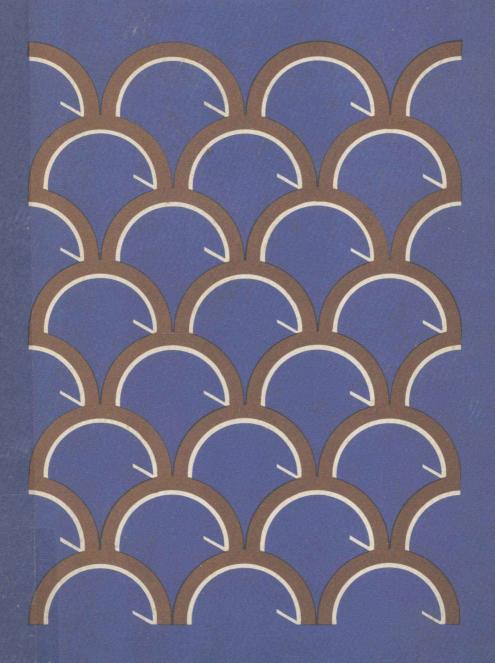
# SOCIAL FACTS: Introductory Readings James L. Price



## SOCIAL FACTS Introductory Readings

James L. Price

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY / THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

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#### To My Mother and Father

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#### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

During eleven years of teaching introductory sociology courses, one of my biggest difficulties has been finding a convenient source of factual information that is at the same time comprehensive within a society, comparative between societies, and historical. This reader is intended to help solve the problem. The better introductory sociology textbooks provide systematic treatment of the basic sociological concepts and propositions; however, most of the factual information in these textbooks refers to the contemporary United States. The better introductory sociology anthologies also emphasize basic sociological concepts and propositions: the factual information in the anthologies is mostly found in case studies. Although case studies are valuable, they are inherently noncomprehensive, noncomparative, and nonhistorical.

The lack of comprehensive, comparative, and historical factual information in introductory sociology textbooks and anthologies obscures the real strength and weaknesses of contemporary sociology. Sociology lacks a common set of concepts,<sup>4</sup> has very few verified propositions, and is totally devoid of systematically tested theory.<sup>5</sup> However, sociology has a large amount of comprehensive, comparative, and historical factual information. The feature of contemporary sociology that is perhaps its point of greatest strength—its relatively solid factual base—is underrepresented in introductory sociology textbooks and anthologies, whereas the features of relative weakness—its concepts, propositions, and theory—are overrepresented.

The introductory sociology textbooks and anthologies may not contain the type of factual information that this anthology seeks to supply, because the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Factual information will be defined and illustrated in the section "A Case for Social Facts."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The following sources contain discussions of concepts and propositions: Hans L. Zetterberg, On Theory and Verification in Sociology (Totowa, N.J.: The Bedminster Press, 1965), pp. 9-86; Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action (New York: The Free Press, 1949), pp. 3-42; Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (New York: The Free Press, 1957), pp. 85-101; and George C. Homans, "Contemporary Theory in Sociology," in Robert E. L. Faris (ed.), Handbook of Modern Sociology (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1964), pp. 951-977.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The comments about the better introductory sociology textbooks and anthologies are also applicable to the Bobbs-Merrill reprint series and the introductory sociology paperbacks published by Prentice-Hall and Random House.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Sociology is not, of course, devoid of conceptual agreement. For a discussion of some areas of agreement, see Alex Inkeles, *What Is Sociology?* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> This is, of course, using *theory* in its most rigorous sense, as a set of interrelated propositions. Discussions of theory are listed in note 2.

purpose of introductory sociology courses is generally to acquaint the student with the sociological perspective, and this perspective is perhaps best taught by emphasizing concepts and propositions. The editor does not disagree with an emphasis on concepts and propositions for introductory sociology courses; this is clearly the most efficient means to teach the sociological perspective, and is the means that the editor has always used. If the teacher uses this means, then, in a sense any facts will serve an illustrative purpose. However, when factual information is used in introductory sociology courses to illustrate the concepts and propositions, the factual information should be comprehensive, comparative, and historical, because it is this type of information that must ultimately be collected if there is ever to be a "science of society" rather than a "science of selected segments of the United States in the midtwentieth century." Constant use of this type of factual information shows the students and reminds the teachers of the preferred type of information.

