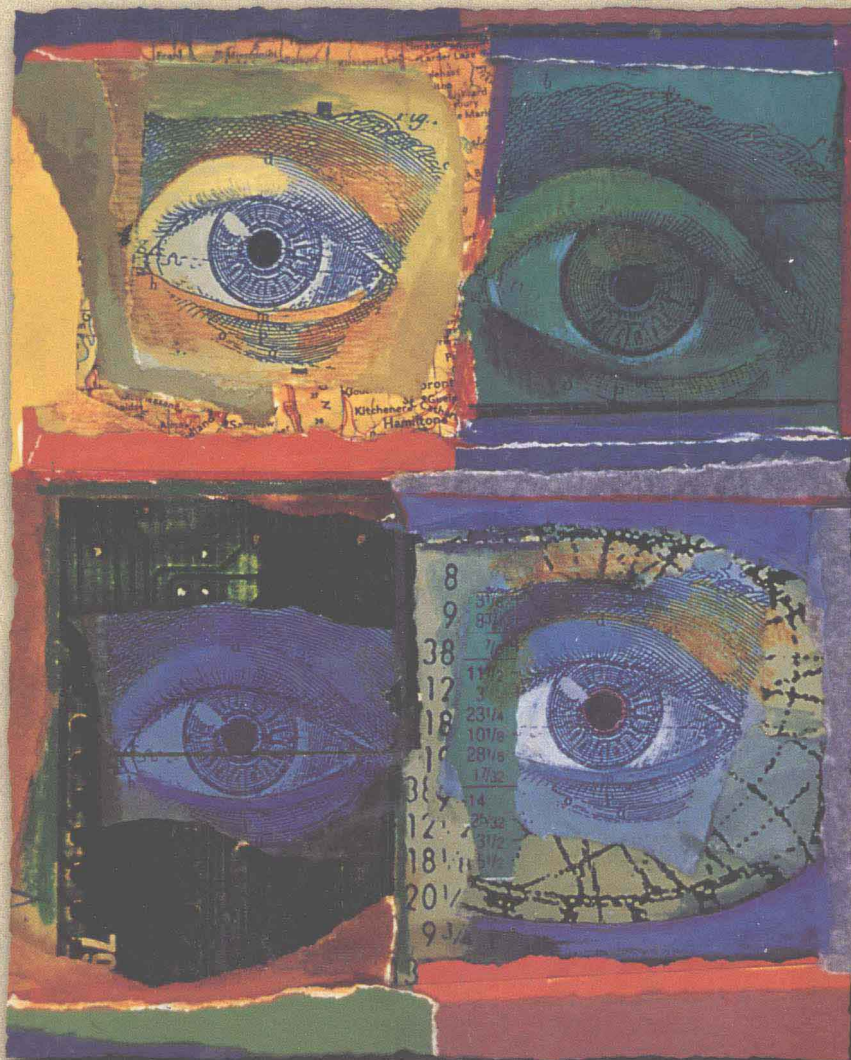


*Foundations of*  
**MODERN**  
**SOCIOLOGY**

SEVENTH EDITION



METTA SPENCER

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SOCIOLOGY

SEVENTH EDITION

METTA SPENCER

*University of Toronto*

With The Editorial Collaboration of

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# PREFACE

I began preparing the first edition of this book in 1969, while we were witnessing all the dramatic social changes and reforms of the sixties. The first edition reflected the sociological concerns of its period—as have all the subsequent editions. Yet over the years, the original debates have not vanished completely. They have simply been overlaid with additional and newer perspectives.

In the sixties, for example, sociologists were mainly preoccupied with the goal of overcoming social inequality with respect to social class, racial and ethnic conflicts, gender (or “women’s liberation,” as it was then called), as well as the exploitation of the underdeveloped countries by transnational capitalism. We cannot pretend to have resolved any of these questions, which remain live problems.

During the later seventies the main issue for Anglophone Canadian sociologists was the formation of a distinctive Canadian identity, culture, and economy, as opposed to the Americanization of almost everything. Canadians felt vulnerable, so that an up-to-date textbook writer of that period tried to use only Canadian examples, even if that meant skimming on cross-cultural comparisons between Canada and other societies where many immigrant students had been born. This question of Canadian culture remains alive today, though the society has become less insular, for several reasons. The long constitutional debate over Quebec’s sovereignty has been the major factor bringing this change, but it was matched by the political struggle over free trade, which focused Canada’s attention on its place in the global economy. This was also the period when the nuclear arms race was at its most dangerous phase and the social activists of the day had to concentrate on overcoming it and limiting the effects of the Cold War. This is when I added a new chapter on war and peace, and it is still an important part of the book, for unfortunately warfare has not declined but only taken on a different shape.

