

SOCIOLOGY

The Core



James W. Vander Zanden
Fourth Edition

SOCIOLOGY

THE CORE

FOURTH EDITION

James W. Vander Zanden

The Ohio State University

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SOCIOLOGY
The Core

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*To my sons,
Nels and Brad*

Preface

We are about to enter the twenty-first century—a rather awesome thought. Perhaps even more daunting, students currently taking a first course in sociology will live out the greater part of their lives in the new century. The education that students receive should allow them to live fuller, richer, and more fruitful lives. Indeed, such a goal is ultimately the bedrock upon which we build and justify our careers as educators and sociologists.

The introductory course in sociology affords students the opportunity to grasp the power of the sociological imagination in understanding and mastering their social world. As a science of social organization and interaction, sociology provides a new vision of social life. It encourages us to scrutinize aspects of our social environment that we might otherwise ignore, neglect, or take for granted. Sociology equips us with a special form of consciousness, suspending the belief that things are simply as they seem. In sum, sociology is a liberating science.

☐ Providing the Core

A course in sociology should broaden the horizons of students, sharpen their observational skills, and strengthen their analytical capabilities. But as the store of sociological knowledge has grown, many instructors have felt it necessary to transmit more and more material to their students. This trend is reflected in many mainline introductory sociology textbooks that are little more than information catalogs. Unhappily, students are finding themselves overwhelmed with concepts, principles, and data, and the first course in sociology is rapidly becoming unmanageable. Under these circumstances, sociology loses its vitality as a “way of seeing” and becomes simply a body of information that students must mechanically memorize and regurgitate on examinations.

This text aims to make the introductory course manageable for instructors and students alike. It provides the core of sociology—the basic foundations of the discipline. It strips away many peripheral concerns and presents the essentials of sociology. In so doing, it aims to supply a solid foundation in sociological concepts and principles without compromising the integrity of the discipline. The coverage of many key topics—theory, culture, socialization, groups, formal organization, deviance, social stratification, race, gender, power, the family, religion, and social change—is equal to, and in many cases exceeds, that found in most other introductory textbooks.

A core text serves as a home base for students while allowing greater latitude to instructors. It is an aid to pedagogy, a coherent presentation of sociological materials. Instructors can supplement the text with papers, readers, or monographs that meet their unique teaching needs. It would be presumptuous for any sociologist to program another sociologist’s course. So I have attempted to provide a solid resource—a common intellectual platform—with the hope that each instructor will find it a sound foundation and go on his or her own way from there. Simultaneously, students can use the core text as a “second voice,” available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and move at their own pace, irrespective of their educational backgrounds.

☐ Bringing Students In

The text seeks to make sociology come alive as a vital and exciting field, to relate principles to real-world circumstances, and to attune students to the dynamic processes of our rapidly changing contemporary society. In this way the study of a science comes to captivate student interest and

excite student imagination. In my classes at Ohio State University, I have attempted to foster and encourage a sociological consciousness through student projects and journals. I have asked the students to observe particular events and then interpret them with sociological concepts and principles. Through this process I have hoped to encourage students to begin thinking like sociologists. The insights supplied by the students are often quite interesting. A sampling of this material is provided in boxes labeled "Doing Sociology." The boxes allow students to teach other students by bringing the full drama, color, and richness of the human experience to the learning process. In this edition, I have included eight new "Doing Sociology" boxes, seven of which summarize the classroom experiences of sociology instructors and their students as told in *Teaching Sociology*.

□ Pedagogical Aids

In selecting pedagogical aids for the text, I decided to use those that provide the most guidance with the least clutter. Each chapter opens with an outline of its major headings, which allows students to review at a glance the material to be covered. Each chapter concludes with a numbered summary that recapitulates the central points and allows students to review what they have read in a systematic manner, and with a list of key terms and definitions that provides students with a convenient means of reviewing key concepts. The terms most essential to the core of sociology are set in **boldface** type and are defined as they are presented in the text.

□ Ancillary Materials

Accompanying *Sociology: The Core* is a complete package of learning and teaching aids. The stu-

dent Study Guide, prepared by Meg Wilkes Karraker, offers major learning objectives for each chapter; matching and multiple-choice items that review key concepts; questions for review; and selected readings.

The Instructor's Manual, prepared by John Henderson, Scottsdale Community College, includes chapter-by-chapter techniques for reinforcing the textual material, classroom ideas, student projects, and annotated lists of films and additional readings.

The Print Test Bank, prepared by John Henderson, contains fifty to sixty multiple-choice items and five to ten essay questions per chapter. This test bank is also available in floppy disk for use on IBM-compatible and Macintosh computers.

An extensive set of 80 four-color high-quality acetate overhead transparencies for introductory sociology are available from McGraw-Hill along with a new videodisc, *Points of Departure* (also available on videotape), based on NBC news footage as well as a diverse video library.