This anthology is not intended to de-emphasize the importance of concepts and propositions in introductory sociology courses; rather it is intended to provide the teacher with the best possible types of factual information with which to illustrate the concepts and propositions. Teachers who use the anthology will probably want to use it as a supplement to a textbook which emphasizes basic concepts and propositions.

#### A CASE FOR SOCIAL FACTS

This anthology primarily contains factual information, yet the editor knows that introductory sociology students are not particularly enthusiastic about this type of information. Before presenting a case for social facts, the term will be defined and illustrated.

Facts are empirically verifiable statements about phenomena.<sup>6</sup> For example, it is a fact that the suicide rate in the United States in 1962 was 10.8 per 100,000 population.<sup>7</sup> The term social fact comes from Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), a French sociologist who is well known for his description and explanation of suicide rates.<sup>8</sup> As Durkheim, this anthology views social facts to be empirically verifiable statements about group phenomena.<sup>9</sup> Because sociologists study group phenomena, social facts are the kind of facts that are of special interest to them.

Social facts—and this is the first argument—cannot be avoided because they are necessary to understand the basic concepts and propositions that are

<sup>6</sup> Parsons, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Jack Gibbs, "Suicide," in Robert K. Merton and Robert A. Nisbet (eds.), Contemporary Social Problems (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc., 1966), p. 297.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Social facts are discussed in Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. Sarah A. Solovay and John H. Mueller (New York: The Free Press, 1938). Suicide is described and explained in Émile Durkheim, *Suicide*, trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (New York: The Free Press, 1951).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> This is Durkheim's meaning of social fact, not his exact definition.

emphasized in introductory sociology courses. It is impossible, for example, for a teacher to get across to students the concept of "class" without at some point referring to a specific class, and once specific classes are referred to, the teacher has begun to make factual statements. If social facts cannot be avoided, and this seems to be the case, then the question becomes one of selecting which facts to use for illustrative purposes.

The type of factual information that is most helpful for introductory sociology students-and this is the second argument-is what might be termed the "benchmark" type. Bench-mark factual information refers to very comprehensive types of data and is helpful because it facilitates the interpretation of large amounts of commonly encountered factual information. Consider, for example, the results of a study of religious groups in New York City. 10 This study found the following distribution among the three major religious groups: Roman Catholics, 44 per cent; Protestants, 22 per cent; and Jews, 28 per cent. How is the reader to interpret this factual information? Is there anything unusual about the distribution of the three major religious groups in New York City? The factual information in this study—and this is a commonly encountered type of factual information—can be interpreted if the reader has learned that the distribution of the three major religious groups in the United States is the following: Roman Catholics, 26 per cent; Protestants, 66 per cent; and Jews, 3 per cent. 11 In New York City, Roman Catholics and Jews are statistically overrepresented—New York City Roman Catholics, 44 per cent, and United States Roman Catholics, 26 per cent; New York City Jews, 28 per cent, and United States Jews, 3 per cent. New York City Protestants, on the other hand, are statistically underrepresented-New York City Protestants, 22 per cent, United States Protestants, 66 per cent. The factual information about the distribution of the three religious groups in the United States is a bench-mark type of factual information, and is the type which should be emphasized in introductory sociology courses.<sup>12</sup>

#### OUTLINE OF THE ANTHOLOGY

The outline of the anthology reflects its emphasis on factual information in four ways.

First, the anthology excludes some of the traditional units for classifying sociological information. There are four parts of the anthology: Part I, "The Individual and the Group"; Part II, "The Social Structure of the Group"; Part III, "Types of Groups"; and Part IV, "Population and Ecology." The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Seymour M. Lipset, Martin A. Trow, and James A. Coleman, *Union Democracy* (New York: The Free Press, 1956), p. 114.