By the eighties and early nineties, after Mikhail Gorbachev had put a stop to the Cold War, a number of nationalistic wars broke out around the world, especially in the formerly socialist countries that were undergoing secession, but also in such Third World spots as Somalia. These events also meant that Canadians could not be preoccupied merely with Canada’s own problems, partly because Canadian peacekeepers were so important on the global scene, and partly because the refugees from these terrible conflicts often made their way to Canada and settled here.

During the later nineties, in addition to international relations and international trade, many Canadians have shifted their focus to the environment. We know that the entire biosphere is in danger and that individual nations cannot solve these problems; we must cooperate through transnational arrangements such as the United Nations and other global organizations. Accordingly, in

this edition I have added a separate chapter on the environment and have again separated the chapters on economics and politics, which are becoming so important during this period of globalization.

The overall trend, then, is for Canadian sociology to become more conscious of the whole planet. This need not diminish the importance of older debates about inequality, but in fact many of those debates have also changed. All around the world, the late nineties seem to be a time of political and economic conservatism. In only a few countries is socialism still upheld as the ideal. Even highly democratic socialist societies, such as Scandinavia, are privatizing and reducing their welfare states. Marxist sociology is no longer as credible as twenty years ago, but there is no alternative approach that is offering any ready-made solutions. A textbook today must introduce students to a sociology that is more tentative about its recommendations and even a little uncertain about what it should be doing. The trend toward “post-modernism” reflects the more limited aspirations of sociologists in the nineties.

Yet sociology will not dwindle away. The world needs the information that can be generated by this field of research. I hope that many students who begin the study of sociology with this textbook will adopt this work as a lifetime vocation. I hope you will find a niche where you can find pleasure in working as a sociologist.

Instead of proposing a grandiose, ready-made ideological formula for you to adopt, what I have tried to do in this book is to describe some of the problems that need to be solved. You don’t need a major ideological theory such as Marxism anyway. Sociologists should just keep their eyes on the ball—focusing all the time on the pragmatic problems that have obvious political or social implications for policy-makers. Do that and you will probably make a difference as a sociologist—or in whatever other field of work you undertake. May this book be an appropriate offering to the lives of its readers and to the highest purposes that you intend to serve.

## NEW TO THIS EDITION

A new chapter is devoted to issues of the environment. This chapter reviews the current status of the world’s resources and the problems caused by industrial agriculture. We take into account Clive Ponting’s evidence about the collapse of previous civilizations as resulting from overpopulation. We consider the Thomas Homer-Dixon research showing that shortages of basic necessities (e.g., land, water, firewood) accompanying high population growth in poor countries tends to increase the amount of violence.

The material on politics and economics, which used to be combined in one chapter, now are in two separate chapters, *Politics* and *Economic Life*. The new politics

chapter emphasizes the requisites and correlates of democracy, which is in a period of expansion around the world. The new economic life chapter addresses the changes in the world economy—the breakdown of the Cold War economic blocs and the increase in globalization, with its effects on the South as well as the East and West. We also cover the effect of the World Bank on sponsoring harmful megaprojects such as dams in the South.

With the addition of the chapter on the environment, the chapter on *Population and Ecology* in the last edition has been changed to *Population and Health*. Among added features is a comparison between the American and Canadian health care systems. Also, the debate over population policy is reviewed, with particular reference to Ruth Dixon-Mueller's research pointing out the importance of empowering women. This approach provided the winning policy recommendation at the 1994 population conference in Cairo.

I have deleted the chapter on *A Nation and a World* in this edition, but the issues that it covered can still be found in other sections. For example, the chapter on ethnicity is now called *Ethnicity and Nationalism*. It covers the rise of nationalistic movements around the world. It also covers the distinction between French and German laws regarding naturalization and citizenship.

## ORGANIZATION

The book is divided into four sections: (1) an Introduction; (2) a section on the individual in society; (3) a section on social institutions; and (4) a section on changing society.

The *Introduction* is designed to acquaint the student with the major theoretical traditions in the discipline and the notion that knowledge is acquired in a systematic, empirical way.

*The Individual in Society* explains that individuals acquire their particular traits through social experience. We begin by introducing the notion that cultures—ideas, symbols, and ways of living—are transmitted through communication in particular communities. We move from the dynamics of face-to-face relationships and other forms of micro-level social interaction to group structures—small group relations as well as the importance of bureaucracy in shaping our lives. This section also has a chapter on the classical deviance material and contemporary problems of crime and punishment. We examine the impact of social inequality and the challenges of allocating benefits fairly within a society.

