

FIFTH EDITION

# SOCIOLOGY

Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life



DAVID M. NEWMAN

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Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life

DAVID M. NEWMAN  
DePauw University



PINE FORGE PRESS

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## About the Author

David M. Newman (Ph.D., University of Washington) is Professor of Sociology at DePauw University. In addition to the introductory course, he teaches courses in research methods, family, social psychology, and deviance. He has won teaching awards at both the University of Washington and DePauw University.

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## Preface

It was the first day of the fall semester in 1994. I had just finished making the final adjustments to the first edition of this book, which was due to be published the following January. I felt good, like I'd just accomplished something monumental. Even my two children were impressed with me (although not as impressed as the time we went to a professional hockey game and I leaped out of my seat to catch an errant, speeding puck barehanded). I walked into the first meeting of my Contemporary Society class eager to start teaching wide-eyed, first-year students a thing or two about sociology.

In my introductory comments to the class that day I mentioned that I had just written this book. The panicked look in their eyes—a curious combination of awe and fear—calmed when I told them I wouldn't be requiring them to read it that semester. I assured them that the process of writing an introductory text helped me immensely in preparing for the course and that I hoped to pass on to them the knowledge I had accumulated.

The next day after class one of the students—a bright, freshly scrubbed, 18-year-old—approached me. The ensuing conversation would leave a lasting, humbling impression on me:

*Student:* Hi. Umm. Professor Newman . . . I called my parents last night to, like, tell them how my first day in college went. I think they were, like, more nervous than I was. You know how parents can be.

*Me:* Yes, I sure do. I'm a parent myself, you know.

*Student:* Yeah, whatever. Anyway, I was telling them about my classes and my professors and stuff. I told them about this class and how I thought it would be pretty cool. I told them you were writing a book. I thought that would impress them, you know, make it seem like they were getting their money's worth and everything.

*Me:* Well, thanks.

*Student:* So, they go, "What's the book about?" [He laughed sheepishly.] I told them I didn't know, but I'd find out. So that's what I'm doing . . . finding out.

*Me:* Well, I'm glad you asked. You see, it's an introductory sociology textbook that uses everyday experiences and phenomena as a way of understanding important sociological theories and ideas. In it I've attempted to. . .

*Student:* Wait, did you say it was a *textbook*?

*Me:* Why, yes. You see the purpose of the book is to provide the reader with a thorough and useful introduction to the sociological perspective. I want to convey. . . .

*Student:* [quite embarrassed now] Oh . . . Professor Newman, I'm really sorry. I misunderstood you. I thought you had written a *real* book.

*Real* book. *Real* book. *Real* book. Those words echoed in my head like some relentless church bell. At first I tried to dismiss the comment as the utterances of a naïve kid who didn't know any better. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized what his comment reflected. The perception that textbooks aren't *real* books is pervasive. I recently heard a radio ad for a local Red Cross book drive asking listeners to donate any unused or unwanted books *as long as they weren't textbooks*. Torn copies of *The Cat in the Hat*? Fine, they'll take 'em. Grease-stained owners' manuals for 1976 Ford Pintos? Sure, glad to have 'em. Textbooks? No way!

Sadly, these sorts of perceptions are not altogether unwarranted. Textbooks hover on the margins of the literary world, somewhere between respectable, intellectual tomes on trailblazing research and Harlequin romance novels. Historically they've been less than titillating: thick, heavy, expensive, and easily discarded for a measly five bucks at the end-of-semester "book buy-back."

My goal from the start has been to write a textbook that reads like a *real* book. In the first four editions I tried to capture simultaneously the essence of my discipline and the reader's interest. From what reviewers, instructors, and students who've read and used the book over the years have said, I think I've been fairly successful. People seem to like the relaxed tone and appreciate the consistent theme that ties all the chapters together. Many instructors have commented on how the book enables students to truly understand the unique and useful features of a sociological perspective.

## Features of the Fifth Edition

To my 13-year-old son, continually revising this book is surely a sign of my utter incompetence. "Why do you keep writing the *same* book over and over? My English teacher once made me rewrite my book report on *Island of the Blue Dolphins* because I spelled too many words wrong. Is that what's going on here? Is your publisher making you write the book over because you've put too much wrong stuff in it?" I told him no and that I'd make him read the book—cover to cover—if he continued criticizing it. He stopped.

Despite his concerns, sociology textbooks do need to be revised regularly. No book can be of lasting value if it remains static, locked into a particular style and content. I constantly keep my ears and eyes open, always looking for some new example or current issue to include in the book. My office overflows with boxes of newspaper articles, photocopied journal articles, and shreds of paper napkins containing scribbled notes that I write to myself at the breakfast table when I hear something interesting on the radio.

When an author revises a book, it's easier to paste on new material than it is to cut out the old stuff. But simply adding on bits and pieces, here and there, tends to make

books fat, messy, and unwieldy. So I've tried to streamline the book wherever possible. I've replaced outdated material with new material where appropriate, revised all the statistical information, condensed or moved some sections, and changed the order of a few chapters.

