

# Sociology

Sixth Edition

*An Introduction*



Richard J. Gelles / Ann Levine

# Sociology

*An Introduction*



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## SOCIOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION

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To Judy, Jason, and David  
—R.J.G.

To Stacy and my extended family  
(Cross & Jermaine, Biruté & Jane,  
*le bébé* Kyle, Exxon, Tootsie, Wil-  
low, Siswi, and forever, Roscoe)  
—A.L.

# Preface

Students come to their first course in sociology with a natural curiosity about the social world. In responding to that curiosity, the authors of an introductory sociology textbook have two basic responsibilities. The first is to introduce students to the sociological perspective: to theoretical orientations, to the use of the scientific method in studying human behavior, and to the concepts that guide the thinking and research of sociologists. The second is to describe what sociologists have learned about how the social world is put together and why people behave as they do.

Some texts emphasize the first responsibility on the grounds that students must master theoretical constructs, technical vocabulary, and methodology before they can begin to understand social behavior. We agree that learning the basics is important. But we believe that a true understanding of the discipline of sociology comes from the active effort to understand society and how it got to be the way it is. Hence our emphasis is on how sociology answers real world questions about both public issues and private troubles.

In this edition, as in previous ones, our primary goal is to show how social structures affect people; how the society in which one lives, the position one occupies in that society, and the roles one plays influence individual experience and social behavior. Sociology shows that many of the things we take for granted, such as the differences between the sexes, are in large part social creations. Sociology also shows how apparently irrational behavior—such as the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, the 1992 riot in Los Angeles, and the Heaven's Gate group suicide—is comprehensible, given a certain set of social circumstances.

A number of basic Sociology texts have been published in recent years. Most are shorter, simpler spin-offs of longer, higher-level texts. Ours is one of the only books that was specifically designed for shorter courses (17 versus 22 or more chapters)

and is packaged as a lower-priced paperback. Not a condensation of a “big book,” our book does not short-change students on sociology. Limiting the number of chapters has enabled us to provide the in-depth analysis of sociological theories, concepts, and research of longer books. At the same time, our use of clearly written concrete examples makes this book accessible to students at all levels.

## The Sixth Edition

This edition has been revised in a number of ways.

### *Global Perspective*

Looking at social issues and social processes in other societies helps us to see our own society more clearly. Furthermore, events and trends within our society are shaped increasingly by global forces, which may be beyond our control but not beyond sociological understanding. The United States is inextricably linked to the global community—economically, politically, culturally, and even morally. Finally, many of today's students have roots in different countries and cultures.

The global coverage in this edition includes the following:

- Each chapter has *A Global View* box, which looks at the social pattern under discussion in another culture(s).
- Key chapters include new sections that compare our institutions with those in other societies. For example, Chapter 9: “Racial and Ethnic Stratification” begins with the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and introduces patterns of intergroup relations by looking at different societies (rather than focusing exclusively on the United States). Chapter 13: “Religion” has a new comparative section on major world religions. Given the role religion plays in national and global politics today, understanding different belief systems is critical.

Chapter 14: “Politics” compares democracy in the United States with the parliamentary and social democracies of Europe, as well as comparing democracy with contemporary monarchies, dictatorships, and totalitarian political systems.

- For continuity and depth we return to the same societies in different chapters and contexts, especially Japan, China, and postcommunist Russia. For example, Chapter 4: “Socialization through the Life Course” begins with a comparative study of preschool in Japan, China, and the United States. Chapter 12: “Education” compares education in Japan, China, western Europe, and the United States.
- We have added a new map program. Some of the maps are designed primarily for identification, so that students do not wonder “where in the world” is, say, Papua New Guinea? Others reinforce sociological points, such as Figure 3-2, which illustrates global migration patterns, and Map 9-4, which compares pre- and postcolonial maps of Africa.

Many chapters include discussions, figures, and tables that show where the United States stands in relation to other countries—for example, in degrees of economic inequality (Chapter 8), student achievement test scores (Chapter 12), participation in organized religion (Chapter 13), and even vacation time (Chapter 15). Throughout this edition, we point out the differences between the United States and western European democracies, which we too often assume are like the United States in everything but language and cuisine.

## The Mass Media

One of the prime forces in globalization has been the mass media. Most of what we know about the world we learn from television, books (rising book sales have defied predictions that reading would become passé), and increasingly the Internet. In recognition of this fact, we place major emphasis on the media.

