



READINGS FOR

SOCIOLOGY

EDITED BY GARTH MASSEY

FIFTH EDITION

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EDITED BY

Garth Massey

University of Wyoming

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P R E F A C E

When students open a sociology book for the first time, they have little idea what to expect. Sociology sounds like society, and they think they know what society is. They may have a sense that sociology is about families, poor people, crime, or work and leisure. They may have heard that their sociology teacher is “pretty liberal” though they may be unsure of what that means. They may be taking sociology because they want to help people, start a business, study abroad, be a lawyer, or figure out something about their life, their parents, their relationships, or those parts of the city where they never go. This is good.

Sociology is about society. The question is: What is society? How will I know it when I see it? Or can I see it? When the teacher begins talking about social structure as hidden dimensions of social control, as group processes revealed in statistics, as more apparent to minority-group members than to others, doubts begin to creep in. For the teacher, the challenge is to turn doubts into curiosity, uncertainty into intrigue, and to guide students into a new way of seeing. That is what makes sociology unique among the social sciences.

Sociology *is* about families and poor people and crime and work and leisure. But these subjects may not be presented in the way students expect. Sociology is as much about the police as the criminal, the employer as the employee, the wealthy as the working class, the busboy and receptionist as the customer and client. And it is about much more. Fortunately, families on television today are portrayed with more honesty and accuracy than they were two or three decades ago, and are more likely to reflect the actual families in American society. But what about families worldwide? And what about love, marriage and divorce, the intersection of work and family, the hidden work of mothers, disbanded and reconstructed families, and “alternative strategies of reproductive success”? Sociology invites the student to confront a welter of diversity, challenging the myths, pieties, and certainties that make for a complacent life. Most students will not be expecting this, but most will appreciate having had the experience.

Sociology is a critical discipline. Students often interpret this as reflecting the political views of their teacher. I recently asked my students to evaluate critically news they found on the Web. Several brought forward articles critical of George W. Bush. These are obviously biased, they told me, because they criticize the president. Perhaps the greatest challenge for the teacher of sociology is to disentangle critical from criticism, to help students embrace critique and feel comfortable looking beyond the surface appearance, the public

pronouncements, the taken for granted, and yet avoid the stultifying cynicism of discovering that the emperor wears no clothes. The journey taken by sociology students—from Goffman's dissection of intimate relations through the historical demise of mass transit and the colonial reconfiguring of traditional societies—can help them acquire the sensibility for constructive doubt and a desire to know more. But as with any journey, students have to pack well, keep their eyes open, and be prepared for some mishaps.

I often think the world is a more difficult environment than when I was a youngster. It is harder to maneuver, more uncertain, and less forgiving. The instruments of social control are more finely honed. The commercially driven media are more widespread and sophisticated, more persuasive and alluring. Alternative images and contrary messages are both less available and systematically dismissed by the mainstream. Students know that the gap between rich and poor has grown wider, and to be in the middle class they must work harder, yet they will find less security there. I think students today must be better prepared than ever to confront the challenges facing them, not only to advance their personal well-being but to act as concerned citizens on behalf of a greater good. I believe the skills required for sociological thinking can help them to do this.

At the same time, students have more choices than when I grew up. And with more choices comes the necessity of making decisions based on good information. This is where sociology's value lies. Young women do have greater opportunity than ever, despite the prejudices and discrimination they continue to face. Worldwide, this situation is changing as well, but there is a long way to go. More and more students are taking time during their college careers to go abroad, spreading across the globe. And it is increasingly possible to imagine a life that is filled with experiences of cultural difference. In the global economy, few people can expect to sit still. New towns, new jobs, new careers, new friends—these are the reasonable expectations of young people, and they evoke both excitement and trepidation. Navigating all of this is not easy, but sociology can help.

Globalization is a stronger theme in this collection of *Readings for Sociology* than in the past. Built around the icon of the global economy—McDonald's—several readings explore the globalization debate. Inglehart and Baker's essay, subtitled "Who's Afraid of Ronald McDonald?" and James Watson's "McDonald's in Hong Kong," along with George Ritzer's "McDonald's System" and Benjamin R. Barber's "Jihad vs. McWorld," add depth and complexity to the question of globalization's power to transform societies. Robert Glennon's "Size Does Count, at Least in French Fries" illustrates the power of global corporations to affect not only what we eat but how we farm, our rivers and streams, and our environmental future. Richard Rodriguez's "Go North, Young Man" is as much about global culture as it is about migration. And not to be forgotten are the women in William M. Adler's "Job on the Line," who know intimately globalization's effect on working people.

