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sociology

SECOND EDITION

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SECOND EDITION

FOREWORD, PREFACE, AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FOREWORD

For some years now Prentice-Hall and I have been working to bring the best of sociological thought and writing to a wide audience through the medium of our series on the *FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN SOCIOLOGY*. The series is now planned to include more than two dozen volumes covering all major areas in the field of sociology. Each book, written by an outstanding specialist, introduces a particular subfield within the discipline. The books in the series have become quite popular with both teachers and students and have enjoyed persistent and enduring support.

Over many years of teaching large lecture sections for introductory sociology, however, I was always struck by the difficulty of finding suitable introductory books—books of high quality yet effectively adapted to the needs of beginning students. So we resolved to develop, as part of the Foundations

Series, a new introductory textbook. Professor Metta Spencer, who undertook the work, brought to the task excellent advanced training, extensive research experience, and equally important, many years of teaching the introductory course.

This new text, which takes its title from the series, has more than fulfilled the goals that were set for it. The book deals with the systematic study of groups and societies. The major aspects of social life are analyzed, with special reference to the role of each aspect in the development, functioning, and change of large social systems. No other introductory text contains such a richness of material in its exposition of theoretical perspectives, in its elaboration of sociological knowledge and basic concepts, and in its description of empirical research. These qualities, linked to clear, interesting writing and strong organization, have resulted in an introductory sociology text of the highest quality.

Alex Inkeles

PREFACE

One of my friends who has taught introductory sociology for many years keeps all her letters from former students, who are now doing things like selling insurance, editing newspapers, guiding tour groups through Asia, and administering foreign aid programs. These people often make the same remark in their letters: as students they hadn't realized how much they were gaining from their sociology course, but those earlier studies now come up repeatedly in their personal life and in their work. Years later they are writing thank-you notes for the most useful course they ever took.

Sociology does not necessarily connect with people's lives. Indeed, it is hard work to show students how to use sociology to understand their social experiences. People talk about sociological problems every day of their lives—on subways, in court, in the dentist's waiting room, everywhere. I hope that the information in this book and the kind of perspective it provides will add value to such conversations.

It is probably impossible for an introductory course to teach students to think like sociologists. It takes a lot of courses to accomplish that. But the introductory course can give students a good start in that direction. It can at least present some basic facts about the social structure of our society. More important, a good sociology course can help students begin to develop critical independent thinking by pointing out vital issues and controversies. Facts never speak for themselves. They only speak for people who know how to assess their significance. And sociology as a discipline can provide its students with both factual information and a heightened ability to judge the *significance* of those facts.

To that end, this book focuses not only on the facts that sociologists know (and we do know a lot), but also on the arguments and debates that underlie those facts. It does no good to give students answers until they first understand the questions. Indeed, I am just as pleased when a student discovers a new problem to be puzzled over, as I am when a student provides a satisfying answer to that problem. After all, that is what sociology consists of—identifying questions, suggesting answers to those questions, and identifying new questions and problems in the suggested answers. Introductory students can begin to participate in that ongoing process of discovery too. When they do, they find that their sociological skill enhances what they have to say during the coffee break, or on the job, or almost anywhere else. Because then (and only then) does sociology truly connect with their lives.

ORGANIZATION

Each chapter is divided into three major sections: (1) a basic core section; (2) a Social Research section; and (3) a Social Policy section.

The *basic core section* of each chapter contains an orderly presentation of the major concepts and theories of the topic area of that chapter. Important sociologists past and present and the exciting controversies that sometimes swirl around them are discussed. The core section emphasizes the lasting aspects of sociology—the basic concepts and significant issues that sociologists think about.

The *Social Research: Sociologists at Work* section always appears on an orange background to set it off from the rest of the chapter. It focuses on recent empirical research in the topic area of the chapter and discusses one or more landmark studies. It emphasizes the way sociologists come to know what they know and the people and

events that contributed to that store of sociological knowledge.

The *Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints* section always appears on a gray background. This section talks about political, economic, or ethical issues about which people have to make decisions. By discussing roles that sociologists can play in shaping the world of the future, this section serves to answer questions that are sometimes raised about the “relevance” of sociology.

FEATURES

Other elements of the book have been designed to make learning more effective for students:

GLOSSARIES A glossary containing several hundred careful definitions of all important concepts is found at the end of the book for easy reference. In addition, key terms within the body of the text are printed in color, defined when they are used for the first time, and reviewed in lists of key terms at the end of each chapter. This reinforces the learning of the most important terms found in this book as well as in advanced books and courses on particular areas of sociology.