*Social Institutions* deals with the basic structural “building blocks” that are found everywhere but which vary greatly from one society to another: the family, religion, education, the political system, the economy, cities and other settlements, and ethnic groups.

*Changing Society* deals with more fluid factors—processes that today tend to interrupt the routines of established institutions and require new solutions. These include warfare and the means of limiting it, population growth, disease and other threats to health, surges of social protest and unrest, modernization, and other ways of understanding global dynamics.

Each chapter is divided into three major sections: (1) a basic core section; (2) a Research section; and (3) a Policy section.

The *basic core section* of each chapter contains an orderly presentation of the major concepts and theories of the topic area of the chapter. Important sociologists past and present and the exciting controversies that sometimes swirl around them are dis-

cussed. The core section emphasizes the lasting aspects of sociology—the basic concepts and significant issues that sociologists think about.

The *Research: Social Scientists at Work* section focuses on recent empirical research in the topic area of the chapter and discusses one or more landmark studies. It emphasizes the way sociologists come to know what they know and the people and events that have contributed to that store of sociological knowledge.

The *Policy: Informing Decision Making* section talks about political, economic, or ethical issues concerning which people have to make decisions. By discussing roles that sociologists can play in shaping the world of the future, this section serves to answer questions that are sometimes raised about the “relevance” of sociology.

## FEATURES

Other elements of the book have been designed to make learning more effective for students:

### GLOSSARIES

A glossary containing several hundred careful definitions of all important concepts is found at the end of the book for easy reference. In addition, key terms within the body of the text are printed in bold italic, defined when they are used for the first time, and reviewed in lists of key terms at the end of each chapter. This reinforces the learning of the most important terms found in this book as well as in advanced books and courses on particular areas of sociology.

### SUMMARIES

Each chapter is followed by a summary that reviews the most important ideas presented in the chapter. Basic concepts are again stressed.

### READING LISTS

Extensive reading lists appear at the end of each chapter, with descriptive annotations to suggest potential uses of the books.

### GRAPHS, CHARTS, AND TABLES

Because much empirical research in the field of sociology is reported in tabular form, a selection of this type of material is included. Students are given a thorough introduction on how to read and construct tables in Chapter 2.

### PHOTOGRAPHS

A lively array of pictures has been chosen to provoke thought and to make points visually that could not be expressed in words.

### THE RESEARCH PAPER

An appendix at the end of the book is addressed to students. Its purpose is to show how to use the library and how to write a term paper.

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## SUPPLEMENTS

Three supplementary aids have been designed to accompany the book:

### THE STUDY GUIDE

The study guide reviews the material in the textbook through presentation of chapter objectives, basic sociological concepts, and various self-administered tests. Three testing formats are used—multiple choice, fill-in, and matching—with answers supplied for immediate feedback. Questions cover the basic core material, as well as the Research and Policy sections.

### THE INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL AND TEST ITEM FILE

The manual outlines the basic structure of each chapter, facilitating additional lecture materials and discussion questions. Class projects and research topics are included for each chapter.

The test item file includes a thousand items selected to test the student's understanding of introductory sociology. The questions, primarily multiple-choice, are referenced to the appropriate text page. Essay questions are also included. A computerized test item file is also available.

### CBC/PRENTICE HALL VIDEO LIBRARY



Prentice Hall Canada and the CBC have worked together to bring you the best and most comprehensive video package available in the college market, containing clips from such notable CBC programs as *News in Review* and *The Fifth Estate*. Designed specifically to complement the text, this library is an excellent tool for bringing students into contact with the world outside the classroom. These programs have extremely high production quality, present substantial content, and are hosted by well-versed, well-known anchors, and have been chosen to relate directly to chapter content as indicated by the video icon.

# A ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A textbook writer is not expected to innovate so much as to select from and accurately report on the innovations of other scholars. My intellectual debts are, therefore, unbounded. I am particularly glad to acknowledge the sociologists who prepared a series of books on special topics: the Prentice Hall *Foundations of Modern Sociology* series. I have been free to draw on their work and incorporate it in this book. Moreover, this book has been considerably influenced by the editor of that series, Alex Inkeles. While I appreciate these valuable inputs, I must also accept final responsibility for any errors or misinterpretations that may appear here.

