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SOCIOLOGY

THE CORE

SECOND
EDITION

JAMES W. VANDER ZANDEN

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THE CORE

SECOND EDITION

James W. Vander Zanden

Ohio State University

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*To my sons,
Nels and Brad*

SOCIOLOGY

The Core

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Preface

Few other academic disciplines touch us as closely as does sociology. As a science of social organization and interaction, it illuminates how we are woven as social beings into the fabric of our society. Sociology assists us in understanding what is happening around us and what social forces come to bear on us. It encourages us to scrutinize aspects of our social environment that we often ignore, neglect, or take for granted. So sociology equips us with a special form of consciousness.

☐ Supplying the Core

This text 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. 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 with the hope that each instructor will find it a sound foundation and go on his or her own way from there.

☐ 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 student to teach student by bringing the full drama, color, and richness of the human experience to the learning process.

☐ 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 conve-

nient 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 student Study Guide, prepared by Mary Margaret Wilkes Karraker, offers major learning objectives for each chapter; chapter summaries; multiple-choice items that review key concepts; questions for review; and current-events exercises.

The Instructor's Manual, prepared by Sally Rogers, includes learning objectives and techniques for reinforcing them; chapter outlines that highlight key concepts; five student projects for each chapter; annotated lists of films and supplemental readings; and an outline of assignments for book and journal reviews.

Two Print Test Banks, one also prepared by Sally Rogers, and another prepared by David Morriss, each contain seventy-five multiple-

choice items and five essay questions per chapter. These test banks are also available in floppy disks for use on IBM compatible or Apple computers.

Finally, an extensive set of high quality acetate overhead transparencies for introductory sociology are available from McGraw-Hill.

□ Acknowledgments

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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

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 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 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 should be 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 systematic information to bear on difficult questions associated with social policies and choices. Thus sociological findings often find application in practical matters. 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). Social science research has also dramatically changed our ideas about child development, 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).

Sociologists may also 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 (Feldman et al., 1983), 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 in 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 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 across the paths of everyday activity. Many of these understandings are beneath the usual threshold of our awareness (Collins and Makowsky, 1984), 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.

NEW LEVELS OF REALITY

We can gain an appreciation for the sociological perspective by considering a classic study carried out by the social scientist Elliot Liebow (1967) in Washington, D.C. He spent eighteen months studying the lives of some twenty black men who "hung out" on the streetcorner in front of the New Deal Carry-out Shop. 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.

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

Doing Sociology: Navigating Across Campus

Consider what happens as you navigate crowded campus sidewalks 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” principle at



In the photo on the left, notice the step-and-slide maneuver the man is making to effect a “clean pass.” In the photo on the 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)



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

- Even were we to program robots to remain on the

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. It starts and stops, the truck finally disappears.

right side of the walk, the robots 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

shoulder, 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 white truckdriver views the black 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 men on the corner that morning had jobs.

Boley had a weekday off because he worked Saturdays as a member of a trash collection crew. Sweets worked nights mopping floors and cleaning up trash in an office building. Tally had come back from his job after his employer had concluded that the weather was

not suitable for pouring concrete. And Clarence had to attend a funeral at eleven o'clock.

Also on the corner that morning were a few men who had been laid off and who were drawing unemployment compensation. They had nothing to gain by accepting work that paid little more, and frequently less, than they received in unemployment benefits. And there were a small number like Arthur, able-bodied men who had no visible means of support but who did not want a job. The truckdriver had assumed that the Arthurs were representative of all the streetcorner men. Finally, not to be forgotten, the man on the porch turned out to be severely crippled by arthritis.

The truckdriver thought that able-bodied men like Arthur do not work because they are lazy and undependable. Like many middle-class Americans, he believed that black ghetto men live only for the moment, indulging their whims and satisfying their current appetites with little thought for long-term consequences. Rather than providing for a wife and children, saving their money, and investing in a future, the men appear to squander their limited resources in a life style consumed by gambling, alcohol, drugs, and "high living."

But Liebow found these stereotyped images to be wrong. He discovered that streetcorner men and middle-class men differ not so much in their attitudes toward the future as in the different futures they see ahead of them. Middle-class men command sufficient financial resources to justify the long-term commitment of resources to money-market funds, savings accounts, mutual funds, stocks, and bonds. They hold jobs that offer the promise of upward mobility in corporate or professional careers. And they can reasonably expect their children to pursue a higher education. But it is otherwise for streetcorner men, who are obliged to expend all their resources maintaining themselves in the present. Thus when streetcorner men squander a week's pay in

two days it is not because, like animals or children, they are unconcerned with the future. They do so precisely because they are aware of the future and the hopelessness of their prospects.

Like many privileged Americans, the white truckdriver had located the job problems of ghetto men in the men themselves—or, more precisely, in their lack of willingness to work. Given this interpretation, social policy might best be directed toward changing the motivations of streetcorner men and encouraging them to develop those values and goals that lead to occupational achievement. But Liebow's research revealed a quite different state of affairs. The streetcorner men and other American men did *not* differ in their fundamental values or goals. The men on the corner also wanted stable jobs and marriages. However, they had continually discovered that jobs are only intermittently available, almost always menial, often hard, and invariably low-paying. Jobs as dishwashers, janitors, store clerks, and unskilled laborers lie outside those tracks that typically lead to advancement in the United States, and thus the jobs offer no more in the future than they do in the present. Moreover, armed with models of other men in their community who have failed, streetcorner men are uncertain of their ability to carry out their responsibilities as husbands and fathers.

In seeking an explanation for their behavior, Liebow looked beyond the individual men to the social fabric in which the men were enmeshed. He turned his investigative eye upon the social arrangements that are external to individuals but that nonetheless structure their experiences and place constraints on their behavior. In sum, society—and more particularly its groups and institutions—provides the framework for sociology, not the individual. The sociological perspective allows us to bring previously inaccessible aspects of