SUMMARIES Each chapter is followed by a summary that reviews the most important ideas presented in the chapter. Basic concepts are again stressed.

READING LISTS Extensive reading lists appear at the end of each chapter, with descriptive annotations to suggest potential uses of the books.

GRAPHS, CHARTS, AND TABLES Because much empirical research in the field of sociology is reported in tabular form, a

selection of this type of material is included. Students are given a thorough introduction on how to read and construct tables in Chapter 2.

PHOTOGRAPHS A lively array of pictures has been chosen to provoke thought and to make points visually that could not be expressed in words.

THE REFERENCE PAPER An appendix at the end of the book is addressed to students. Its purpose is to show how to use the library and how to write a term paper.

SUPPLEMENTS

Three supplementary aids have been designed to accompany the book:

THE STUDY GUIDE AND WORKBOOK reviews the material in the textbook through presentation of chapter objectives, basic sociological concepts, and various self-administered tests. Three testing formats are used—multiple-choice, fill-in, and matching—with answers supplied for immediate feedback. Questions cover the basic core material, as well as the Social Research and Social Policy sections, and are cross-referenced to the appropriate pages of this text.

A TEST ITEM FILE includes a thousand items selected to test the student’s understanding of introductory sociology. The questions, primarily multiple-choice, are referenced to the appropriate text page. Essay questions are also included.

THE INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL outlines the basic structure of each chapter, facilitating additional lecture materials and discussion questions. Class projects and research topics are included for each chapter, as are audio-visual aids.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Any textbook owes a great debt to the vast literature on which it draws, and I have drawn on the work of many outstanding sociologists. This particular text owes a special debt to the individual books in the Prentice-Hall FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN SOCIOLOGY series. In preparing a new but different book in that series, I was able to draw directly from the material in the other volumes and, equally important, upon the editorial skill and sociological expertise of Alex Inkeles. His good judgment has played a vital part in the development of this book. While I want to acknowledge my debt to others and to the series authors in particular, final responsibility for errors or misinterpretation must rest with me.

One of the high points of writing a book comes in thanking the people who have contributed by sharing their knowledge and parts of their lives with the author. For me to do so fully would be to double the length of this book; so many magnificent colleagues and friends have helped me, and I cannot say all that I feel about their generosity, nor can I name them all.

This book has benefited greatly from the comments of Ralph Beals, Lawrence Felt, Paula Felt, Diane Horowitz, Leslie Howard, Nancy Howell, Brian Hull, John Kervin, Pierre Lorion, Stanford Lyman, Ted Mann, Richard Ofshe, Alice Propper, Rheta Rosen, Diana Russell, Edward Shorter, Edward Silva, John Simpson, Kenneth Walker, and Jennifer Welsh. Other people provided critical reviews of various drafts of the manuscript: Mark Abrahamson, Patricia Allen, J. Cameron Coleman, Spencer Condie, Joseph E. Faulkner, Lee Frank, Richard Hall, Mark Hutter, John Klein, Thomas Koebernick, R. L. Liverman, Betty Metz, Dennis

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Students also played a major part in helping me develop the book. I distributed drafts of various chapters to several classes in both large public universities and small private colleges. The final result is much better because I have had the benefit of their responses to these drafts, and I thank my students for their helpful suggestions.

Madeline Richard and Susan Robbins contributed excellent research assistance. Mary Paul and Beverley Thomas were helpful in secretarial capacities. Ann Finlayson contributed editorial suggestions.

The Prentice-Hall staff has been terrific. I am grateful to Irene Fraga for her administrative help, and to David Stirling for his coordination in marketing. The production has been handled admirably and pleasantly by Ann Torbert, Tom Pendleton, Walter Behnke, Serena Hoffman, and Nancy Myers.

Two editors have at different times and in different ways made an exceptional contribution to the style and organization of the manuscript—Ray Mullaney and Carolyn Smith. Their contributions appear on almost every page, and I am deeply grateful to both of them.

Edward Stanford, Prentice-Hall's good-natured and unflappable executive, was involved in every important decision that arose in developing this book. Every time I work with him I gain more appreciation for his excellent judgment. And I want to thank Alex Inkeles for his good advice and the friendly association I have enjoyed with him.