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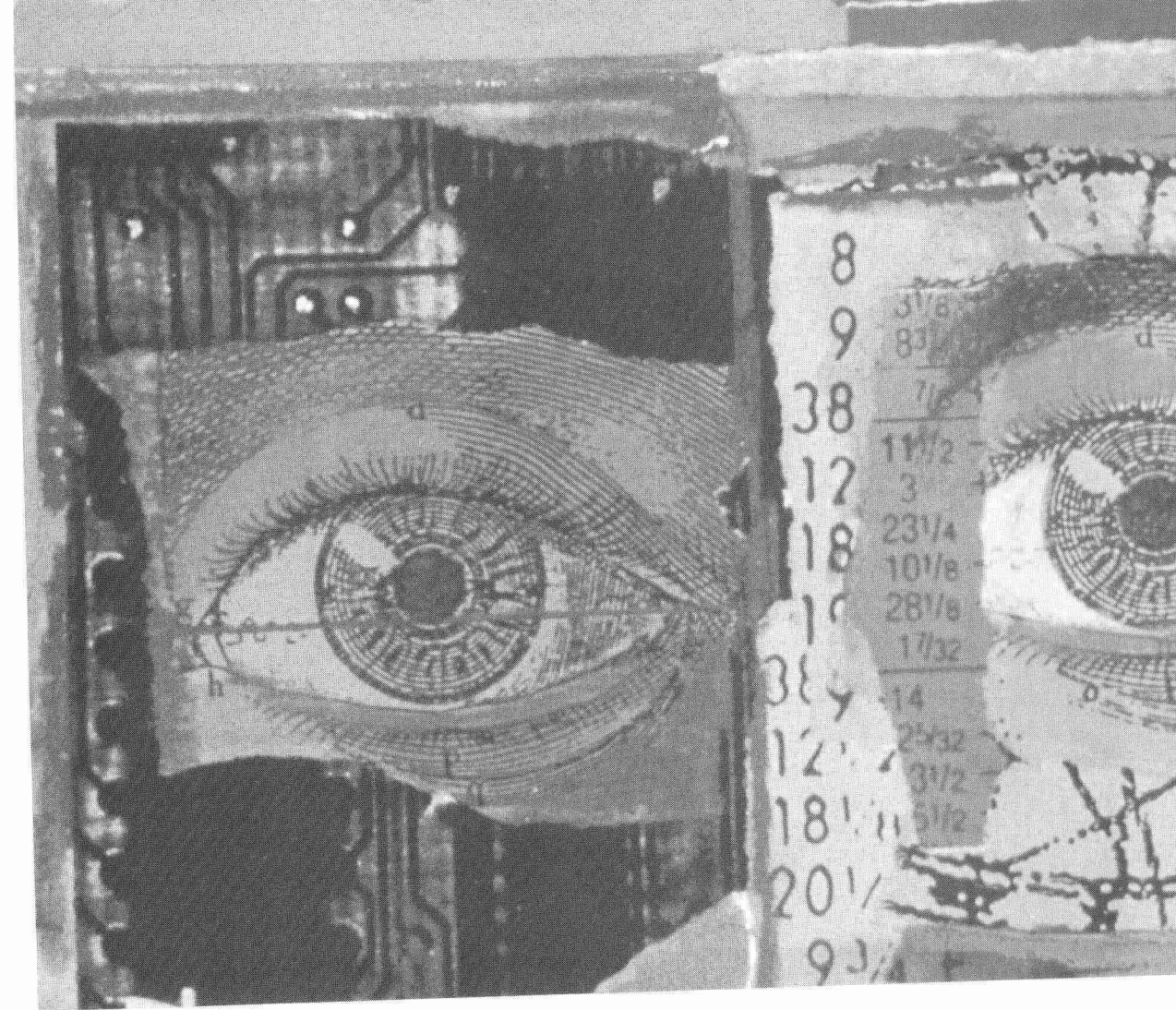
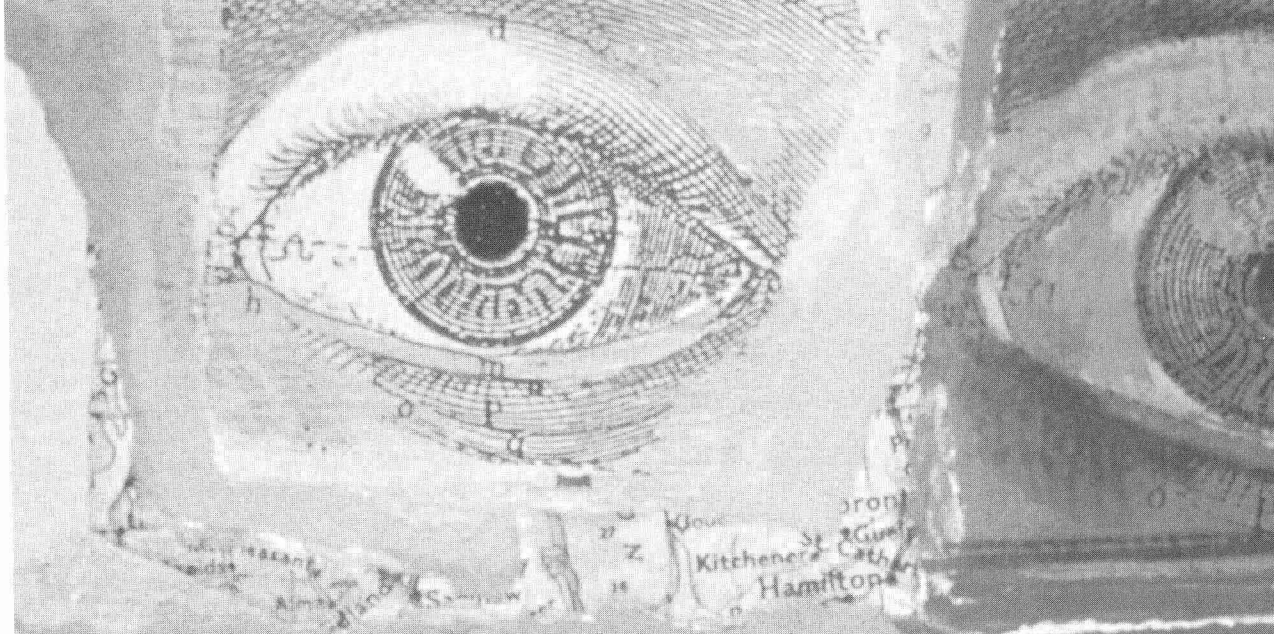
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