IAN ROBERTSON Sociology

THIRD EDITION

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IAN ROBERTSON

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Sociology, THIRD EDITION

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PREFACE

Like its predecessors, this edition of *Sociology* rests on two basic premises. The first is that sociology is both a humanistic art and a rigorous science; in fact, much of its excitement arises from the insights offered by this unique blend of two intellectual traditions. The second premise is that sociology can be, and should be, a profoundly liberating discipline. By challenging conventional wisdoms and by dissolving the myths about social reality, the discipline provides an acute awareness of the human authorship of, and responsibility for, both the social world and much of our personal experience and identity. Sociology thus offers that crucial sense of options and choice that is essential to human freedom.

The original impetus to write this book grew out of several years' experience as a teacher and professional writer in radically different societies in North America, Europe, and Africa. Sociology fascinates me and informs my daily observations of the social world. I count the book successful to the extent that it conveys to the reader the sheer pleasure that I draw from sociology myself.

Changes in This Edition

The changes in the present edition are extensive: I have written three new chapters, combined or reorganized several others, rewritten much of the rest of the book, and replaced most of the illustrations and artwork.

The first of the new chapters deals with the important social institution of medicine, a subject that I have found has high student interest. The second of these chapters covers technology and environment and concentrates on a crucial feature of the modern world, the interaction between technological innovation and our social and natural surroundings. The third new chapter deals with

war and peace, with a particular focus on warfare in the nuclear age. I am particularly eager to include this novel chapter in a sociology text. It has long been a matter of regret to me that certain journals in our field contain so much material of so little real import, while crucial issues such as warfare—which, after all, has claimed nearly 100 million lives over the course of this century and now threatens the very future of society—go almost completely neglected.

To accommodate these new chapters and to improve the narrative flow, I have (1) combined the two original chapters on social stratification and on social inequality in the United States, (2) combined the original chapters on urbanization and population, and (3) eliminated the science chapter while transferring its core features to the new chapter on technology and environment.

I have also added a new theme to the book: the emergence of postindustrial society. The United States is now such a society, in the sense that most workers are engaged in providing services and information rather than in industrial manufacturing. At appropriate points the book explores the meaning and implications of this development. The change from preindustrial to industrial and now to postindustrial society has been accompanied by a shift in loyalties away from the community and tradition, and I examine the implications of this trend toward self-fulfillment and individualism in such areas as deviance, sexuality, gender roles, family life, religion, and the economy.

The additional new material in this edition is too extensive to list in full, but some of the new topics discussed are the sociology of art; the sociology of emotions; the sociology of time and space; mental disorder; the Japanese corporation; the medicalization of deviance; the death penalty; AIDS and new styles in sexual behavior; new immigration patterns; women and work; the chang-

ing economic status of children and the aged; problems of the black family; the abortion dilemma; academic standards in the schools; changes in the Islamic world; the American fundamentalist revival; socioeconomic changes in China; trends in the American political system; world-system theory; terrorism; and "urban legends." As before, I have tried throughout the book to convey a sense of the "cutting edge" of the discipline by including much material that is not traditionally covered in sociology texts.

Organization

In general, the coverage of the field continues to reflect the same goal that I had for the first edition, when I decided at the outset not to write a slender "core" text covering a few selected topics. The problem with such an approach, of course, is that one person's core may be another's apple—or vice versa—with the result that some instructors are left without text discussion of material they consider essential. Instead, I have tried to give a broad coverage of the main areas of the discipline, while keeping the text sufficiently flexible to be adapted to the needs of individual instructors.