<sup>11</sup> Donald J. Bogue, The Population of the United States (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p. 689.

<sup>12</sup> Factual generalizations may also serve as bench-marks. An example is the statement that members of white-collar occupations vote Republican relatively more often than members of blue-collar occupations. For a discussion of factual generalizations, see Merton, op. cit., pp. 95–96. Merton refers, not to factual generalizations, but to empirical generalizations.

exact wording will vary, but units of classification similar in meaning to these four will be found in most introductory sociology textbooks and anthologies. Two traditional units are not included in this anthology: "The Nature of Sociology" and "Social Change." The information which would be discussed under "The Nature of Sociology"—or some other similar heading—is primarily conceptual, because it generally defines science and indicates why sociology should be viewed as a science. This type of conceptual analysis is inappropriate in an anthology which emphasizes factual information; the type of textbook that this anthology is intended to supplement will discuss the nature of sociology. There is no unit on social change because the historical information presented throughout the anthology reports information about this subject. Any textbook will contain conceptual and propositional material about the nature, types, determinants, and consequences of social change.

The exclusion of some of the traditional units for classifying sociological information is also apparent in the sections within each of the four parts of the anthology. Part II, "The Social Structure of the Group," for example, contains six traditional units: "Economy," "Polity," "Kinship," "Religion," "Education," and "Stratification." However, neither Part II nor any of the other three parts has a section on social control. There is no section on social control because some of the material that is traditionally discussed under this heading is found in Part II under four sections: "Kinship," "Religion," "Education," and "Stratification." The standard introductory textbook will, of course, contain conceptual and propositional material about the nature, types, and determinants of social control.

Second, the introductions found in each part primarily summarize the factual information contained in the selections, and indicate its significance for basic sociological concepts and propositions. The introductions do not contain expositions of the basic concepts and propositions; these will be contained in the type of textbook that the anthology is designed to supplement.

Third, the Additional Readings at the end of the parts or the sections within the parts provide further readings for interested individuals. These readings are some of the many excellent selections of factual information which could not be included in the anthology.

Fourth, "A Note for Researchers," immediately following the Preface, contains the editor's suggestions about some of the topics which require factual information. No attempt has been made to make the list of topics exhaustive; the list merely contains a few topics about which the editor unsuccessfully sought to locate information.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Anyone who compiles an anthology for a discipline like sociology must rely on the assistance of his colleagues, because the discipline is so complex that no single individual can master it completely. My colleagues at the University of Iowa have been extremely generous in the assistance they have given me, and it is to them that I owe the deepest debt of gratitude. I have especially benefited from the assistance of Ira Reiss, John Stratton, and Bob Terry.

Ted Jitodai, Benton Johnson, and Hans Zetterberg graciously consented to read the entire manuscript and I profited immensely from the valuable suggestions that they made. The flaws which remain in the anthology are not there because of any lack of effort by these sociologists.

Very few sociologists share my enthusiasm for the codification of social facts. One notable exception is the eminent theorist Hans Zetterberg, by whose example I have been very much encouraged. The sociological almanac which he coedited with Murray Gendell has been especially helpful in teaching introductory sociological courses.<sup>13</sup>

When I began work on this anthology I asked several colleagues at other universities for suggestions. I received very helpful suggestions from Robert Blumstock, Roy Bowles, Douglas Card, Kenneth Cunningham, Ted Jitodai, Benton Johnson, John Scanzoni, Donald Spence, Lee Spray, and Curt Tausky.

A Macmillan Company grant made it possible for me to hire a research assistant, Renée Hoffman. Her intelligent and diligent labor greatly speeded the compilation of the anthology.

J. L. P.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Murray Gendell and Hans L. Zetterberg, *A Sociological Almanac for the United States* (New York: The Bedminster Press, 1961). The following publication by one of Zetterberg's students has also been helpful: Murray Hausknecht, *The Joiners* (New York: The Bedminster Press, 1962).

