

# TAKING SIDES



## Clashing Views on Controversial **Social Issues**

TWELFTH EDITION

Kurt Finsterbusch

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Clashing Views on Controversial  
**Social Issues**

TWELFTH EDITION

**Selected, Edited, and with Introductions by**

**Kurt Finsterbusch**  
*University of Maryland*

**McGraw-Hill/Dushkin**  
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*To my wife, Meredith Ramsay, who richly shares with me a  
life of the mind and much, much more.*

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Charles Vitelli

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## Preface

**T**he English word *fanatic* is derived from the Latin *fanum*, meaning temple. It refers to the kind of madmen often seen in the precincts of temples in ancient times, the kind presumed to be possessed by deities or demons. The term first came into English usage during the seventeenth century, when it was used to describe religious zealots. Soon after, its meaning was broadened to include a political and social context. We have come to associate the term *fanatic* with a person who acts as if his or her views were inspired, a person utterly incapable of appreciating opposing points of view. The nineteenth-century English novelist George Eliot put it precisely: "I call a man fanatical when . . . he . . . becomes unjust and unsympathetic to men who are out of his own track." A fanatic may hear but is unable to listen. Confronted with those who disagree, a fanatic immediately vilifies opponents.

Most of us would avoid the company of fanatics, but who among us is not tempted to caricature opponents instead of listening to them? Who does not put certain topics off limits for discussion? Who does not grasp at euphemisms to avoid facing inconvenient facts? Who has not, in George Eliot's language, sometimes been "unjust and unsympathetic" to those on a different track? Who is not, at least in certain very sensitive areas, a *little* fanatical? The counterweight to fanaticism is open discussion. The difficult issues that trouble us as a society have at least two sides, and we lose as a society if we hear only one side. At the individual level, the answer to fanaticism is listening. And that is the underlying purpose of this book: to encourage its readers to listen to opposing points of view.

This book contains 40 selections presented in a pro and con format. A total of 20 different controversial social issues are debated. The sociologists, political scientists, economists, and social critics whose views are debated here make their cases vigorously. In order to effectively read each selection, analyze the points raised, and debate the basic assumptions and values of each position, or, in other words, in order to think critically about what you are reading, you will first have to give each side a sympathetic hearing. John Stuart Mill, the nineteenth-century British philosopher, noted that the majority is not doing the minority a favor by listening to its views; it is doing *itself* a favor. By listening to contrasting points of view, we strengthen our own. In some cases we change our viewpoints completely. But in most cases, we either incorporate some elements of the opposing view—thus making our own richer—or else learn how to answer the objections to our viewpoints. Either way, we gain from the experience.

**Organization of the book** Each issue has an issue *introduction*, which sets the stage for the debate as it is argued in the YES and NO selections. Each issue concludes with a *postscrip*t that makes some final observations and points the way to other questions related to the issue. In reading the issue and forming

your own opinions you should not feel confined to adopt one or the other of the positions presented. There are positions in between the given views or totally outside them, and the *suggestions for further reading* that appear in each issue postscript should help you find resources to continue your study of the subject. At the back of the book is a listing of all the *contributors to this volume*, which will give you information on the social scientists whose views are debated here. Also, on the *On the Internet* page that accompanies each part opener, you will find Internet site addresses (URLs) that are relevant to the issues in that part.

**Changes to this edition** This new edition has been significantly updated. There are four completely new issues: *Does Television Violence Make Children Significantly More Violent?* (Issue 2); *Is Competition the Solution to the Ills of Public Education?* (Issue 14); *Is Mankind Dangerously Harming the Environment?* (Issue 19); and *Is Globalization Good for Mankind?* (Issue 20). In addition, for the issues on immigration (Issue 3), family (Issue 7), economic inequality (Issue 8), welfare reform (Issue 13), and drugs (Issue 17), one or both of the selections were replaced to bring a fresh perspective to the debates. In all, there are 15 new selections. Today the world is changing rapidly in many ways so that new issues arise, old ones fade, and some old issues become recast by events.

**A word to the instructor** An *Instructor's Manual With Test Questions* (multiple-choice and essay) is available through the publisher for the instructor using *Taking Sides* in the classroom. A general guidebook, *Using Taking Sides in the Classroom*, which discusses methods and techniques for integrating the pro-con approach into any classroom setting, is also available. An online version of *Using Taking Sides in the Classroom* and a correspondence service for *Taking Sides* adopters can be found at <http://www.dushkin.com/usingsides/>.

*Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Social Issues* is only one title in the Taking Sides series. If you are interested in seeing the table of contents for any of the other titles, please visit the Taking Sides Web site at <http://www.dushkin.com/takingsides/>.

**Acknowledgments** I wish to acknowledge the encouragement and support given to this project over the years by Mimi Egan and Theodore Knight, former and present list managers for the Taking Sides series, and Juliana Gribbins, developmental editor.

I want to thank my wife, Meredith Ramsay, for her example and support.

I also want to thank George McKenna for many years as a close colleague and coeditor through many early editions of this book.

**Kurt Finsterbusch**  
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# Introduction

## Debating Social Issues

Kurt Finsterbusch

### What Is Sociology?

"I have become a problem to myself," St. Augustine said. Put into a social and secular framework, St. Augustine's concern marks the starting point of sociology. We have become a problem to ourselves, and it is sociology that seeks to understand the problem and, perhaps, to find some solutions. The subject matter of sociology, then, is ourselves—people interacting with one another in groups and organizations.

Although the subject matter of sociology is very familiar, it is often useful to look at it in an unfamiliar light, one that involves a variety of theories and perceptual frameworks. In fact, to properly understand social phenomena, it *should* be looked at from several different points of view. In practice, however, this may lead to more friction than light, especially when each view proponent says, "I am right and you are wrong," rather than, "My view adds considerably to what your view has shown."

Sociology, as a science of society, was developed in the nineteenth century. Auguste Comte (1798–1857), the French mathematician and philosopher who is considered to be the father of sociology, had a vision of a well-run society based on social science knowledge. Sociologists (Comte coined the term) would discover the laws of social life and then determine how society should be structured and run. Society would not become perfect, because some problems are intractable, but he believed that a society guided by scientists and other experts was the best possible society.

Unfortunately, Comte's vision was extremely naive. For most matters of state there is no one best way of structuring or doing things that sociologists can discover and recommend. Instead, sociologists debate more social issues than they resolve.

The purpose of sociology is to throw light on social issues and their relationship to the complex, confusing, and dynamic social world around us. It seeks to describe how society is organized and how individuals fit into it. But neither the organization of society nor the fit of individuals is perfect. Social disorganization is a fact of life—at least in modern, complex societies such as the one we live in. Here, perfect harmony continues to elude us, and "social problems" are endemic. The very institutions, laws, and policies that produce benefits also produce what sociologists call "unintended effects"—unintended

and undesirable. The changes that please one sector of the society may displease another, or the changes that seem so indisputably healthy at first turn out to have a dark underside to them. The examples are endless. Modern urban life gives people privacy and freedom from snooping neighbors that the small town never afforded; yet that very privacy seems to breed an uneasy sense of anonymity and loneliness. Take another example: Hierarchy is necessary for organizations to function efficiently, but hierarchy leads to the creation of a ruling elite. Flatten out the hierarchy and you may achieve social equality—but at the price of confusion, incompetence, and low productivity.

This is not to say that all efforts to effect social change are ultimately futile and that the only sound view is the tragic one that concludes “nothing works.” We can be realistic without falling into despair. In many respects, the human condition has improved over the centuries and has improved as a result of conscious social policies. But improvements are purchased at a price—not only a monetary price but one involving human discomfort and discontent. The job of policymakers is to balance the anticipated benefits against the probable costs.

It can never hurt policymakers to know more about the society in which they work or the social issues they confront. That, broadly speaking, is the purpose of sociology. It is what this book is about. This volume examines issues that are central to the study of sociology.

## Culture and Values

A common value system is the major mechanism for integrating a society, but modern societies contain so many different groups with differing ideas and values that integration must be built as much on tolerance of differences as on common values. Furthermore, technology and social conditions change, so values must adjust to new situations, often weakening old values. Some people (often called conservatives) will defend the old values. Others (often called liberals) will make concessions to allow for change. For example, the protection of human life is a sacred value to most people, but some would compromise that value when the life involved is a 90-year-old comatose man on life-support machines who had signed a document indicating that he did not want to be kept alive under those conditions. The conservative would counter that once we make the value of human life relative, we become dangerously open to greater evils—that perhaps society will come to think it acceptable to terminate all sick, elderly people undergoing expensive treatments. This is only one example of how values are hotly debated today.