I have again divided the book into five units. Unit I provides an introduction to sociology and to the methods of sociological research. Unit II deals with the individual, culture, and society, and focuses on the influence of social and cultural forces on personal experience and social behavior. The chapters in this unit cover culture, society, socialization, social interaction, social groups, deviance, and sexual behavior. Unit III discusses various forms of social inequality, and emphasizes the role of ideology as well as coercion and tradition in the maintenance of inequalities. The first chapter in the unit deals with the general problem of social stratification, and then discusses the United States in detail; the second deals with inequalities of race and ethnicity; and the third, with inequalities of gender and of age. Unit IV discusses several important social institutions: the family, education, religion, medicine, the economic order, and the political order. Finally, Unit V focuses on some issues of social change; it contains chapters on social change, collective behavior and social movements, population and urbanization, technology and environment, and war and peace.

I have taken great care, however, to structure the book in such a way that instructors can, if they wish, omit some chapters and present others in a different order. Nearly all instructors will want to cover the first five chapters, in which the most important terms and concepts of the discipline are introduced. (Chapter 2, on methods, could be omitted, but devoting some lecture time to research methods would then be advisable.) The sequence of the remaining chapters can then be freely rearranged to suit the convenience of the individual instructor, and there are ample cross-references to the five basic chapters and to relevant topics in other chapters to facilitate the use of any alternative sequence.

Features

The book includes a number of distinctive features that are intended to enhance its effectiveness as a teaching and learning tool.

Cross-cultural material. While this book is not intended as an exercise in comparative sociology, I have started from the assumption that sociology is something more than the study of American society. Throughout the text there are frequent references to other cultures and to the historical past. This material is intended to serve two purposes. The first is to enliven the text, for the ways of life of other peoples—particularly in preindustrial societies—are inherently fascinating. The second purpose, more serious, is to undermine ethnocentric attitudes by highlighting, through comparison, distinctive aspects of American society that might otherwise pass unnoticed or be taken for granted.

Art. The sociology of art has long been a personal interest of mine, and I have always regarded the artwork and other illustrations as integral to the book—nearly as important, in fact, as the writing. Users have responded very positively to the inclusion of fine art in previous editions, and I have expanded this feature in the present revision, paying particular attention to pieces that convey points of historical or cross-cultural interest. I have also taken particular care in selecting photographs, cartoons, and other graphic materials that best complement the narrative. Additionally, I have tried to provide full and informative captions that reinforce and amplify the text discussion. Numerous tables and charts, up-to-date and easy to read, are also used to aid the students' understanding of concepts and sociological data.

Theory. I have always believed that a sound introduction to sociological theory should be an essential feature of the introductory course, and that we

fail both the discipline and our students if we do not provide it. The treatment of theory in this book is shaped by two convictions. The first is that theory can be presented in a clear, concise, interesting, and understandable manner, and that its practical value can be readily appreciated by the student. The second conviction is that theory must not, as happens all too often, be briefly introduced in the first chapter and then hastily buried: this tactic can only confirm the student's worst suspicions that theory is an irrelevant luxury.

I have again taken a fairly eclectic approach to sociological theory and have utilized all three of the main perspectives in the contemporary discipline: functionalist theory (primarily for issues of social order and stability), conflict theory (primarily for issues of social tension and change), and interactionist theories (primarily for "micro" issues). Above all, I have made use of these perspectives throughout the book—not by applying them mechanically to everything, but by introducing particular theoretical perspectives where they will genuinely enhance the understanding of a specific issue. Where the perspectives complement one another, as they often do, this is made clear; where they seem contradictory, the problem is discussed, and, if possible, resolved. I have drawn extensively, of course, on the ideas of contemporary sociologists; but in keeping with the continuing resurgence of interest in classical thinkers, I have given due emphasis to such writers as Marx, Durkheim, and Weber.

Readings. I have included a number of readings from original sources at appropriate places in the text. These readings have been chosen for their interest and relevance, and are designed to give the student a deeper, more first-hand experience of sociological writing and research.

Pedagogical aids. Several features of the book are designed to aid the learning process. Each chapter begins with a brief overview of its major topics and closes with a numbered, point-by-point summary of the contents. All important terms are printed in bold-face italics and immediately defined—and the definitions are consistent throughout. These important terms are also listed (with the number of the page on which they are defined) for end-of-chapter review. Throughout the book, there are also occasional boxes containing short and relevant items of interest.