### A NOTE FOR RESEARCHERS

This note, which indicates areas that seem to require factual information, could be made very brief by simply stating that the scope of all the selections should be expanded. Case studies within a country should be broadened to random samples; comparative studies between two countries should be broadened to include the world; historical studies of recent periods should be broadened to cover all recorded history. However, such a broad observation produces little specific information for researchers. Consequently, this note will indicate specific types of information that were sought but were unavailable or could not be located.

#### PART I, THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

Role. The editor could not locate direct, systematic data about sex roles for adolescents, adults, and older persons. Barry, Bacon, and Child, in "A Cross-Cultural Survey of Some Sex Differences in Socialization," focus on "infancy" and "childhood." Parsons argues that the adult male role is anchored in the occupational world, whereas the adult female role is anchored in the family. However, Parsons' data, although systematic, do not consist of direct measurement of sex role content. This lack of data is surprising in view of the long tradition of research on sex differences.

Two types of information about "minorities" ("racial and ethnic relations") could not be found: first, information about "discrimination" toward Jews in the United States; and second, information about "prejudice" and discrimination toward Jews in Europe. The selection by Stember, "Attitudes Toward Jews," contains information only about prejudice toward Jews in the United States. There is some data about discrimination toward Jews—an example is Baltzell's *The Protestant Establishment*.<sup>2</sup> However, this information is not as systematic as Stember's material. The European data should be especially interesting, because of the long history of anti-Semitism in Europe.

Culture. Systematic data about upper-class norms could not be located. The selections by Cohen, "The Middle-Class Norms," and Miller-Riessman, "The Working-Class Norms," although not as firmly based as preferred—especially the selection by Cohen—at least contain systematic data about two important classes. There are some good studies of upper-class life from which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Talcott Parsons, "The American Family: Its Relations to Personality and to the Social Structure," in Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Bales (eds.), Family, Socialization and Interaction Process (New York: The Free Press, 1955), pp. 3-34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> E. Digby Baltzell, The Protestant Establishment (New York: Random House, 1964).

information about norms can be abstracted—again the work of Baltzell comes most readily to mind<sup>3</sup>—but such studies, although quite helpful, are no substitute for systematic data.

The "information explosion" has now taken its place alongside the "population explosion" as a topic of major importance to scientists and nonscientists. There is an abundance of compact and systematic studies documenting the "population explosion"; however, comparable studies could not be located to document the "information explosion." A massive amount of data is contained in Machlup's work; however, this material is too long for an anthology.<sup>4</sup> The work of Price comes the nearest to supplying the type of required information.<sup>5</sup> However, Price's focus is too narrow, because he mostly presents information about the natural sciences.

Deviant Behavior. It is now a common practice to include topics such as the following within the area of deviant behavior: delinquency, crime, drug addiction, alcoholism, mental disorders, suicide, family disintegration, discrimination, and prejudice. Selections could be found for the separate types of deviant behavior, such as Kohn's "On the Social Epidemiology of Schizophrenia" and Sykes' "The Characteristics of Criminals," but no selection could be found which encompasses all the specific types of deviant behavior, and which might have been entitled "On the Social Epidemiology of Deviant Behavior."

#### PART II, THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE GROUP

Economy. The selection by Folger and Nam, "Trends in Education in Relation to the Occupational Structure," presents information about the occupational structure in the United States for 1900 and 1960. However, no selection could be found which presented information encompassing the total history of the United States. Profound changes occurred in the United States before 1900—the most important example is the industrial growth between 1860 and 1900—and it would be very helpful to have information about the earlier period to compare with the information about the later period.