Three debates on values are presented in Part 1. In Issue 1, David Whitman challenges the common perception that morals have declined in America, while Gertrude Himmelfarb provides empirical support for the declining morality thesis. Issue 2 examines a major institution that can be seen as responsible for instilling values and culture in people—the media. This issue focuses in particular on media violence. W. James Potter criticizes the media for being filled with violence and for contributing to the violence and aggression of Americans, especially children. In response, Jib Fowles states that the research evidence on

which Potter's thesis rests is weak, and he argues that it is based on misguided assumptions. The final culture/values debate, Issue 3, concerns the cultural impact of immigration. Patrick Buchanan argues that current levels of immigration are too high and that immigrant cultures are too different from American culture to be assimilated. Thus, immigration is threatening America's cultural unity. Ben Wattenberg counters that the cultural impacts of immigration will be minor because annual immigration amounts to only a third of a percent of the United States population. Furthermore, he maintains that immigration contributes to America's power and influence.

## **Sex Roles, Gender, and the Family**

An area that has experienced tremendous value change in the last several decades is sex roles and the family. Women in large numbers have rejected major aspects of their traditional gender roles and family roles while remaining strongly committed to much of the mother role and to many feminine characteristics. Men have changed much less but their situation has changed considerably. Issue 4 considers whether current sex roles are more stressful for women or for men. Jeff Grabmeier contends that women suffer more stress than men because current practices still favor men and that women are not able to cope as well as men with current sex role expectations. Susan Faludi argues the opposite. Men's sex roles are incongruent with the current conditions and men do not know how to deal with the situation. Issue 5 focuses on the causes of communication problems between men and women. It has recently been advanced that such problems are largely the result of radically different conversation styles between the genders. Philip Yancey champions this view, contending that men's concerns about maintaining status and women's concerns about maintaining connections and closeness affects their interpretations of what they hear and say to each other. Mary Crawford asserts that this view has become popularized and exaggerated by the media and that the basis of the thesis is demeaning to women. Issue 6 debates whether same-sex marriages should be legal. Andrew Sullivan argues that "marriage is . . . the highest public recognition of a private commitment. . . . Denying it to homosexuals is the most public affront possible to their public equality." The opposing selection is a critical review and rebuttal of Sullivan's assertions by James Q. Wilson. Issue 7, which has been much debated by feminists and their critics, asks, Is the decline of the traditional family a national crisis? David Popenoe is deeply concerned about the decline of the traditional family, while Stephanie Coontz thinks that such concern amounts to little more than nostalgia for a bygone era.

## **Stratification and Inequality**

Issue 8 centers around a sociological debate about whether or not increasing economic inequality is a serious problem. Christopher Jencks asserts that it is, while Christopher C. DeMuth argues that consumption patterns indicate that inequality has actually decreased in recent decades. Many commentators on American life decry the pathologies of the underclass as the shame of America.



Charles Murray is a leading proponent of this view and his article is republished in Issue 9. Barry Schwartz critiques Murray's view and argues that the current advanced stage of capitalism is largely responsible for eroding American ideals and producing the underclass.

Today one of the most controversial issues regarding inequalities is affirmative action. Is equality promoted or undermined by such policies? Walter E. Williams and Wilbert Jenkins take opposing sides on this question in Issue 10.

## Political Economy and Institutions

Sociologists study not only the poor, the workers, and the victims of discrimination but also those at the top of society—those who occupy what the late sociologist C. Wright Mills used to call “the command posts.” The question is whether the “pluralist” model or the “power elite” model is the one that best fits the facts in America. Does a single power elite rule the United States, or do many groups contend for power and influence so that the political process is accessible to all? In Issue 11, G. William Domhoff argues that the business elite have a dominating influence in government decisions and that no other group has nearly as much power. Jeffrey M. Berry counters that liberal citizen groups have successfully opened the policy-making process and made it more participatory. Currently, grassroots groups of all kinds have some power and influence. The question is, how much?

