

FOURTH EDITION

MAPPING
THE SOCIAL
LANDSCAPE

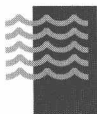


READINGS IN
SOCIOLOGY

SUSAN J. FERGUSON

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Mapping the Social Landscape

Readings in Sociology

Fourth Edition

SUSAN J. FERGUSON

Grinnell College



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MAPPING THE SOCIAL LANDSCAPE: READINGS IN SOCIOLOGY, FOURTH EDITION

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Preface

As the title suggests, *Mapping the Social Landscape* is about exploration and discovery. It means taking a closer look at a complex, ever-changing social world in which locations, pathways, and boundaries are not fixed. Because sociology describes and explains our social surroundings, it enables us to understand this shifting landscape. Thus, sociology is about discovering society and discovering ourselves. The purpose of this anthology is to introduce the discipline of sociology and to convey the excitement and the challenge of the sociological enterprise.

Although a number of readers in introductory sociology are already available for students, I have yet to find one that exposes students to the broad diversity of scholarship, perspectives, and authorship that exists within the field of sociology. This diversity goes beyond recognizing gender, racial-ethnic, and social class differences to acknowledging a plurality of voices and views within the discipline. Like other anthologies, this one includes classic works by authors such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, and C. Wright Mills; in addition, however, I have drawn from a wide range of contemporary scholarship, some of which provides newer treatments of traditional concepts. This diversity of viewpoints and approaches should encourage students to evaluate and analyze the sociological ideas and research findings presented.

In addition, because I find it invaluable in my own teaching to use examples from personal experiences to enable students to see the connection between “private troubles and public issues,” as C. Wright Mills phrased it, I have included in this collection a few personal narratives to help students comprehend how social forces affect individual lives. Thus, this anthology includes classic as well as contemporary writings, and the voices of other social scientists who render provocative sociological insights. The readings also exemplify functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist perspectives and different types of research methodology. Each article is preceded by a brief headnote that sets the context within which the reader can seek to understand the sociological work. Thus, the selections communicate an enthusiasm for sociology while illustrating sociological concepts, theories, and methods.

During the past 30 years, sociology has benefited from a rich abundance of creative scholarship, but many of these original works have not been adequately presented in textbooks or readers. I believe an introductory anthology needs to reflect the new questions concerning research and theory within the discipline. Moreover, I find that students enjoy reading the actual words and research of sociologists. This anthology, therefore, includes many

cutting-edge pieces of sociological scholarship and some very recent publications by recognized social analysts. Current issues are examined, including childhood school cliques, teen pregnancy, depression and identity, gangs, the tattoo subculture, gay and lesbian families, TV talk shows, working at McDonald's, the effects of globalization, racism in the United States, the Internet, poverty, military boot camps, teen suicide, eating disorders, elite boarding schools, and the political influence of corporate PACs. In essence, I have attempted not to break new ground but, rather, to compile a collection that provides a fresh, innovative look at the discipline of sociology.

Changes to the Fourth Edition

With this fourth edition, I maintain a balance of classical and contemporary readings. In addition to many of the classic pieces that appeared in the third edition, I have included Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore's classic work on some principles of stratification. I also have brought back Talcott Parsons' classic selection on the social structure of medicine. Both of these classic pieces are wonderful "lead" articles for the sections they are in, and they lay the groundwork for enhanced sociological understanding. Other changes I have made to this fourth edition include the addition of 18 selections of contemporary sociological research that illustrate analyses of timely social issues and the intersections among race, social class, and gender. These new selections examine cosmetic surgery, women in racist groups, a prison riot, rape on college campuses, the working poor, racial dynamics at the slaughterhouse, Native Americans and casinos, HIV/AIDS in Africa, religion in the United States, working mothers, Iraq and the war against terrorism, and multiracial identities. Among these readings are some selections that I consider to be contemporary classics in that they provide an overview of the discipline of sociology or a specific content area. These readings include an essay by Michael Schwalbe on how the social world works; a now classic work by Michael Omi and Howard Winant on the social construction of race in the United States; and an essay by Amitai Etzioni on community building. Based on reviewers' comments, I also have added a separate section on the institution of the mass media, which highlights the work of Marty Marger and Gregory Mantsios, as well as an excerpt from Todd Gitlin's new book, *Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives* (2001). I also have extensively revised the sections on race, health and medicine, and social change. I think the students will find the newer pieces in these sections more accessible and interesting. Of course, for all of the readings, I have tried to choose selections that are compelling to students and demonstrate well the diversity within the discipline of sociology. Please note that I welcome feedback from professors and students on this edition of *Mapping the Social Landscape*. You can e-mail me at Grinnell College. My e-mail address is fergusos@grinnell.edu.