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JAMES W. VANDER ZANDEN

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Chapter 1



DEVELOPING A SOCIOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

New Levels of Reality
The Sociological Imagination
Microsociology and Macrosociology

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Auguste Comte and Harriet Martineau
Herbert Spencer
Karl Marx
Emile Durkheim
Max Weber
American Sociology

CONDUCTING RESEARCH

The Logic of Science
Steps in the Scientific Method
Research Methods
Research Ethics

"No man [or woman] is an island, entire of itself," wrote the English poet John Donne some four centuries ago. He was drawing our attention to the fact that every person may be many things, but above all each of us is a social being. As infants we are born into a social environment; we become genuinely human only in this environment; and we take our places within the human enterprise in such an environment. Indeed, we cannot be human all by ourselves. What we think, how we feel, and what we say and do are shaped by our interaction with other people in group settings. It is the web of meanings, expectations, behavior, and structural arrangements that result when people interact with one another in society that is the stuff of the science we term sociology. Thus we may define **sociology** as the scientific study of social interaction and organization.

Judged by ancient folklore, myths, and archaeological remains, human beings have had a long interest in understanding themselves and their social arrangements. They have pondered why people of other societies order their lives in ways that differ from theirs. They have reflected on the reasons that members of their society violate social rules. They have wondered why some people become wealthy while others experience abject poverty. They have been bewildered by episodes of mass hysteria, revolution, and war. Yet it has been only in the past 150 years or so that human beings have sought answers to these and related questions through science. This science—sociology—pursues the study of social interaction and group behavior through research governed by the rigorous and disciplined collection and analysis of facts.

But many of us are not simply interested in understanding society and human behavior. We would also like to improve the human condition so that we and others might lead fuller, richer, and more fruitful lives. To do this, we need knowledge about the basic structures and processes involved in the social enterprise. Sociology, through its emphasis on observation and

measurement, allows us to bring rigorous and systematic scientific thinking and information to bear on difficult questions associated with social policies and choices, including such themes as poverty, health, immigration, crime, and education. Many people interested in these issues do not realize that more is needed than a "loving heart." Put another way, knowledge must inform action.

Sociological writings often find application in practical matters (Barber, 1988). For instance, the U.S. Supreme Court placed heavy reliance on social science findings regarding the effects of segregation on children in reaching its historic 1954 decision declaring mandatory school segregation unconstitutional (Klineberg, 1986; Jackson, 1990). Similarly, research on the nursery school experiences of children was influential in leading government officials to establish the Head Start program in 1965 and later to provide rigorous follow-up programs so that the effects of Head Start do not "wash out" over time (Zigler Styfco, 1993). The purpose of Head Start is to provide preschool educational opportunities for economically disadvantaged youngsters so that they may become financially independent. Social science research has also dramatically changed our ideas about crime, poverty, aging, mental illness, alcoholism, foreigners, foreign cultures, and behavioral differences in men and women. As the result of this and other research, Americans today have a quite different view of human behavior and social institutions than their parents did only a generation ago (Sterba, 1982; Ferriss, 1988).

Increasingly, people are coming to recognize the centrality of the social and behavioral sciences to the nation's health and science agenda. For instance, a 1993 study released by the American Medical Association shows that at least \$1 out of every \$4 Americans spend on health care each year goes to treat conditions that result from alcohol abuse, drug use, smoking, street and domestic violence, and other behaviors that are potentially changeable through social interventions (*New York Times*, February 23, 1993,

B/7). Indeed, sociologists may deliberately design studies to evaluate public policies or to inform us about social conditions, such as those that assess the effects of various criminal justice programs (Sampson and Laub, 1990; Langan, 1991), the social consequences of mass unemployment (Buss and Redburn, 1983), and the social impact that highways and high-technology actions have on people's lives and the physical environment (Freudenburg, 1986). Further, the collection of census and other national statistical data, which is the foundation of many federal and state policies on health, education, housing, and welfare, is based on sample survey and statistical techniques developed by sociologists and other social scientists. Sociology, then, is a powerful scientific tool both for acquiring knowledge about ourselves and for intervening in social affairs to realize various goals.

□ The Sociological Perspective

The sociological perspective invites us to look beyond the often neglected and taken-for-granted aspects of our social environment and examine them in fresh and creative ways (Berger, 1963). We find that there are many layers of meaning in the human experience and that things are not always what they seem. Networks of invisible rules and institutional arrangements guide our behavior. And we continually evolve, negotiate, and rework tacit bargains with family members, friends, lovers, and work associates as we steer our lives along the paths of everyday activity. Many of these understandings are below the usual threshold of our awareness (Collins and Makowsky, 1984), and so as we look behind the outer edifice of the world and scrutinize the hidden fabric, we encounter new levels of reality (see "Doing Sociology," which examines how we navigate across crowded campus sidewalks). This approach to reality—a special form of consciousness—is the core of the sociological perspective.