Glossary. The book contains an extensive glossary—virtually a mini-dictionary—of over three

hundred important sociological terms. The glossary can be used both for ready reference and for reviewing purposes.

Library research techniques. I have included a brief appendix on techniques of library research. This appendix is intended as a handy guide to library facilities, including data-base computer files; it offers many suggestions for tracking down sources and information and should prove useful to students working on term papers or research projects.

Supplementary Materials

A new *Study Guide* is available to help students both in understanding and in reviewing the course. The guide, prepared by Carla B. Howery of the American Sociological Association, includes learning objectives, chapter summaries, multiplechoice questions, application exercises, and case studies.

The text is further complemented by a comprehensive *Instructor's Resource Manual*, extensively revised by Donald P. Irish (Hamline University) and Carla B. Howery. The revised manual includes essay and application questions, discussions and demonstrations, projects, sample lectures, additional lecture topics, a film guide, a new software guide, sample syllabi, and other teaching resources.

A *Test Bank* of multiple-choice questions has been prepared by Jeffrey P. Rosenfeld (Nassau Community College) and John N. Short (University of Arkansas, Monticello). The test bank is accompanied by *Computest*, a computerized test-generation system.

A new supplement to the text is a set of *Computer Simulations*. The simulations contain eight personal-computer games that allow students to practice and apply sociological concepts in an interesting and stimulating way. The simulations have been prepared by John Stimson (William Paterson College), Ardyth Stimson (Kean College), Stephen Shalom (William Paterson College), and Robert C. Rosen (William Paterson College). They are designed for use with an Apple II+/IIe/IIc.

The text has also served as the basis for a series of video programs, *Focus on Society*, prepared for open-circuit broadcast and cable television by the Dallas County Community College District. This series is supplemented by a separate study guide by Paul McGee (North Lake College).

Finally, I have prepared a new edition of my

anthology of readings in sociology, *The Social World*. Organized in the same sequence of topics as the text, the reader should provide a useful accompaniment to it.

Thanks

I have been greatly helped in the preparation of this book by a number of people, including the many instructors and students who have offered their comments and suggestions either in writing or in person. I particularly want to thank those of my colleagues who evaluated various parts of the published second edition and of the manuscript for the third edition for accuracy, coverage, readability, currency, and teachability. The book owes a great deal to the many constructive criticisms and suggestions they offered. Of course, I have not always agreed with the reviewers (nor have they always agreed with one another), and the responsibility for the final manuscript is entirely my own. The reviewers were

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I am especially grateful to Donald Irish, who read the entire manuscript for all three editions; the book has benefited greatly from his cogent criticisms and humane wisdom. I have gained a great deal since the previous edition from my teaching of introductory sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and at William Paterson College, New Jersey, and I am indebted to my students and colleagues at both institutions.

I am grateful also to June Lundborg Whitworth, who is once again responsible for the photo and art research for the text. My thanks also go to two graduate students at Columbia University who helped with the research for the book, Tracey Dewart and Rosa Haritos.

Finally, I am fortunate to continue my association with Worth Publishers, a company with a deserved reputation for its commitment to excellence at every stage of the publishing process. For the effort they put into this book and the extraordinary support they have given me, my thanks go to Bob Worth and all his staff, notably George Touloumes, Sarah J. Segal, and Demetrios Zangos of the production department, and particularly my good friends and superb editors, Peter Deane and Linda Baron Davis.