Supplemental Learning Materials

I have written an accompanying test manual that contains numerous examination and discussion questions for each reading. As the editor of this anthology, I developed these items with the goal of helping instructors test students' understanding of key concepts and themes. The Instructor's Manual can be obtained from your local McGraw-Hill representative. In addition, there is a Web site for this book that links to additional information and resources. It can be found at www.mhhe.com/ferguson4.

Acknowledgments

The completion of this book involved the support and labor of many people. I would like to begin by acknowledging my former sociology editor, Serina Beauparlant of Mayfield Publishing Company, who challenged me, almost 10 years ago, to take on this project. Much of Serina's vision is contained within the structure of this book. Over the years we have spent many hours on the telephone debating the strengths and weaknesses of various readings. Serina, if I am a clutch hitter, then you are the phenomenal batting coach. I could not have asked for a more thoughtful and attentive sociology editor. Thank you for initiating this project with me.

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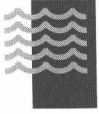
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PART I

The Sociological Perspective

1

THE PROMISE

C. WRIGHT MILLS

The initial three selections examine the sociological perspective. The first of these is written by C. Wright Mills (1916–1962), a former professor of sociology at Columbia University. During his brief academic career, Mills became one of the best known and most controversial sociologists. He was critical of the U.S. government and other social institutions where power was unfairly concentrated. He also believed that academics should be socially responsible and speak out against social injustice. The excerpt that follows is from Mills' acclaimed book *The Sociological Imagination*. Since its original publication in 1959, this text has been a required reading for most introductory sociology students around the world. Mills' sociological imagination perspective not only compels the best sociological analyses but also enables the sociologist and the individual to distinguish between "personal troubles" and "public issues." By separating these phenomena, we can better comprehend the sources of and solutions to social problems.

Nowadays men often feel that their private lives are a series of traps. They sense that within their everyday worlds, they cannot overcome their troubles, and in this feeling, they are often quite correct: What ordinary men are directly aware of and what they try to do are bounded by the private orbits in which they live; their visions and their powers are limited to the close-up scenes of job, family, neighborhood; in other milieux, they move vicariously and remain spectators. And the more aware they become,

This article was written in 1959 before scholars were sensitive to gender inclusivity in language. The references to masculine pronouns and men are, therefore, generic to both males and females and should be read as such. Please note that I have left the author's original language in this selection and other readings. —*Editor*

From *The Sociological Imagination*, pp. 3–13. Copyright © 1959, 2000 by Oxford University Press, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of Oxford University Press.

however vaguely, of ambitions and of threats which transcend their immediate locales, the more trapped they seem to feel.

Underlying this sense of being trapped are seemingly impersonal changes in the very structure of continent-wide societies. The facts of contemporary history are also facts about the success and the failure of individual men and women. When a society is industrialized, a peasant becomes a worker; a feudal lord is liquidated or becomes a businessman. When classes rise or fall, a man is employed or unemployed; when the rate of investment goes up or down, a man takes new heart or goes broke. When wars happen, an insurance salesman becomes a rocket launcher; a store clerk, a radar man; a wife lives alone; a child grows up without a father. Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.

Yet men do not usually define the troubles they endure in terms of historical change and institutional contradiction. The well-being they enjoy, they do not usually impute to the big ups and downs of the societies in which they live. Seldom aware of the intricate connection between the patterns of their own lives and the course of world history, ordinary men do not usually know what this connection means for the kinds of men they are becoming and for the kinds of history making in which they might take part. They do not possess the quality of mind essential to grasp the interplay of man and society, of biography and history, of self and world. They cannot cope with their personal troubles in such ways as to control the structural transformations that usually lie behind them.

Surely it is no wonder. In what period have so many men been so totally exposed at so fast a pace to such earthquakes of change? That Americans have not known such catastrophic changes as have the men and women of other societies is due to historical facts that are now quickly becoming "merely history." The history that now affects every man is world history. Within this scene and this period, in the course of a single generation, one-sixth of mankind is transformed from all that is feudal and backward into all that is modern, advanced, and fearful. Political colonies are freed; new and less visible forms of imperialism installed. Revolutions occur; men feel the intimate grip of new kinds of authority. Totalitarian societies rise and are smashed to bits—or succeed fabulously. After two centuries of ascendancy, capitalism is shown up as only one way to make society into an industrial apparatus. After two centuries of hope, even formal democracy is restricted to a quite small portion of mankind. Everywhere in the underdeveloped world, ancient ways of life are broken up and vague expectations become urgent demands. Everywhere in the overdeveloped world, the means of authority and of violence become total in scope and bureaucratic in form. Humanity itself now lies before us, the super-nation at either pole concentrating its most coordinated and massive efforts upon the preparation of World War Three.

The very shaping of history now outpaces the ability of men to orient themselves in accordance with cherished values. And which values? Even when they do not panic, men often sense that older ways of feeling and think-