Doing Sociology: Navigating across Campus

Consider what happens as you navigate crowded campus side-walks and intersections. If you and your classmates were to move like two sets of robots, each set maintaining its line of march, you would constantly knock one another down. Yet somehow you manage to minimize collisions. What crash avoidance devices do you employ in routing your movement across campus? Students in introductory sociology classes at Ohio State University have examined this matter and have identified a number of social mechanisms.

- Cultural rules assist us by providing guidelines for navigating walkways. They dictate that we use the right side of the walk. They define for us the “first come, first through”



(Left) Notice the step-and-slide maneuver the man is making to effect a “clean pass.” (Right) Notice how the woman communicates through eye contact with the man her intention of crossing in front of him. Both parties must take account of each other in devising their movements if they are to avoid a collision. (Don McCarthy)



principle at crowded intersections. And they provide that men should defer to women, the young to the elderly, and the able-bodied to the handicapped. We need not invent a new solution for each sidewalk

encounter. Instead, we employ common understandings or ready-made answers that were devised by earlier generations of Americans. Accordingly, we do not cross the campus in a haphazard or random fashion,

NEW LEVELS OF REALITY

We can gain an appreciation for the sociological perspective by considering a classic study carried out by social scientist Elliot Liebow (1967) in a downtown Washington, D.C., African-American neighborhood. Thirty-seven years old and white, he began “hanging out” on a corner in front of the New Deal Carry-out Shop. Liebow won the trust of twenty or so African-American men, listened carefully, and faithfully told their stories in the study he titled *Tally’s Corner*.

The shop is located a short distance from the White House in a blighted section of the city. It is open seven days a week, serving a diverse clientele coffee, hamburgers, french fries, hot dogs, and submarine sandwiches. The men come to the corner to eat, to enjoy easy talk, to banter with women who pass by, to “horse around,” to see “what’s happening,” and in general to pass the time. Some of the men are close friends, some do not like others, and some think of others as enemies.

but we move in accordance with established cultural formulas or recipes.

- Even if we were to program robots to remain on the right side of the walk, they would collide at intersections. So in crossing the campus, we need to communicate our intentions. For the most part, we accomplish this task on the nonverbal level. At about 15 or 20 feet, we ordinarily size up the situation by glancing at pedestrians we are likely to encounter at an intersection and occasionally establish fleeting eye contact with them. We then shut down eye contact until we are about 3 to 5 feet apart. At this distance we establish brief eye contact, signaling to others that we recognize their presence. However, we usually do not hold the visual contact unless we wish to take an assertive or aggressive stance. Simultaneously, we mentally calculate our own and the other person's pace and

make appropriate adjustments to avoid a collision. In doing so, we may "negotiate" with the other individuals—we slow our pace to signal to them that we would like them to increase their pace, or we quicken our pace to ask them to slow their pace. Additionally, we mutually inform one another of our anticipated route through body language. We may incline our heads, shoulders, or bodies and dart our eyes in the direction we are headed.

- Numbers make a difference. The lone individual is at a disadvantage, and groups at an advantage. A lone individual is likely to give way or detour around a group of people (even stepping off the sidewalk), whereas a group is likely to ignore a lone individual and continue on course in an assertive fashion.
- Pedestrians "compress" themselves in crowded settings. For instance, individuals cooperate

to effect a "clean pass." When they are about 5 to 6 feet apart, each person slightly angles his or her body, turns the shoulders, and takes a slight step to the side; hands are pulled inward or away to avoid hand-to-hand contact; bodies are twisted backward to maximize face-to-face distance. Likewise, students often pull their backpack or books toward a more central and less exposed position.

- In the course of navigating campus sidewalks, people are constantly sizing one another up, especially in terms of their basic roles and physical attractiveness. Men tend to hold their gaze longer when looking at women than when looking at men. Likewise, men seem to be permitted greater leeway in "looking over" women than women are permitted in "looking over" men. If individuals are interested in one another, after a few paces they follow up with a backward glance.

The following scene is typical of a weekday morning in this Washington neighborhood (Liebow, 1967:29):

A pickup truck drives slowly down the street. The truck stops as it comes abreast of a man sitting on a cast-iron porch and the white driver calls out, asking if the man wants a day's work. The man shakes his head and the truck moves on up the block, stopping again whenever idling men come within calling distance of the driver. At the Carry-out corner, five men debate the question briefly

and shake their heads no to the truck. The truck turns the corner and repeats the same performance up the next street. In the distance, one can see one man, then another climb into the back of the truck and sit down. In starts and stops, the truck finally disappears.

The white truckdriver views the African-American streetcorner men as lazy and irresponsible, unwilling "to take a job even if it were handed to them on a platter." But Liebow discovered quite a different picture. Indeed, most of the