- To introduce the sociological perspective, Chapter 1 of this edition opens with different approaches to explaining poverty. We begin with journalist Leon Dash’s Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Rosa Lee, whose life exemplified common ideas about the urban poor (and the “welfare queen”). Next we compare Dash’s account of Rosa Lee’s story to the sociological explanation of poverty in William J. Wilson’s latest book, *When Work Disappears*. Finally, we point out that Wilson was one of President Bill Clinton’s chief advisers on urban poverty and social policy during the intense debate on welfare reform. Our discussion of Émile Durkheim’s classic study of suicide includes a box on the role the media play in copycat suicides (updated with grunge rock star Kurt Cobain). The last section of the chapter analyzes the news from a sociological perspective, including a dynamic graphic on the “web” of connections among giant media corporations.
- We follow through on this opening with a series of boxes entitled *Sociology and the Media* in which we analyze media coverage of a topic, identify the hidden assumptions in media reporting, and/or consider the impact of the media on people’s attitudes and behavior. For example, “Prime-Time Families” (Chapter 11) compares and contrasts three generations of TV sitcoms. This popular feature from previous editions is designed to encourage students to become more intelligent consumers of media information.

## Gender

In the belief that women’s activities are not a subplot to the “serious,” male-dominated history of society, we have expanded our coverage of gender.

- Chapter 10: “Gender Stratification” analyzes female inequality in the workplace and the family and describes the origins and current status of the women’s movement. We have updated our coverage of sexual harassment (looking, in particular, at the military) and have added a new section on sexual orientation. The basic message of this chapter is that the revolution in gender roles is at best incomplete.
- Unlike other texts, we do not limit coverage of gender issues to a single chapter or to a section on feminist sociology, as if this were a stepsister to “real” sociology. Rather, women and so-called women’s issues appear in every chapter. For example, in Chapter 1: “The Sociological Perspective” we use the “discovery” of wife abuse to illustrate the role sociologists play in calling hidden problems to public attention. In Chapter 4: “Socialization through the Life Course” we look not only at gender socialization in infancy and childhood but also at stages of an adult woman’s life. In this edition students will “meet” poor, homeless women and famous, wealthy women (Oprah Winfrey); powerful women heads of state and powerless victims of dowry violence and female genital mutilation; women in their roles as athletes, soldiers, clergy, and corporate executives; as well as wives and mothers.

- This book is not “for women only.” Also unlike other texts, in our chapter on gender we describe the hazards of the traditional male role and how social definitions of masculinity are changing, including an in-depth look at Promise Keepers.

We would also note that the number of women taking courses in sociology has increased over the last decade to about half the students studying sociology—a trend that we believe reflects the fact that women see understanding society not as something best left to men but as *their* business.

## Aging

The graying of the U.S. population is a major social structural change that affects everyone: children who compete with their grandparents for their parents’ time, workers who pay Social Security taxes, baby-boomers who wonder whether the country will support them as they age, and the elderly themselves. Never before have so many people lived to such an old age or enjoyed good health and leisure time in their 60s, 70s, and 80s. Rather than setting aside a special chapter on senior citizens, we have woven aging into the text, beginning with changing age structure (Chapter 1) and continuing with resocialization in late adulthood and changing attitudes toward dying (Chapter 4), age stratification (Chapter 5), generational differences in economic prospects (Chapter 9), and a global analysis of age structure (Chapter 16).

## Update

Some students (and even some instructors) may find this difficult to believe, but when we wrote the first edition of this text (published in 1980) the civil rights movement was a living memory, the women’s movement was just gathering steam, the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union divided most of the world into two camps, and all-male universities such as Princeton and women’s colleges such as Vassar were just beginning to admit students of the opposite sex. Fax machines, post-its, and compact discs (CDs) had not been invented yet; neither had the concepts of sexual harassment and date rape. The Internet was known only to scientists at major universities. Much has changed.

Just as the world has changed over the six editions of this book, so has sociology changed. In

each edition, we have updated not only social facts (patterns and trends) but also sociological thinking. For example, in the past the study of social stratification usually focused on the United States; today explanations of inequality in our society requires sociologists to look at global forces. What we wrote even in the last edition does not cover changes that have occurred in the past three years. Nevertheless, knowing what happened three, thirty, or three hundred years ago is essential to understanding the present. In updating this book we have not thrown out the past. Many chapters include the historical background necessary to make sense of current events through a sociological lens. In Chapter 7: “Deviance and Social Control,” for example, we open with the “beer crisis” among the Pilgrims who settled in Plymouth, and we then use changes in attitudes toward and patterns of drinking in the United States (including drinking on college campuses today) to introduce the social definition of deviance.

Writing a sixth edition not only requires authors to update material but also provides them the luxury of refining it. In this edition, we decided to focus on the subjects long considered the most difficult for introductory students: social structure, politics, and economics.