The United States is a capitalist welfare state, and the role of the state in capitalism (more precisely, the market) and in welfare is examined in the next two issues. Issue 12 considers whether or not the government should step in and attempt to correct for the failures of the market through regulations, policies, and programs. Ernest Erber argues that an active government is needed to protect consumers, workers, and the environment; to bring about greater equality; and to guide economic and social change. Milton and Rose Friedman argue that even well-intended state interventions in the market usually only make matters worse and that governments cannot serve the public good as effectively as competitive markets can. One way in which the government intervenes in the economy is by providing welfare to people who cannot provide for their own needs in the labor market. Issue 13 debates the wisdom of the Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which ended Aid to Families of Dependent Children (which was what most people equated with welfare). The editors of the *Economist* call this act “America's great achievement” because it greatly reduced welfare rolls and dramatically increased the employment of welfare mothers. Randy Albelda states that the reality is more depressing. The old welfare system helped women who were on welfare to prepare for and obtain good jobs while the new law practically forces women on welfare to take bad jobs at poverty-level wages.

Education is one of the biggest jobs of government as well as the key to individual prosperity and the success of the economy. For decades the American system of education has been severely criticized. Such an important institution is destined to be closely scrutinized, and for decades the American system of education has been severely criticized and many reforms have been attempted.

Two proposals for school reform are given in Issue 14. Chester E. Finn, Jr., Bruno V. Manno, and Gregg Vanourek argue that charter schools will open up choices for parents and that the competition will dramatically improve public school systems. James P. Comer maintains that charter schools can only modestly improve public schools. This is because the only reform that will produce dramatic improvements is one that will "base everything we do on what is known about how children and youths develop and learn."

The final issue in this section—doctor-assisted suicide—is truly one of life and death. The actions of Dr. Jack Kevorkian, who has assisted in over 100 patient suicides, have brought this issue into the public light. In Issue 15, Marcia Angell presents medical and ethical reasons why she believes that doctor-assisted suicide is merciful and right. Paul R. McHugh maintains that suicidal patients suffer from depression and that they can and should be treated therapeutically, not murdered.

## **Crime and Social Control**

Crime is interesting to sociologists because crimes are those activities that society makes illegal and will use force to stop. Why are some acts made illegal and others (even those that may be more harmful) not made illegal? Surveys indicate that concern about crime is extremely high in America. Is the fear of crime, however, rightly placed? Americans fear mainly street crime, but Jeffrey Reiman argues in Issue 16 that corporate crime—also known as "white-collar crime"—causes far more death, harm, and financial loss to Americans than street crime. In contrast, John J. DiIulio, Jr., points out the great harm done by street criminals, even to the point of social disintegration in some poor neighborhoods. Much of the harm that DiIulio describes is related to the illegal drug trade, which brings about such bad consequences that some people are seriously talking about legalizing drugs in order to kill the illegal drug business. Ethan A. Nadelmann argues this view in Issue 17, while Eric A. Voth argues that legalization would greatly harm society. Drug use would mushroom and damage many lives, whereas the current war on drugs has considerably reduced drug use. Finally, Issue 18 asks whether capital punishment is justified. Robert W. Lee insists that some crimes are so heinous that only execution is an appropriate form of punishment. Furthermore, the death penalty is needed to deter murder. Eric M. Freedman asserts that the death penalty does not reduce crime, is extraordinarily expensive, and diverts scarce funds from more helpful purposes. Capital punishment also leads to the execution of many innocent people.

## **The Future: Population/Environment/Society**

Many social commentators speculate on "the fate of the earth." The environmentalists have their own vision of apocalypse. They see the possibility that the human race could degrade the environment to the point that population growth and increasing economic production could overshoot the carrying capacity of the globe. The resulting collapse could lead to the extinction of much of the human race and the end of free societies. Other analysts believe that

these fears are groundless. In Issue 19, Chris Bright shows how human actions can inadvertently degrade the environment in ways that adversely affect humans. In contrast, Bjorn Lomborg argues that the environment is improving in many ways and that environmental problems are manageable or will have mild adverse effects.

The last issue in this book assesses the benefits and costs of globalization. Murray Weidenbaum argues that economic globalization has been a demonstration of the basic economic theory that global markets and relatively free trade economically benefit all nations that participate. Even workers in the United States have benefited in spite of their complaints. Herman E. Daly counters that globalization, which dissolves national boundaries, hurts both workers and the environment.

## The Social Construction of Reality

An important idea in sociology is that people construct social reality in the course of interaction by attaching social meanings to the reality they are experiencing and then responding to those meanings. Two people can walk down a city street and derive very different meanings from what they see around them. Both, for example, may see homeless people—but they may see them in different contexts. One fits them into a picture of once-vibrant cities dragged into decay and ruin because of permissive policies that have encouraged pathological types to harass citizens; the other observer fits them into a picture of an America that can no longer hide the wretchedness of its poor. Both feel that they are seeing something deplorable, but their views of what makes it deplorable are radically opposed. Their differing views of what they have seen will lead to very different prescriptions for what should be done about the problem.