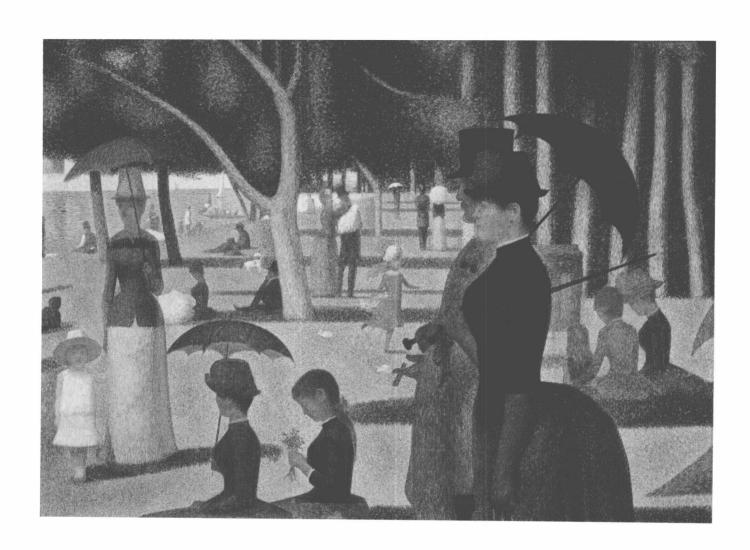
The Author

Ian Robertson spent most of his early years in South Africa, where he obtained a B.A. degree in Political Science at the University of Natal. As president of the multiracial National Union of South African Students he organized several campaigns against that country's apartheid laws, until he was arbitrarily placed under restriction by Prime Minister Vorster. Among other prohibitions, he was forbidden to teach, write, belong to organizations, enter college premises, or be with more than one other person at any time. He was eventually allowed to leave South Africa, and thereafter he studied at Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard universities, supporting himself through scholarships and writing. During this period his articles on various social topics appeared in such publications as the Times and Guardian in England and the New Republic and Nation in the United States.

Ian Robertson trained as a teacher at Oxford, where he was awarded a Diploma in Education in English and Latin. At Cambridge he took a First-Class Honors degree and M.A. in sociology and was elected Senior Scholar in Sociology at King's College. At Harvard he was awarded both a master's degree and a doctorate in the sociology of education. Dr. Robertson has a wide teaching experience: he has taught basic curriculum to retarded children in England, high school social studies in Massachusetts, sociology of education to Harvard graduates, and social sciences to Cambridge undergraduates. Most recently, he has taught introductory sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles (1983) and the William Paterson College of New Jersey (1985). He is currently devoting himself to his writing.

In addition to various articles, Dr. Robertson has published *Readings in Sociology: Contemporary Perspectives* (Harper & Row, 1976), *Race and Politics in South Africa* (Transaction Books, 1978), *Social Problems* (Random House, 1980), and *The Social World* (Worth, 1987).

Sociology



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UNIT 1

Introduction to Sociology

Like any subject that deals with people, sociology can be truly fascinating. This introductory unit explains what sociology is, as well as what sociologists do and how they go about their work. In reading it you will discover sociology's distinctive perspective on human society and social behavior.

The first chapter offers you a general overview of the discipline, presenting sociologists as "strangers" in the familiar landscape of their own society: in other words, as people who look afresh at the world others take for granted. The chapter explains the "sociological imagination"—the vivid awareness you will gain of the close link between personal experience and wider social forces. It also discusses the scientific nature of sociology, the relationship of sociology to other social sciences, the history of the discipline, and the major theoretical approaches that sociologists use to make sense of their subject matter.

The second chapter discusses the methods sociologists use to investigate the social world. Sociological research is essentially a form of detective work, in which the sociologist tries to find out what is happening in society and why. The value of sociologists' conclusions is obviously influenced by the accuracy and reliability of the methods they use to collect and analyze the evidence. The chapter therefore examines the problems of tracing cause and effect in social behavior, the unique difficulties sociologists face in their research, and the methods they use to uncover the facts about social life.

The illustration opposite is a detail from Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte, by the French artist Georges Seurat. The work was painted in Europe a century ago and shows one aspect of the diverse and changing milieu in which the discipline of sociology developed.