

Sociology



Paul B. Horton Chester L. Hunt

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Western Michigan University

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To
Talcott Parsons,
C. Wright Mills,
and
Erving Goffman

Preface

What should an introductory sociology textbook try to do? First and most important, we believe it should capture the interest of the student and demonstrate both the process and challenge of scientific observation and analysis of social behavior in a readable and interesting way.

Second, an introductory so-

ciology textbook should seek to cultivate in the student the habit of scientific analysis of social data. Unless students gain a sophisticated awareness of their own ethnocentrism and some ability to objectify their observations, the sociology course has failed in one of its major objectives.

Third, an introductory soci-

ology textbook should present the basic concepts and descriptive materials of sociology clearly and intelligibly. These should be illustrated so vividly that they "come alive" and become part of the student's thinking vocabulary. Concepts should be learned not simply as definitions to be memorized but as accurate,

descriptive names for the ways people act and the things people build. Concepts are far more than a professional vocabulary to be used in advanced studies: They are even more important as tools for identifying and understanding a process or idea. Many sociology students will find that the introductory course is a terminal course as well, and the basic concepts should be tools for continuing social observation and analysis.

In this textbook we have tried to do these things. Whether we have succeeded is for the reader to judge. We have generally avoided esoteric sources in favor of others more easily available to most students. We have often used literary and popular sources for purposes of illustration. We have done this to emphasize that sociology is the disciplined observation and analysis of everyday life and that the concepts and insights of sociology are applicable to all that goes on around the student.

We note that some recent textbooks contain very few footnotes or citations. It is true that footnotes and citations *do* clutter up a book. But we believe that students should constantly be reminded of the evidential basis for the conclusions of sociology. There-

fore, we have documented heavily in order to present sociology as a scientific and scholarly discipline, not as an exercise in popular journalism.

We have sought to incorporate recent research in this new edition but have not slavishly deleted significant earlier research and theory simply to gain a more current dateline. We seek to describe new and controversial developments in sociology analytically and objectively, in the belief that advocacy and espousal are not proper in an introductory textbook.

We have tried to minimize the overlap with other sociology courses. This textbook is not an encapsulated encyclopedia of the entire sociology curriculum. We have intentionally not emphasized "social problems" material, in the belief that the introductory course should concentrate upon principles and concepts and should leave specialized topics and problem-oriented materials for later courses.

In this sixth edition we have deleted very few topics, but many sections have been rewritten in condensed form to make room for new topics and materials. We have somewhat reordered the chapter sequence, have reorganized some chapters, and have

given greater attention to the interactionist and conflict perspectives.

The accompanying *Study Guide and Source Book* has again been revised by Bruce J. Cohen. Many students find it helpful in study and review, as a source of related materials and as a yardstick to measure their mastery of the text materials. An *Instructor's Resource Manual*, prepared again by Bobbie Wright and Steven Severin is again available as a teaching aid. Other supplements include a Test Bank keyed to the Micro Examiner System.

We owe a debt of appreciation to many people: to a number of our colleagues for helpful suggestions; to the sociologist-reviewers, George H. Benziger, Erie Community College; David Brinkerhoff, University of Nebraska; Brindaban Chaubey, Shippensburg State College; Richard Della Fave, North Carolina State University; Thomas E. Drabek, University of Denver; William Egelman, Iona College; Larry Horn, Los Angeles Pierce College; Dennis McGrath, Community College of Philadelphia; James Orcutt, Florida State University; James C. Petersen, Western Michigan University; Marcella Rainey, Black Hawk College; Laurel Richardson, The Ohio

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Paul B. Horton
Chester L. Hunt



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