Our lives expand by recognizing magnificence in others, quite beyond the limiting circumstances of our relationships. And here I want to honor all that I have recognized in Ross Johnson, Jim Fisk, Susan Ingram, and my son Jonathan Spencer, the liveliest companion of my life.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS IN BRIEF

INTRODUCTION

- 1** *What Is Sociology?* 3
- 2** *Methods of Social Research* 23

Part One THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY

- 3** *Culture* 53
- 4** *Socialization* 83
- 5** *Sex Roles* 109
- 6** *Social Groups* 139
- 7** *Deviance and Control* 173

Part Two SOCIAL INTERACTION

- 8** *Organizations* 209
- 9** *Social Stratification* 235
- 10** *Racial and Ethnic Groups* 269
- 11** *Collective Behavior
and Social Movements* 307

Part Three SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

- 12** *The Family* 337
- 13** *Religion* 367
- 14** *Education* 403
- 15** *Politics and Society* 429
- 16** *Economic Life* 463

Part Four CHANGING SOCIETY

- 17** *Population and Ecology* 495
- 18** *Urban Living* 525
- 19** *Social Change* 557

- The Reference Paper* 581
- Notes* 587
- Glossary* 604
- Name Index* 612
- Subject Index* 615

CONTENTS IN DETAIL

Introduction 1

chapter 1 **WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?**

page 3

The social sciences 4
ECONOMICS 5
POLITICAL SCIENCE 5
HISTORY 6
GEOGRAPHY 6
PSYCHOLOGY 6
ANTHROPOLOGY 8
SOCIAL WORK 8
A brief historical survey 8
THE EARLY SOCIOLOGISTS 8
SOCIOLOGY IN THE UNITED STATES 10
Dominant perspectives in sociology 12
EVOLUTIONISM 13
Social Darwinism 13
Marxism 13
Durkheim 14
Contemporary evolutionism 15
STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM 15
FUNCTIONAL REQUISITES 16
THE EQUILIBRIUM MODEL 17
THE CONFLICT MODEL 17
SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM 17
WHICH MODEL TO CHOOSE? 18
Values, research, and policy 19
Summary 20
Key Terms 20
For Further Reading 21

chapter 2 **METHODS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH**

page 23

A research project: explaining Beatlemania 24
THE THEORY 24
TESTING THE THEORY 25

Sociology as a science 29
CASE STUDIES 29
MAKING UP THEORIES AND TESTING THEM 30
Variables 32
Indicators 32
Validity 33
Representativeness 33
Prediction 34
Sources of sociological data 35
DOCUMENTS 35
OFFICIAL STATISTICS 36
INTERVIEWS 37
QUESTIONNAIRES 37
OBSERVATION 37
LABORATORY EXPERIMENTS 39
CONTENT ANALYSIS 40
Organizing the data and preparing a report 41
PREPARING DATA FOR ANALYSIS 41
CONSTRUCTING AND READING TABLES 42
Introducing controls 45
THE RESEARCH REPORT 47
Evaluations research 47
Summary 48
Key Terms 49
For Further Reading 50

PART ONE

The Individual in Society 51

chapter 3 **CULTURE**

page 53

Elements of Culture 54
SYMBOLS 55
VALUES 55
NORMS 56
FOLKLORE 56
LAW 56
IDEOLOGY 56
Three views of culture 57
CULTURE AS A NORMATIVE SYSTEM 57
Social control 58
Cultural relativism 58
CULTURE AS AN EXPRESSIVE SYSTEM 59
Artistic expression as a code 59
Publics 60
CULTURE AS A SYSTEM OF IDEAS 61
Culture and social structure 62

Technology 63
 Cultural integration and diversity 64
 What influences culture? 66
 RACE AND CULTURE 66
 GEOGRAPHY AND CULTURE 68
 TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE 68
 Marx: technology and ideology 68
 Innis and McLuhan: communication and culture 69
 Social Research: Sociologists at Work 71
 THE CULTURE OF POVERTY 71
 The structural setting 71
 Life style 72
 A further empirical test 72
 POPULAR CULTURE AND THE MASS MEDIA 74
 Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints 77
 CULTURAL RELATIVISM AND ETHICS 77
 POVERTY: CULTURAL OR STRUCTURAL? 78
 HIGH VERSUS POPULAR CULTURE 78
 Summary 79
 Key Terms 80
 For Further Reading 80