Blauner's selection, "Work Satisfaction in Modern Society," summarizes information about work "orientation" rather than work "behavior." The editor could not find systematic data about such behavioral variables as rates of turnover and absenteeism. For example, no studies could be found which indicated average rates of turnover and absenteeism for the typical organization

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Baltzell, op. cit.; and E. Digby Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentleman (New York: The Free Press, 1958).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Fritz Machlup, The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Derek J. de Solla Price, *Science Since Babylon* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1961), and Derek J. de Solla Price, *Little Science*, *Big Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> These topics came from Marshall B. Clinard, *Sociology of Deviant Behavior* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963).

or for different kinds of organizations. This apparent gap in the data is surprising, because there is an immense literature about turnover and absenteeism.

Polity. Information about the distribution of democracy could not be located for areas other than the European and English-speaking nations and the Latin American nations, the two areas which Lipset treats in his "The Distribution of Democracy." There are democracies in areas which Lipset does not treat—such as Japan, the Philippine Islands, and India—and it would be helpful to have systematic data about the distribution of democracy in these areas.

Kinship. It is generally believed that individuals who marry are generally similar in terms of race, age, religion, ethnicity, and class. This hypothesized pattern—which is a highly probable factual generalization—is referred to as "marital endogamy." Hollingshead's classic paper "Cultural Factors in the Selection of Marriage Mates" is frequently cited to support the idea of marital endogamy. Hollingshead's paper, however, only reports data about a single study of a single community—New Haven, Connecticut. There are other studies which contain relevant data, but the editor could not locate any single selection which summarized the existing literature.

Religion. The selection by Lazerwitz, "Some Factors Associated with Variations in Church Attendance," reported information which indicated a positive relationship between class and church attendance: the higher the class, the higher the rate of church attendance. However, neither Lazerwitz nor any of the other authors reported any information about class and religious "beliefs." The upper classes may be more religious than the lower classes when religiosity is measured by "practices" such as church attendance; however, the same pattern may not exist when religiosity is measured by beliefs.

Mass Media. Sociologists have only recently evidenced an interest in the mass media. The newness of the field may, therefore, account for the paucity of factual information. So little information could be located that the anthology has no section on the mass media.

#### PART III, TYPES OF GROUPS

Community. It is frequently pointed out that a disproportionate amount of deviant behavior is found in urban communities. However, some scholars have also pointed out that urban communities also contain a disproportionate amount of significant conformity, such as high degrees of achievement in business, the arts, sciences, and professions.<sup>8</sup> It is relatively easy to locate systematic factual information to support the point about deviant behavior in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> August B. Hollingshead, "Cultural Factors in the Selection of Marriage Mates," in Robert F. Winch and Robert McGinnis, *Marriage and the Family* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1953), pp. 399–412.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> An example is Robert K. Merton, "Anomie, Anomia, and Social Interaction: Contexts of Deviant Behavior," in Marshall B. Clinard (ed.), *Anomie and Deviant Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1964), pp. 222-223.

urban communities; however, no corresponding information could be located to support the point about conformity.

Organization. The importance of large organizations for society is primarily documented with statistics based on economic organizations. An example of this emphasis is Means' "A Contemporary View of Industrial Concentration." There is, however, a sizable literature documenting the importance of large organizations in the areas of the polity and social control. However, the editor could not locate any selections which summarized this literature. What is needed is a single selection which indicates the importance of large size for economic, political, and control organizations.

The Berle and Means thesis—whose replication was reported by Larner in "Ownership and Control in the 200 Largest Nonfinancial Corporations, 1929 and 1963"—basically suggests that control in the large business corporation rests with the managers rather than with the boards of directors, who are supposed to represent the owners. An interesting question arises as to whether the same type of relationship which exists between the managers and the boards of directors in large business corporations also exists between managers and governing board members in other areas. (Boards of directors are usually viewed as one type of governing board; other examples are school boards, city councils, university regents, hospital trustees, and church elders.) There is an immense literature about the relationship between managers and governing boards, especially in the areas of government and schools, but factual information relating to this question has not been compactly summarized.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Clinard, Sociology of Deviant Behavior, op. cit. This selection by Clinard was not used in the anthology because of the limitations of space.

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## **PART I**

The Individual and the Group