The social construction of reality is an important idea for this book because each author is socially constructing reality and working hard to persuade you to see his or her point of view; that is, to see the definition of the situation and the set of meanings he or she has assigned to the situation. In doing this, each author presents a carefully selected set of facts, arguments, and values. The arguments contain assumptions or theories, some of which are spelled out and some of which are unspoken. The critical reader has to judge the evidence for the facts, the logic and soundness of the arguments, the importance of the values, and whether or not omitted facts, theories, and values invalidate the thesis. This book facilitates this critical thinking process by placing authors in opposition. This puts the reader in the position of critically evaluating two constructions of reality for each issue instead of one.

## Conclusion

Writing in the 1950s, a period that was in some ways like our own, the sociologist C. Wright Mills said that Americans know a lot about their “troubles” but they cannot make the connections between seemingly personal concerns and the concerns of others in the world. If they could only learn to make those connections, they could turn their concerns into *issues*. An issue transcends the

realm of the personal. According to Mills, "An issue is a public matter: some value cherished by publics is felt to be threatened. Often there is a debate about what the value really is and what it is that really threatens it."

It is not primarily personal troubles but social issues that I have tried to present in this book. The variety of topics in it can be taken as an invitation to discover what Mills called "the sociological imagination." This imagination, said Mills, "is the capacity to shift from one perspective to another—from the political to the psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessment of the national budgets of the world.... It is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self—and to see the relations between the two." This book, with a range of issues well suited to the sociological imagination, is intended to enlarge that capacity.



# On the Internet ...



## **Internet Philosophical Resources on Moral Relativism**

This Web site for *Ethics Updates* offers discussion questions, a bibliographical guide, and a list of Internet resources concerning moral relativism.

<http://ethics.acusd.edu/relativism.html>

## **The National Institute on Media and the Family**

The National Institute on Media and the Family Web site is a national resource for teachers, parents, community leaders, and others who are interested in the influence of electronic media on early childhood education, child development, academic performance, culture, and violence.

<http://www.mediaandthefamily.com>

## **The International Center for Migration, Ethnicity, and Citizenship**

The International Center for Migration, Ethnicity, and Citizenship is engaged in scholarly research and public policy analysis bearing on international migration, refugees, and the incorporation of newcomers in host countries.

<http://www.newschool.edu/icmec/>

## **National Immigrant Forum**

The National Immigrant Forum is a pro-immigrant organization that examines the effects of immigration on U.S. society. Click on the links for discussion of underground economies, immigrant economies, race and ethnic relations, and other topics.

<http://www.immigrationforum.org>

## **The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)**

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) serves as a forum to share information and analysis, to educate communities and the general public, and to develop and coordinate plans of action on important immigrant and refugee issues.

<http://www.nnirr.org>





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## **PART 1 CULTURE AND VALUES 1**

### **Issue 1. Is America in Moral Decline? 2**

**YES:** Gertrude Himmelfarb, from *The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1995) 4

**NO:** David Whitman, from *The Optimism Gap: The I'm OK—They're Not Syndrome and the Myth of American Decline* (Walker & Company, 1998) 13

Gertrude Himmelfarb, a professor emeritus of history, details some of the increasing moral problems in America and interprets them as being part of a larger pattern, which she calls "the de-moralization of society." Writer David Whitman empirically tests the moral decline thesis and finds that, according to the indicators that he employs, it is a myth.

### **Issue 2. Does Television Violence Make Children Significantly More Violent? 22**

**YES:** W. James Potter, from *On Media Violence* (Sage Publications, 1999) 24

**NO:** Jib Fowles, from *The Case for Television Violence* (Sage Publications, 1999) 37

Professor of communication W. James Potter reviews the harmful influences of media violence and explains some of the mechanisms that cause these influences. Professor of communication Jib Fowles argues that the evidence on the negative influences of the media on children is weak and does not prove that television violence makes children significantly more violent.