chapter 4
SOCIALIZATION

page 83

Biological factors in socialization 87
 The family and early socialization 89
 FAMILY STRUCTURE AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT 90
 LEARNING LANGUAGE AND IDEALS 90
 ADULT-ORIENTED OR PEER GROUP SOCIALIZATION? 92
 Socialization through the life cycle 93
 ANTICIPATORY SOCIALIZATION 94
 SOCIALIZATION IN ADULTHOOD 94
 RESOCIALIZATION 95
 Three views of socialization 96
 DURKHEIM ON MORAL AUTHORITY 96
 PIAGET ON MORAL REASONING 96
 FREUD ON REPRESSION 98
 Sublimation 99
 Surplus repression 99
 Social Research: Sociologists at Work 100
 ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION 100
 CHILDHOOD SOCIALIZATION FOR ACHIEVEMENT 102
 ACHIEVEMENT AND FEMININITY 102
 Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints 104
 CHILD CARE FOR WORKING MOTHERS 104
 Summary 106

Key Terms 106
 For Further Reading 107

chapter 5
SEX ROLES

page 109

Sex: the biological facts 112
 PRENATAL FACTORS 112
 HORMONES 114
 Gender 114
 SEX AND GENDER IDENTITY 115
 GENDER ROLES 115
 Sources of sex role differentiation 118
 SEX ROLES AND SOCIALIZATION 118
 ORIGINS OF SEX ROLE DIFFERENCES 121
 Gender roles in North America 123
 GENDER AND STATUS 123
 GENDER AND HOUSEWORK 123
 GENDER AND JOBS 124
 GENDER AND HIGHER EDUCATION 124
 The women's movement 125
 HISTORY 126
 THE MOVEMENT TODAY 130
 Social Research: Sociologists at Work 131
 SECRETARIES AND BOSSES 131
 Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints 133
 Summary 134
 Key Terms 136
 For Further Reading 136

chapter 6
SOCIAL GROUPS

page 139

The need for togetherness 140
 SOCIAL DEPRIVATION 140
 PRIMATES AND PEOPLE 141
 PERSONAL SPACE AND EXPRESSIVE BEHAVIOR 141
 Territoriality 142
 Interaction rituals 144
 Facial expressions and emotion 145
 Types of groups 146
 PRIMARY GROUPS AND SECONDARY GROUPS 148
 ENCOUNTER GROUPS AND COMMUNES 150
 PEER GROUPS 151
 REFERENCE GROUPS 151

LARGE, COMPLEX GROUPS	152
<i>Social groups and the social self</i>	152
THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP	152
THE LOOKING-GLASS SELF	153
ETHICS, THE SELF, AND THE PRIMARY GROUP	153
COMMUNICATION AND THE SELF	155
Role taking	157
Self-reflexive behavior	158
The play and game stages	158
I and me	160
THE ACT	161
HOW SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISTS WORK	161
Group interaction	162
GROUP BOUNDARIES	162
INTERACTION ACROSS GROUP BOUNDARIES	164
THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY	165
<i>Social Research: Sociologists at Work</i>	166
OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY	166
COMPLIANCE WITH EXPERT AUTHORITY	166
GROUP PRESSURE	167
<i>Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints</i>	168
Summary	169
Key Terms	170
For Further Reading	171

chapter 7

DEVIANCE AND CONTROL

page 173

Types of Deviance	174
DEVIANT BEHAVIOR	175
Who commits deviant acts?	175
Organized crime	176
Other deviant behaviors	178
DEVIANT HABITS	179
OTHER TYPES OF DEVIANCE	181
Deviant psychologies	181
Deviant cultures	181
<i>The social construction of deviance</i>	182
MAKING THE RULES	182
ENFORCING THE RULES	182
LABELING THE DEVIANT	183
White-collar crime	183
Stigma	183
Redefining deviance	184
<i>Controlling deviance</i>	184
SOCIALIZATION	185
INFORMAL GROUP PRESSURE	185
SOCIAL SANCTIONS	185
<i>The consequences of deviance</i>	186