Here are some of the specific changes I've made in this fifth edition to enhance the features that worked so well in previous editions.

### **Updated Examples and Statistical Information**

As in the first four editions, each chapter is peppered with anecdotes, personal observations, and accounts of contemporary events. Many of the examples you will read come from incidents in my own life; others are taken right from today's news headlines. For instance, since I wrote the last edition we experienced the unprecedented attacks of 9/11 and subsequent military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq. It would be impossible to write an introduction to the discipline of sociology without accounting for these life-altering occurrences. So I've made a special effort to provide some sociological insight into these events throughout the book. Such striking examples, as well as smaller ones taken from everyday life, are meant to show you the pervasiveness and applicability of sociology in our ordinary experiences in a way that, I hope, rings familiar with you.

Throughout the book I've also tried to provide the most current statistical information possible. I've updated all the graphic exhibits and, in the process, changed many from statistical tables to more readable charts, making trends and relationships more obvious. Most of the new statistical information is drawn from the most recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Department of Justice.

### **New and Improved Visual Essays**

This edition includes a larger, improved visual component. Most textbooks contain photographs, comic strips, and other types of pictures. But rarely does this material go beyond simply filling up space. I wanted the visual images in this book to serve a purpose: to paint detailed, informative sociological portraits. To that end, Doug Harper, Becky Smith, and Liz Grauerholz have produced several unique, vivid, and provocative visual essays for this edition. These essays—focusing on such diverse social phenomena as baseball games, funeral rituals in the Netherlands, fashions in body ornamentation, family-friendly public facilities, tramps, global vegetable markets, images of social class, the immigrant experience, and the depiction of the future in movies—provide a wonderful opportunity for you to “see” many of the concepts and ideas I've written about in the book. As you study the visual essays, you will become a much more visually astute observer of and participant in your own social world.

### **New Sociologists at Work and Micro-Macro Connections**

In the first four editions, I provided many in-depth features that focused either on a specific piece of sociological research or on some issue that illustrates the connection between the everyday lives of individuals and the structure of their society. These extended discussions link social institutions to personal experiences and, in the



process, provide insight into the methods sociologists use to gather information and draw conclusions about how our world works.

Many instructors and students have found these features very useful in generating classroom discussion. The features that I've updated from the previous edition focus on suicide, the toy industry's role in gender socialization, impression management on the Internet, the formation of virtual communities, dual earner parents, the cultural impact of antidepressant drugs, the U.S. health care system, media images of social class, welfare trends, racial superiority in professional sports, racial profiling, the shifting politics of immigration, and environmental justice. I've also added several new features about the language of war, the experiences of middle-class black families, sexual abuse by the clergy, voting restrictions placed on convicted felons, and global money markets.

### **Increased Focus on Globalization and Technology**

This edition also contains many more cross-cultural examples and discussions of globalization than did the previous editions, showing how our lives are linked to, and affected by, our increasingly global society. One of the most profound trends in the world today is the linking of heretofore disconnected societies and cultures. It is difficult, if not impossible, to provide a complete picture of sociology and social life without examining how our lives are intertwined with global events and processes.

I have also included more examples and analyses of new innovations in information and communication technology. In less than a decade, the Internet has dramatically changed the way we live our everyday lives. In the process, it has emerged as an important area of sociological study.

### **New Articles in the Companion Reader**

Jodi O'Brien, a sociologist at Seattle University, and I have carefully edited a companion volume to this book consisting of short articles, chapters, and excerpts written by other authors. These readings are provocative and eye-opening examples of the joys and insights of sociological thinking. Many of them vividly show how sociologists gather evidence through carefully designed research. Others are personal narratives that provide firsthand accounts of how social forces influence people's lives. The readings examine common, everyday experiences, important social issues, and distinct historical events that illustrate the relationship between the individual and society. We've taken great pains to include readings that show how race, social class, gender, and sexual orientation intersect to influence everyday experiences.

We've streamlined the companion reader by reducing the number of readings from 38 to 32. Of these articles, 9 are new to this edition. The new selections touch on such important and relevant sociological issues as the social process of becoming a marijuana user, the relationship between disability and masculinity, personal webcam sites on the Internet, surrogate motherhood, the process by which Jews "became" white, controversies in getting an accurate count of the number of Native Americans living in the United States, and the ways that children are taught about gender and sexual desire.