**Social Structure** All sociology textbooks include a chapter on social structure. As all sociologists know, this is one of the field’s major contributions to understanding human societies and human behavior. Most texts introduce the basic concepts (social institutions, statuses and roles) and then quickly move on to the more entertaining subject of social interaction. While social interaction is an important part of social structure, this emphasis deprives students of the opportunity to see what sociology really is: the study of social structures and how they affect human social behavior. Typically, groups and formal organizations are covered in a separate chapter.

Our new Chapter 5: “Social Structure” looks at the basic elements of social structure (including formal organizations), the structure of societies (including social institutions and social stratification), and relations among societies (including evolutionary trends and the world system). Thus it is a “macrosocial” chapter, but not an abstract or “dry” one. To bring social structure alive for readers, we open the chapter with discussion of the new

Women's National Basketball Association (the WNBA) and use the rules of the game (here, changing rules for women's basketball) to illustrate the impact of social structure on individual behavior. Later in the chapter we trace basketball's evolution from a minor diversion to a multimillion-dollar enterprise to illustrate the development of formal organization. To introduce social stratification, we look at age stratification, which is as universal and as taken-for-granted as gender stratification. Most people think of aging as a natural biological process, ignoring the impact of social definitions on the experience of growing older. A new discussion of roles as resources looks at Hollywood. We believe these familiar, thought-provoking examples make social structure as interesting and accessible as the most popular topics in sociology, such as deviance.

Our new Chapter 6: "Social Interaction and Social Groups" looks at social structure from the micro-perspective. We begin with apparently insignificant behavior: how husbands monopolize the TV remote control. Then we show how mundane behavior reflects and perpetuates deeper levels of social structure—in this case, the "war of the sexes." The first half of this chapter analyzes everyday interaction, which leads naturally to the topic of social groups. We have expanded our coverage of groups with examples of different leadership styles (the IBM versus Apple models) and new material on behavior in groups (using the Challenger disaster and decision making in juries as primary examples).

Chapter 14: "Politics" has undergone a major revision. First, we open with a vignette about campaign financing during the 1996 presidential election, which is an issue that has moved from the sidelines of American politics to center stage and has virtually overshadowed the election itself. We follow through on this approach in our section on politics in the United States today. Second, we look at politics not just as a matter of power but also as a social institution. We trace the development of specialized political institutions in the first section and compare political systems around the globe in the last section.

Chapter 15: "The Economy and Work" has been moved to the unit on social institutions. Our main goal in revising this chapter is to show the relationship between changes in the economy and changes in work and the workforce. The introduction looks at downsizing in white-collar as well as blue-collar

jobs in the United States, which is a theme picked up later in the chapter, when we discuss cutbacks in Japan and other countries and the recent economic crisis in the Pacific Rim.

## Features

As in the previous editions, each chapter in the book begins with a list of key questions, which correspond to the major sections in the chapter. The chapter summary then reviews how the concepts, theories, and data introduced in the chapter answer these key questions.

We have kept the format (but revised the content) of three sets of boxes: *A Global View*, *Sociology and the Media*, and *Close Up*. These boxes are in-depth discussions of topics and/or research of particular interest, from "The Ethics of Social Research" and Zimbardo's classic study "Are We Prisoners of Society?" to "A Cultural History of Jeans."

Key terms are printed in **boldface** type in the text, listed at the end of each chapter, and defined in a Glossary at the end of the book.

## New Features

Our new *map program* is designed to help readers who have not studied geography since second grade (perhaps the majority of American students) to call attention to global issues, and to stimulate interest in other regions, countries, and cultures.

Each chapter now includes a list of *Recommended Readings*, our choice of some of the best sociological work on subjects in the chapter, including both classic and contemporary titles.

In the last five years, lists of web sites have become a routine feature of sociology texts. We have taken this one step further in our *Sociology on the Web* feature in each chapter by providing readers with Internet exercises that contain suggested topics and questions students can investigate on the Internet, as well as sites to help them get started.

## Supplements for the Student

### Study Guide

Each student will receive along with the text a copy of the free Study Guide prepared by Kenrick Thompson of Northern Michigan University. Each chapter begins with a list of basic questions the stu-

dent should be able to answer and a list of concepts the student should be able to understand after reading the corresponding chapter in the text. Each chapter includes a chapter review, concept review, matching terms, 20 to 30 review questions with brief explanations of the correct answers, and true/false questions that challenge the student to distinguish between popular myths and social fact.

### Web Site

Students are invited to visit the book's web site at <http://www.mhhe.com/gelles>. The site includes a variety of activities and resources, including online study guide material, chapter quizzes/practice tests, crossword puzzles, web destination links, and updates to material in the text.