Other themes this edition strengthens include race, identity, and the environment. Along with Heidi Ardizzone and Earl Lewis's, "Love and Race Caught in the Public Eye" from the fourth edition, new readings include Mary C. Waters's "Optional Ethnicities" and Anthony Walton's "My Secret Life as a Black Man." Russell Shorto's "Faith at Work" recognizes the growing visibility of religious identification and practices in American society, while Robert Glennon's essay and a new essay by Paul Wapner ("Greenpeace and Political Globalization") give this edition of *Readings for Sociology* a stronger focus on environmental issues.

It is important for students new to sociology to experience not only the excitement and range of topics captured by the sociological imagination. The wide range of approaches taken by sociologists and sociologically informed writers importantly reflects the scope of the discipline. Articles in this collection are based on personal experiences and accounts, participants' investigations of private and public settings, life histories, informal interviewing and astute observation, ethnographic and historical research of public records, social surveys, and the analysis of existing data. Readings range from the descriptive to the conceptual, analytic, and theoretical. And they display the long-running and ongoing dialogue over the role and potential impact of social research in the world, from Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto* to Peter L. Berger's *Invitation to Sociology* and Michael Burawoy's "Public Sociologies."

To my mind, a good sociology course shows students the tremendous value of structural analysis, so well displayed by Kelman and Hamilton in their account of the My Lai massacre, Shearing and Stenning's first-hand observations on Disney World, Wilson's explanation of unemployment in inner cities, and Messner's study of male socialization and sports. It never forgets, however, to recognize and illuminate the active agency of human beings, as revealed in several essays, including Pardo's study of the activism of East L.A. mothers, Paules's examination of waitressing, Romero's portrayal of household workers, and Friedan's response to the challenges of growing older.

As in the past, *Readings for Sociology* stresses the intersections of race, class, and gender as critical to sociological understanding. These are often set in the context of family, work, and community—Anderson's "Code of the Street," Hochschild's "Emotional Geography of Work and Family Life," Chambliss's "The Saints and the Roughnecks," Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dime*, Romero's *Maid in the U.S.A.*, Adler's "Job on the Line," Hunt's "Police Accounts of Normal Force," and several others. The context for these essays is spelled out in Reich's "What Happened to the American Social Compact?" Ritzer's "The McDonald's System," Thompson's "Hanging Tongues," Feagin and Parker's "Rise and Fall of Mass Rail Transit," and in other essays that have been retained in this edition.

My youngest sons, Elijah and Nathanael, are now in college, and I have thought often of them as I assembled this collection. What would I want them

to read, discuss, think about, be challenged by, take away from the course, find interesting, and make connections to in their own lives? I have been doing sociology for a long time. Although it is difficult to communicate to anyone else one's passion for one's work, perhaps this is my way of telling my three sons—including my oldest, George: This is what I do for a living. I hope you will be as lucky.

TO THE INSTRUCTOR

If you are using this reader with Anthony Giddens, Mitchell Duneier, and Richard P. Appelbaum's *Introduction to Sociology*, Fifth Edition, you may consider assigning the readings corresponding to each text chapter below. If you are using this reader with another text, you can still follow this schema for most of the chapters.

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PART ONE

**THE STUDY
OF SOCIOLOGY**

1

Sociology as an Individual Pastime

FROM *Invitation to Sociology*

PETER L. BERGER

What does it mean to “think sociologically”? In this selection from his book Invitation to Sociology, Peter Berger explains why sociologists are so annoying to the powers that be, the purveyors of conventional wisdom, advertisers, politicians, and others with a vested interest in your going along with their view of things. Sociologists have a reputation for stirring up the waters and occasionally making trouble. For Berger, this is just part of the way sociologists see the world.

It is gratifying from certain value positions (including some of this writer's) that sociological insights have served in a number of instances to improve the lot of groups of human beings by uncovering morally shocking conditions or by clearing away collective illusions or by showing that socially desired results could be obtained in more humane fashion. One might point, for example, to some applications of sociological knowledge in the penological practice of Western countries. Or one might cite the use made of sociological studies in the Supreme Court decision of 1954 on racial segregation in the public schools. Or one could look at the applications of other sociological studies to the humane planning of urban redevelopment. Certainly the sociologist who is morally and politically sensitive will derive gratification from such instances. But, once more, it will be well to keep in mind that what is at issue here is not sociological understanding as such but certain applications of this understanding. It is not difficult to see how the same understanding could be applied with opposite intentions. Thus the sociological understanding of the dynamics of racial prejudice can be applied effectively by those promoting intragroup hatred as well as by those wanting to spread tolerance. And the sociological understanding of the nature of human solidarity can be employed in the service of both totalitarian and democratic regimes.

* * *

One [more recent] image [of the sociologist is that of] a gatherer of statistics about human behavior. The sociologist is here seen essentially as an aide-de-camp to an IBM machine. He* goes out with a questionnaire, interviews

*Berger wrote this in 1963, using gendered language (preferring *he* to the now-standard *he/she*). Today more than half of all sociology students are women (ed.).