## Teaching Resources and Web Site to Accompany the Book and Companion Reader

The *Instructor's Resource Guide* is available for instructors from Pine Forge Press on a CD-ROM. The manual provides comprehensive, thorough coverage of the material in both the text and the companion reader, including the following:

- ◆ Chapter Summaries
- ◆ Class Exercises and Discussion Topics. Suggestions for writing exercises, discussion topics, and student assignments to use both in and outside of class. This section also provides suggestions for how to use this book's Your Turn activities.
- ◆ Literary and Visual Resources
- ◆ Selected Internet Resources
- ◆ Testing Materials: Multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. The test bank was developed to test students' understanding of the material, so instructors can encourage students to move beyond basic memorization of materials toward application and critique. The multiple-choice questions are organized as recall questions and application questions. Recall questions are based more directly on the information presented in the textbook, and application questions assess students' comprehension of the material and their ability to apply concepts, theories, and research findings.
- ◆ Summaries of Classic Sociological Studies
- ◆ Teaching Resource Materials: Annotated Bibliography. An annotated bibliography of resources useful in preparing for and designing classes, suggestions for how to manage teaching interactions and elicit and evaluate student performance, and techniques for handling any challenges that arise in class.
- ◆ New for this edition: 10 to 15 PowerPoint slides for each chapter.

Students can also access an Internet study site for this book at [www.pineforge.com](http://www.pineforge.com). This site includes additional material not included in the book as well as test questions that can be used to gauge understanding of the book's contents.

## A Word About the "Architecture of Society"

I have chosen the image of architecture in the subtitle to convey one of the driving themes of this book: Society is a human construction. Society is not "out there" somewhere, waiting to be visited and examined. It exists in the minute details of our day-to-day lives. Whenever we follow its rules or break them, enter its roles or shed them, work to change things or keep them as they are, we are adding another nail, plank, or frame to the structure of our society. In short, society—like the buildings around us—couldn't exist were it not for the actions of people.

At the same time, however, this structure that we have created appears to exist independently of us. We don't usually spend much time thinking about the buildings we live, work, and play in as human constructions. We see them as finished products, not as the processes that created them. Only when something goes wrong—the pipes leak or the walls crack—do we realize that people made these structures and people are the ones who must fix them. When buildings outlive their usefulness or become dangerous to their inhabitants, people must renovate them or, if necessary, decide to tear them down.

Likewise, society is so massive and has been around for so long that it *appears* to stand on its own, at a level above and beyond the toiling hands of individual people. But here, too, when things begin to go wrong—widespread discrimination, massive poverty, lack of affordable health care, escalating crime rates—people must do something about it.

So the fascinating paradox of human life is that we build society, collectively “forget” that we’ve built it, and live under its massive and influential structure. But we are not “stuck” with society as it is. Human beings are the architects of their own social reality. Throughout this book, I examine the active roles individuals play in planning, maintaining, or fixing society.

## A Final Thought

One of the greatest challenges I face as a teacher of sociology is trying to get my students to see the personal relevance of the course material, to fully appreciate the connection between the individual and society. The true value of sociology lies in its unique ability to show the reciprocal connection between the most private elements of our lives—our characteristics, experiences, behaviors, and thoughts—and the cultures, groups, organizations, and social institutions to which we belong. The “everyday life” approach in this book uses real-world examples and personal observations as a vehicle for understanding the relationship between individuals and society.

My purpose is to make the familiar, unfamiliar—to help you critically examine the commonplace and the ordinary in your own life. Only when you step back and examine the taken-for-granted aspects of your personal experiences can you see that there is an inherent, sometimes unrecognized organization and predictability to them. At the same time, you will see that the structure of society is greater than the sum of the experiences and psychologies of the individuals in it.

It is my conviction that this intellectual excursion should be a thought-provoking and enjoyable one. Reading a textbook doesn’t have to be boring or, even worse, the academic equivalent of a trip to the dentist (although I personally have nothing against dentists). I believe that part of my task as an instructor is to provide my students with a challenging but comfortable classroom atmosphere in which to learn. I have tried to do the same in this book. Your instructor has chosen this book, not because it makes his or her job teaching your course any easier, but because he or she wants you, the student, to see how sociology helps us to understand how the small private experiences of our everyday lives are connected to this thing we call society. I hope you learn to appreciate this important message, and I hope you enjoy reading this book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Have fun!



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A book project such as this one takes an enormous amount of time to develop. I've spent thousands of hours on this book, toiling away at the computer, holed up in my isolated third-floor office. Yet as solitary as this project was, it could not have been done alone. Many people provided invaluable assistance to make this book a reality. Without their generous help and support, it wouldn't have been written, and you'd be reading some other sociologist's list of people to thank. Because I have revised rather than rewritten this book, I remain indebted to those who have helped me at some point during the writing of all five editions.

First, I would like to thank the former publisher and president of Pine Forge Press, Steve Rutter. Early on, he pushed, prodded, and cajoled me into exceeding my expectations and overachieving. The numerous suggestions he offered over the years made this book a better one. Likewise, the former staff at Pine Forge—Sherith Pankratz, Paul O'Connell, Kirsten Stoller, Jean Skeels, and Rebecca Holland—must be thanked for helping me through the maze of details and difficulties that cropped up during the earlier editions of this book.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Jerry Westby, Denise Simon, Diana Axelsen, Vonessa Vondera, and Kristin Snow at Pine Forge for their insight and guidance in putting together this newest edition. Having already written four editions, I was definitely an old dog with absolutely no desire to learn any new tricks when this team became involved. To their credit, they let me write as I have always written. For that, I am eternally grateful.

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*For my dad*



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