DEVIANCE AND DISORGANIZATION	187
POSITIVE FUNCTIONS OF DEVIANCE	187
Cutting red tape	187
Acting as a safety valve	188
Clarifying rules	188
Uniting the group	188
Highlighting conformity	189
Acting as a warning signal	189
THE NORMALITY OF DEVIANCE	189
<i>The relativity of deviance</i>	190
NORMS GOVERN ROLES	190
ROLE CONFLICT	190
<i>Theories of deviance</i>	190
KINDS-OF-PEOPLE THEORIES	191
Biological theories	191
Psychodynamic theories	192
Problems with kinds-of-people theories	193
SITUATION THEORIES	193
Anomie theory	193
Cultural-transmission theory	195
Role-self theory	197
Problems with situation theories	198
<i>Social Research: Sociologists at Work</i>	199
Mental illness	199
<i>Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints</i>	202
POLICY AND KINDS OF PEOPLE THEORIES	202
POLICY AND SITUATION THEORIES	202
Policies derived from anomie theory	202
Policies based on cultural-transmission theory	203
Policies based on role-self theory	203
Summary	204
Key Terms	205
For Further Reading	206

PART TWO

Social Interaction 207

chapter 8

ORGANIZATIONS

page 209

<i>Characteristics of organizations</i>	210
DIVISION OF LABOR, POWER, AND COMMUNICATION	210
POWER CENTERS	210
SUBSTITUTION OF PERSONNEL	211
<i>Kinds of organizations</i>	211

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS 211
 BUREAUCRACIES 213
 The organizational revolution 213
 Max Weber on bureaucracy 214
 Weber's typology of authority 214
 Characteristics of bureaucracies 215
 The structure of organizations 217
 FORMAL STRUCTURE 217
 INFORMAL STRUCTURE 217
 Organizational control and leadership 218
 ALTERNATIVES TO CONTROL 220
 Theoretical approaches to organizations 221
 THE CLASSICAL APPROACH 221
 THE HUMAN-RELATIONS APPROACH 223
 The Hawthorne studies 223
 The concept of harmonious interests 225
 THE STRUCTURALIST APPROACH 225
 Organizational conflict 226
 Structuralism today 227
 Social Research: Sociologists at Work 228
 ORGANIZATION IN CHINA TODAY 228
 Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints 230
 Summary 232
 Key Terms 233
 For Further Reading 233

CLASS AND FAMILY 250
 Fertility 250
 Child rearing 250
 Divorce 250
 CLASS AND MORTALITY 251
 CLASS AND LIFE STYLE 251
 CLASS AND VOLUNTARY-ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP 251
 CLASS AND RELIGION 251
 CLASS AND POLITICS 251
 CLASS AND PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT 254
 Social Mobility 255
 MOBILITY IN AMERICA 255
 THE CAUSES OF MOBILITY 256
 SOME EFFECTS OF MOBILITY 257
 Three approaches to stratification 258
 MARX 258
 WEBER 258
 THE FUNCTIONALIST VIEW 261
 Social Research: Sociologists at Work 262
 RULING-CLASS COHESIVENESS IN THE UNITED STATES 262
 Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints 263
 Summary 265
 Key Terms 266
 For Further Reading 267

chapter 9

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

page 235

Social class and social status 236
 WHAT IS A SOCIAL CLASS? 236
 SOCIAL STATUS 238
 Ascribed and achieved status 238
 Status inconsistency 241
 COMPONENTS OF CLASS AND STATUS 241
 Social inequality 244
 CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION 244
 Stratification is social 244
 Stratification is found everywhere 245
 Stratification varies in form and degree 245
 Stratification is important 245
 INCOME INEQUALITY 245
 WHO IS POOR? 246
 Employment 246
 Education 246
 Sex 246
 Race 248
 INEQUALITY AND UNFAIRNESS 248
 The results of stratification 250

chapter 10

RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS

page 269

Ethnic groups, minorities, and racial groups 271
 ETHNIC GROUPS 271
 MINORITY GROUPS 272
 RACIAL GROUPS 274
 Minorities in North America 275
 NATIVE MINORITIES 275
 Indians in the United States 275
 Indians in Canada 277
 Eskimos 277
 ASIAN MINORITIES 278
 The Chinese 278
 The Japanese 278
 SPANISH-SPEAKING MINORITIES 279
 Puerto Ricans 279
 Mexican Americans 279
 FRENCH CANADIANS 280
 BLACKS 282
 Slavery in the colonies 282
 Blacks in modern society 282