### **Issue 3. Is Third World Immigration a Threat to America's Way of Life? 46**

**YES:** Patrick Buchanan, from "Shields Up!" *The American Enterprise* (March 2002) 48

**NO:** Ben Wattenberg, from "Immigration Is Good," *The American Enterprise* (March 2002) 55

Political analyst Patrick Buchanan asserts that the large influx of legal and illegal immigrants, especially from Mexico, threatens to undermine the cultural foundations of American unity. Ben Wattenberg, senior fellow at the

American Enterprise Institute, argues that the United States needs a constant flow of immigrants to avoid population decline and also to avoid the diminishment of power and influence.

## PART 2 SEX ROLES, GENDER, AND THE FAMILY 63

### Issue 4. Do the New Sex Roles Burden Women More Than Men? 64

**YES:** Jeff Grabmeier, from "The Burden Women Bear: Why They Suffer More Distress Than Men," *USA Today Magazine* (July 1995) 66

**NO:** Susan Faludi, from *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (William Morrow and Company, 1999) 71

Editor and author Jeff Grabmeier presents evidence showing that women experience more stress than men and then analyzes why. Author Susan Faludi argues that men have been socialized into a sex role that cannot be successfully fulfilled due to current conditions.

### Issue 5. Are Communication Problems Between Men and Women Largely Due to Radically Different Conversation Styles? 80

**YES:** Philip Yancey, from "Do Men and Women Speak the Same Language?" *Marriage Partnership* (Fall 1993) 82

**NO:** Mary Crawford, from *Talking Difference: On Gender and Language* (Sage Publications, 1995) 88

Author Philip Yancey argues that men and women have strikingly different communication styles because they grow up in different cultures. A man is usually concerned about enhancing or maintaining status as he communicates, while a woman will usually communicate in ways that gain or maintain closeness. Professor of psychology Mary Crawford contends that the thesis that men and women have radically different communication styles is greatly exaggerated in the media and is based on simplistic stereotypes.

### Issue 6. Should Same-Sex Marriages Be Legally Recognized? 98

**YES:** Andrew Sullivan, from *Virtually Normal: An Argument About Homosexuality* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1995) 100

**NO:** James Q. Wilson, from "Against Homosexual Marriage," *Commentary* (March 1996) 105

Editor and author Andrew Sullivan argues that the secular liberal state must grant the right of same-sex partners to marry. To not do so would be blatant discrimination. Professor of management and public policy James Q. Wilson presents arguments against legally recognizing same-sex marriages.

## Issue 7. Is the Decline of the Traditional Family a National Crisis? 112

**YES:** David Popenoe, from "The American Family Crisis," *National Forum: The Phi Kappa Phi Journal* (Summer 1995) 114

**NO:** Stephanie Coontz, from "The American Family," *Life* (November 1999) 122

Sociologist David Popenoe contends that families play important roles in society but how the traditional family functions in these roles has declined dramatically in the last several decades, with very adverse effects on children. Family historian Stephanie Coontz argues that current discussion of family decline includes a false idealization of the traditional family of the past and misleading interpretations of current data on families. She finds that the trends are both positive and negative.

## PART 3 STRATIFICATION AND INEQUALITY 131

### Issue 8. Is Increasing Economic Inequality a Serious Problem? 132

**YES:** Christopher Jencks, from "Does Inequality Matter?" *Daedalus* (Winter 2002) 134

**NO:** Christopher C. DeMuth, from "The New Wealth of Nations," *Commentary* (October 1997) 142

Christopher Jencks, professor of social policy at the Kennedy School at Harvard University, presents data on how large the income inequality is in the United States and describes the consequences of this inequality. Christopher C. DeMuth, president of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, argues that the "recent increase in income inequality . . . is a very small tick in the massive and unprecedented leveling of material circumstances that has been proceeding now for almost three centuries and in this century has accelerated dramatically."

### Issue 9. Is the Underclass the Major Threat to American Ideals? 148

**YES:** Charles Murray, from "And Now for the Bad News," *Society* (November/December 1999) 150

**NO:** Barry Schwartz, from "Capitalism, the Market, the 'Underclass,' and the Future," *Society* (November/December 1999) 156

Author Charles Murray describes destructive behavior among the underclass. Murray asserts that this type of behavior will result in serious trouble for society even though, according to statistics, the number of crimes committed has decreased. Psychology professor Barry Schwartz states that the underclass is not the major threat to American ideals. He counters that "the theory and practice of free-market economics have done more to undermine traditional moral values than any other social force."

### Issue 10. Has Affirmative Action Outlived Its Usefulness? 168