### WebQuester (Dushkin/McGraw-Hill)

WebQuester is a series of guided web site explorations and online exercises that walk your students through carefully selected sites covering key topics in sociology. For additional information contact your sales representative or visit the Dushkin site at <http://www.mhhe.com/webquester>.

### McGraw-Hill Learning Architecture

Connecting students and instructors in an integrated environment, this web-based product provides course administration, collaborative learning, content management and customization, as well as interactive quizzing at the click of your computer's mouse.

### Dushkin/McGraw-Hill

Any of these Dushkin publications can be packaged with this text at a discount: Annual Editions, Taking Sides, Sources, Global Studies. For more information please visit the web site at <http://www.dushkin.com>.

## Supplements for the Instructor

The **Instructor's Manual** provides chapter overviews summarizing key principles and research findings, a list of teaching objectives, two or more mini-lectures, research projects to promote student learning through "hands-on" experience, essay questions, and a classroom exercise that can usually

be conducted during one class period. The manual was prepared by a team directed by John Maiolo at East Carolina University.

The **Test Bank and Computerized Test Bank** contains approximately 60 multiple-choice questions per chapter, with answers keyed to the relevant pages in the text and the type of question (applied or factual). The Test Bank was prepared by Kenrick Thompson, who also wrote the Study Guide.

**PowerPoint slides**, available as electronic presentation slides in Windows 3.1, include four-color figures, tables, and maps to use for classroom presentation.

The **McGraw-Hill Video Library** offers adopters a variety of videos, suitable for classroom use in conjunction with the topics in Sociology.

The **Gelles/Levine Web Site**, <http://www.mhhe.com/gelles>, contains a variety of resources and activities, including many quizzes for students. For instructors, the authors have a feature called Seventh Edition Now! which updates material and examples in the book as new research is made available. This way, you can automatically update your lectures and give your students the latest material on a topic or issue.

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His book, *The Violent Home*, was the first systematic empirical investigation of family violence and continues to be highly influential. He is the author or coauthor of 21 books and more than 100 articles and chapters on family violence. His latest books are *The Book of David: How Preserving Families Can Cost Children's Lives* (Basic Books, 1996) and *Intimate Violence in Families, Third Edition* (Sage Publications, 1997). Gelles was a member of the National Academy of Science's panel on Assessing Family Violence Interventions. He is also the Vice President for Publications for the National Council on Family Relations.

Gelles received his A.B. degree from Bates College (1968), an M.A. in Sociology from the University of Rochester (1971), and a Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of New Hampshire (1973). He edited the journal *Teaching Sociology* from 1973 to 1981 and received the American Sociological Association Section on Undergraduate Education Outstanding Contributions to Teaching Award in 1979. Gelles has presented innumerable lectures to policy-making groups and media groups, including *The Today Show*, *CBS Morning News*, *Good Morning America*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Dateline*, and *All Things Considered*. In 1984 *Esquire* named him as one of the men and women who are "changing America."

Presently, Gelles lives in Philadelphia with his wife Judy, a photographer. His son Jason graduated from Harvard University in 1996 and works in Los Angeles. His son David is a senior at Tufts University.

**Ann Levine** is a writer and editor who received her B.A. with Highest Honors in English from New York University in 1966. Before her freelance career, she was an editor in the Journals Department of Rockefeller University and in the College Department of Prentice Hall. Levine has been the principal writer on a number of college textbooks in sociology, psychology, and anthropology. She coauthored *Social Problems*, with Michael Bassis and Richard Gelles, and *Understanding Development*, with Sandra Scarr and Richard Weinberg. The second edition of *You and Your Adolescent: A Parent's Guide for Ages 10 to 20*, by Laurence Steinberg and Levine, was published in 1997. Levine worked with Biruté Galdikas on *Reflections of Eden: My Years with the Orangutans of Borneo* (1994), the subject of an upcoming ABC/Hallmark Productions TV movie. She is currently working with Earl Johnson on a report of his study of fathers of children on welfare (MDRC Russell, 1998).

Levine lives in New York City with her husband, two dogs, and a cat. As a member of the Orangutan Foundation International, she has made several trips to Borneo and learned much from the *Ibu* Professor and from Siswi, Princess, Kusasi, and other orangutans. She also works with Mighty Mutt, a group that rescues stray dogs and cats from the streets of Brooklyn.

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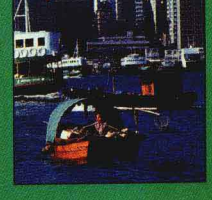
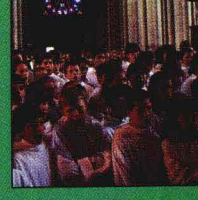
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