JEWIS 285
 Prejudice and ideology 287
 PREJUDICE 287
 RACISM 288
 NATIONALISM 289
 Patterns of group interaction 291
 ETHNIC STRATIFICATION 291
 Colonialism 291
 Segregation and discrimination 292
 Expulsion or annihilation 293
 ETHNIC PLURALISM 293
 INTEGRATION 295
 Reactions of minority groups to dominance 296
 PASSIVITY AND WITHDRAWAL 296
 NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE 297
 VIOLENT RESISTANCE 298
 Social Research: Sociologists at Work 298
 IQ AND RACE 298
 COMPETITION AND INTERGROUP HOSTILITY 299
 Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints 300
 SUSTAINING A PLURALIST SOCIETY 301
 Tolerance 301
 Economic autonomy 301
 Legal autonomy 301
 Unambiguous group membership 302
 Discrimination 302
 AN INTEGRATED SOCIETY 302
 Summary 303
 Key Terms 304
 For Further Reading 305

chapter 11
COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR
AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

page 307

Conditions in which collective behavior occurs 308
 Crowds 310
 DISASTERS 310
 PANIC 311
 THE ACTING CROWD 311
 Contagion theories 312
 Convergence theory 314
 Emergent-norm theory 316
 Game theory 316
 Communication processes in large groups 318
 RUMOR 318
 PUBLIC OPINION 319

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MASS MEDIA 320
 Suggestion 321
 Propaganda 322
 Fads, fashions, and crazes 322
 MASS HYSTERIA 323
 Social movements 324
 FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS 325
 THE LIFE CYCLE OF A SOCIAL MOVEMENT 326
 TYPES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS 326
 Social Research: Sociologists at Work 327
 THE WELFARE RIGHTS MOVEMENT 327
 Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints 330
 THE MEDIA AND COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR 330
 THE POLICE AND COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR 330
 Summary 332
 Key Terms 333
 For Further Reading 333

PART THREE
Social Institutions 335

chapter 12
THE FAMILY

page 337

Family organization and kinship patterns 338
 RULES OF MARRIAGE 339
 SYSTEMS OF DESCENT 340
 SYSTEMS OF RESIDENCE 340
 Functions of the family 342
 REGULATION OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND
 REPRODUCTION 342
 Nonmarital sexual behavior 342
 Homosexual relationships 343
 SOCIALIZATION 344
 PROTECTION 344
 AFFECTION 345
 Variations in family structure 346
 ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN 346
 DIVORCE 348
 The universality of the family 349
 SOCIETIES WITHOUT FAMILIES? 349
 The Nayars 350
 Kibbutzim 350
 The USSR after the Revolution 351

CAN SOCIETIES SURVIVE WITHOUT FAMILIES?	352
<i>Perspectives on social change and the family</i>	352
THE CONSERVATIVE VIEW	352
LePlay	352
Frazier	353
THE RADICAL VIEW	353
Marx and Engels	353
THE LIBERAL VIEW: FUNCTIONALISM	354
Industrialization and the nuclear family	354
Sex role differentiation	355
<i>Social Research: Sociologists at Work</i>	357
OLD AGE AND THE FAMILY	357
THE FUTURE OF THE FAMILY	358
<i>Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints</i>	361
CHALLENGE TO TRADITIONAL SEX ROLES	362
ALTERNATIVES TO THE PRESENT FAMILY	363
Summary	364
Key Terms	365
For Further Reading	365

chapter 13

RELIGION

page 367

<i>Classification of religions</i>	368
<i>The institutionalization of religion</i>	370
CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP	371
THE ROUTINIZATION OF CHARISMA	371
Ritual	371
Belief	371
Religious organization	372
ADJUSTING TO THE SOCIAL ORDER	373
<i>The organization and functions of religion</i>	373
TYPES OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION	373
THE FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION	374
<i>Meaning, magic, and sorcery</i>	375
MEANING AND RELIGION	375
RELIGION AS THE SACRED	377
RELIGION AND MAGIC	378
WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY	378
<i>Religion and social stratification</i>	379
WEBER ON THEOLOGIES AND SOCIAL STATUS	379
SOCIAL CLASS AND RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT:	
EMPIRICAL DATA	382
<i>Religious groups in North America</i>	383
THE UNITED STATES	383
CANADA	385
<i>Theoretical approaches to religion</i>	385

