returning to college after some years in the workforce, and whether you are taking classes online or in the classroom (or both), to what degree do you feel you are learning a whole new way of life as well as gaining academic knowledge and developing new skills?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- What were some of the first experiences you had involving your school that made you think something like, "Wow, I never would have guessed!"?
- What resources does your school offer to help you adjust to your new environment, and how have they helped you?


CHAPTER 4 Society, Social Structure, and Interaction

Quick-start question: *How, if at all, is where you are currently living similar to and different from the place where you primarily lived when you were growing up?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- Have you ever been in a clothing or some other kind of store that made you feel uncomfortable?
- What kind of store was it, and what caused the discomfort?
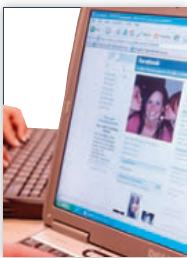
CHAPTER 5 Groups and Organizations

Quick-start question: *Think of a club, organization, or other group you belong to: On a scale of 1 (very little) to 5 (a lot), how much do the other members know about you?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- What is your favorite method of communicating with other people?
- What would cause you to start using a different method of communication?

CHAPTER 6 Deviance and Crime

Quick-start question: *How popular would you consider yourself to have been in high school and how did your level of popularity affect your behavior?*

Additional quick-start questions:

- Do you engage in any type of behavior or possess something that might harm or undermine someone else? If yes, what is it, and how is it a threat to others?
- Under what circumstances do you think you would discard this item or stop this behavior?

CHAPTER 7 Class and Stratification in the United States

Quick-start question: *Are you currently employed? If not, what factors are involved in your being unemployed?*

Additional quick-start questions:

- When you envision your ideal life, what does it look like, and do you believe that achieving it is possible—why or why not?
- What obstacles do you anticipate might limit your ability to realize your ideal life?
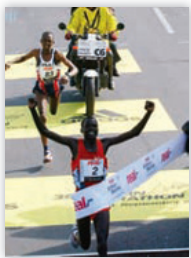
CHAPTER 8 Global Stratification

Quick-start question: *Have you lived in or visited a country other than the one in which you were born?*

Additional quick-start questions:

- Have you spoken to a customer service representative working in a call center in India or another middle-income country?
- How do you think the representative's ambitions might be different from those of his or her elder relatives when they were younger?

CHAPTER 9 Race and Ethnicity

Quick-start question: *Do you think racial/ethnic relations affect sports, and vice versa?*

Additional quick-start questions:

- How many friends or family members do you have whose racial or ethnic background is different from your own?
- If you have friends or family from different backgrounds, what benefits and challenges have you experienced as a result of these relationships?

CHAPTER 10 Sex and Gender

Quick-start question: *How concerned are you and your closest friends about weight and body image?*

Additional quick-start questions:

- Depending on your sex, where would you place yourself on a scale of traditional femininity or masculinity, with 1 indicating "barely" and 5 "very"? Why?
- Have you ever tried to move yourself up or down this scale? If yes, why, and how did you do it?

> *"Reality leaves a lot to the imagination."*
> —John Lennon
>
> *"Always have a vivid imagination, for you never know when you might need it."*
> —J.K. Rowling

When you were younger or possibly even very recently, someone may have suggested that you do something you thought was incredible, or impossible, so you responded, "How am I supposed to do that?!" Chances are, the answer you got was, "Use your imagination." In this familiar exchange, the message is, be resourceful, be creative. In dictionaries, the first definition for *imagination* is usually something like "the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality" (Merriam-Webster). Most of us imagine circumstances or events fairly regularly: what it would be like to have a child or get a new car, what we would say if we got to meet a celebrity we admire, what it will be like when we achieve a long-term goal. Using your sociological imagination is not so different.
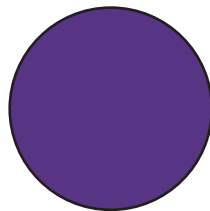
What is my sociological imagination?

The mid-twentieth century sociologist C. Wright Mills used the term *sociological imagination* to describe sociological reasoning—what he considered the ability to see the relationship between individual experiences and the larger society. When we use our sociological imagination, we are thinking sociologically, viewing our and others' personal experiences in the social contexts in which they occur. To think sociologically, then, we first have to recognize that we are members of a society, that we are not completely autonomous individuals making choices independent of outside influences.

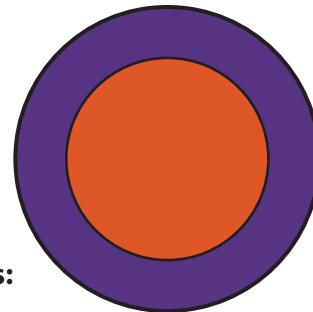That means your relationship to society does not look like this:
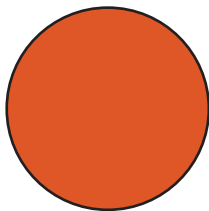
YOU   **SOCIETY**   **It looks like this:**

Why do I want to quick-start my sociological imagination?

The sociological imagination is at the center of the course you're taking and this textbook. As a result, the earlier you develop an awareness of it and how it can be applied the greater edge you'll have as you work through the sociological concepts and theories presented in each chapter you're assigned. That edge will speed up your understanding and help you retain what you learn. Better yet, the sooner you start using your sociological imagination, the sooner you'll be able to move beyond established ways of thinking to gain new insights into yourself, and to develop a greater awareness of the connection between your own world and that of other people. You will see that, as another mid-twentieth century sociologist, Peter Berger, put it, "things are not what they seem." As a result, you will develop new ways of approaching problems and making decisions in everyday life.

CHAPTER 11 Families and Intimate Relationships

Quick-start question: *Were you raised in a single- or two-parent or guardian household, or some other arrangement?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- Were the persons you lived with while growing up raised in a household that was similar to or different from the arrangement in which you grew up?
- When you were growing up, how "normal" did your family's living arrangement feel to you, and to what did you attribute those feelings?

CHAPTER 12 Education and Religion

Quick-start question: *In what educational setting did you receive your education for grades kindergarten through high school? Was religion part of your education during those years?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- While completing grades kindergarten through high school, did you have the sense that you, the other students, and your teachers had access to all of the resources and materials needed?
- Have you ever changed, or would you change, religions or your religious or spiritual beliefs? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 13 Politics and the Economy in Global Perspectivee

Quick-start question: *What have you learned from the media about politics and the United States' and other countries' economies? How might this information be different from what you've learned elsewhere— through word of mouth or in classes or an organization to which you belong?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- In what ways, if any, has the United States' economy influenced your decision to attend college or to choose a specific major?
- What relationships do you think exists between the political and economic systems in a nation and that nation's domestic turmoil—or the wars it wage?

CHAPTER 14 Health, Health Care, & Disability

Quick-start question: *Is affordable health care a human right?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- Where do you currently receive the health care you need, and how is it paid for?
- Do you know anyone with, or do you yourself have, a disability? If so, what are the challenges associated with it?

CHAPTER 15 Population and Urbanization

Quick-start question: *Did either you or your parents immigrate to the United States from another country? How about your grandparents or an earlier generation?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- What are some of the primary benefits and challenges of residing where you do?
- Do you think that you might want to live in a different kind of community some day? Why or why not??

CHAPTER 16 Collective Behavior, Social Movements, and Social Change

Quick-start question: *Do you recycle? If yes, why did you start doing it?*

Additional quick-start questions:
- Have you ever marched in the street or gone to a rally with other people for a cause of any kind?
- If yes, for what cause and why? If not, why not?