EMILE DURKHEIM: RELIGION AS WORSHIP OF SOCIETY	385
SIGMUND FREUD: RELIGION AS ILLUSION	386
KARL MARX: RELIGION AS IDEOLOGY	386
MAX WEBER: RELIGION AS A SOURCE OF SOCIAL CHANGE	387
<i>The effects of religiosity</i>	391
<i>Social Research: Sociologists at Work</i>	392
THE SOCIAL ORIGIN OF MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS	392
RELIGIOUS TRENDS IN THE WEST	393
Wuthnow's study	393
Cox's study	396
Heirich's study	397
<i>Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints</i>	398
RELIGION AND THE STATE	398
Summary	399
Key Terms	400
For Further Reading	401

chapter 14

EDUCATION

page 403

<i>The functions of education</i>	404
THE TRANSMISSION OF CIVILIZATION	404
BABY-SITTING	404
BUILDING NATIONAL SPIRIT	405
ESTABLISHING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS	405
JOB TRAINING	405
TEACHING VALUES	405
CERTIFICATION	406
<i>Trends in education</i>	407
THE UNITED STATES	408
Supplying the job market	408
Variations in the quality of education	410
CANADA	410
THE THIRD WORLD	411
<i>Liberalism and conservatism—the main issues</i>	412
EDUCATION FOR STABILITY OR REFORM?	412
THE LINK BETWEEN EDUCATION AND STATUS	414
<i>Social Research: Sociologists at Work</i>	416
AN EQUAL EDUCATION FOR ALL?	416
THE COLEMAN REPORT	416
JENCKS ON INEQUALITY	417
EDUCATION'S IMPACT ON STUDENTS	418
Changing the student	418

Competition in education 419
Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints 421
 THE PRODUCTIVITY OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS 421
 EDUCATION AND THE LABOR MARKET 423
 QUALITY AND EQUALITY 424
 Busing 424
 Variety or homogeneity? 424
 EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE 425
 Summary 425
 Key Terms 426
 For Further Reading 426

chapter 15
POLITICS AND SOCIETY

page 429

Power, politics, and the state 430
 WHAT IS POLITICS? 430
 LEGITIMACY AND POWER 431
 THREE BASES FOR LEGITIMACY 431
 THE ROLE OF INTEREST GROUPS 432
Pluralism 433
 DE TOCQUEVILLE 434
 DURKHEIM 435
 DEMOCRACY AND PATTERNS OF SOCIAL DIVISION 435
 PLURALISM AND AMERICAN POLITICS 437
Elitism 438
 MICHELS 438
 A PLURALIST REPLY 439
 THE PLURALIST-ELITIST SYNTHESIS 440
Marxism 442
 MARXIST EXPLANATIONS OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS 443
 The communist revolutions in nonindustrial countries 443
 Corporate ownership 444
 The increasingly affluent working class 445
 NEO-MARXISM 445
 PROBLEMS WITH THE NEO-MARXIST VIEW 447
Conclusion 448
Social Research: Sociologists at Work 448
 ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND PARTICIPATION 448
 THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT 450
 RECENT TRENDS IN AMERICAN VOTING PATTERNS 450
 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN TOTALITARIAN REGIMES 451
 MASS REBELLIONS 453

Brinton on the origins of mass rebellions 453
 Davies on the origins of mass rebellions 454
 Russell on the outcome of rebellions 454
Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints 456
 THE CASE FOR DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION 456
 THE CASE FOR REVOLUTION 457
 THE POLITICAL CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE 458
 Summary 458
 Key Terms 459
 For Further Reading 460

chapter 16
ECONOMIC LIFE

page 463

The historical development of economic systems 465
 PRIMITIVE ECONOMIES 465
 EXPLOITATION OF LABOR 467
 COMMERCIAL FARMING IN ENGLAND 468
 THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION 468
Modern economic systems 469
 CAPITALISM 469
 Labor relations in advanced capitalism 470
 The welfare state 471
 SOCIALISM 471
 The Soviet Union 472
 Yugoslavia 474
 China 475
The development of economic thought 475
 MERCANTILISM 477
 ADAM SMITH 477
 KARL MARX 478
 THE MODERN MARKET SYSTEM AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION 479
Social Research: Sociologists at Work 481
 WORK 481
 ALIENATION 482
 AUTOMATION 483
 OCCUPATIONAL ROLES 483
 The executive role 484
 The professional role 484
 The foreman 485
 The low-skilled worker 485
 POSTINDUSTRIAL SOCIETY 485
 MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS 486
Social Policy: Issues and Viewpoints 487
 CAPITAL ACCUMULATION AND VICIOUS CYCLES 489
 EQUITY VERSUS GROWTH 489
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RICH NATIONS AND POOR NATIONS 490