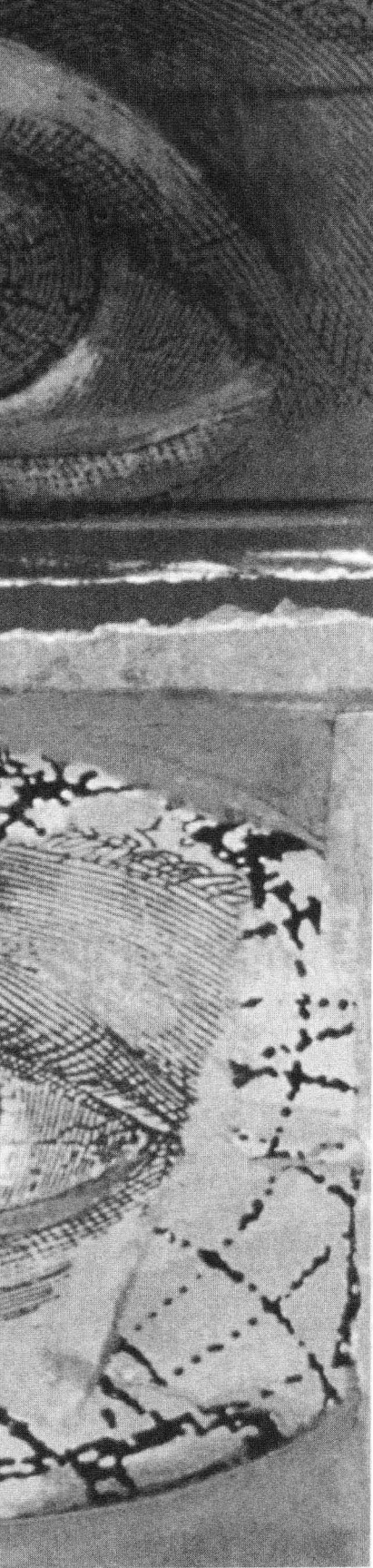
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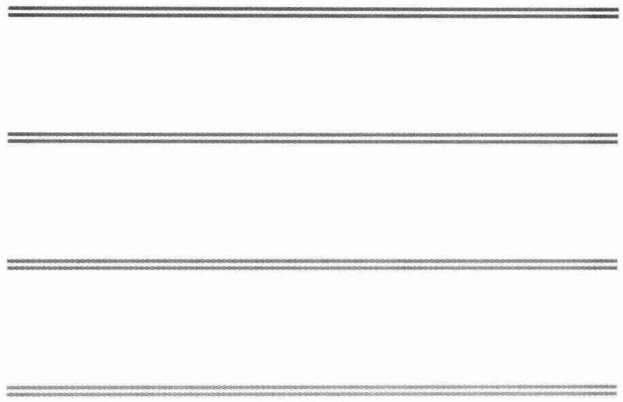
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Toronto, July 1995

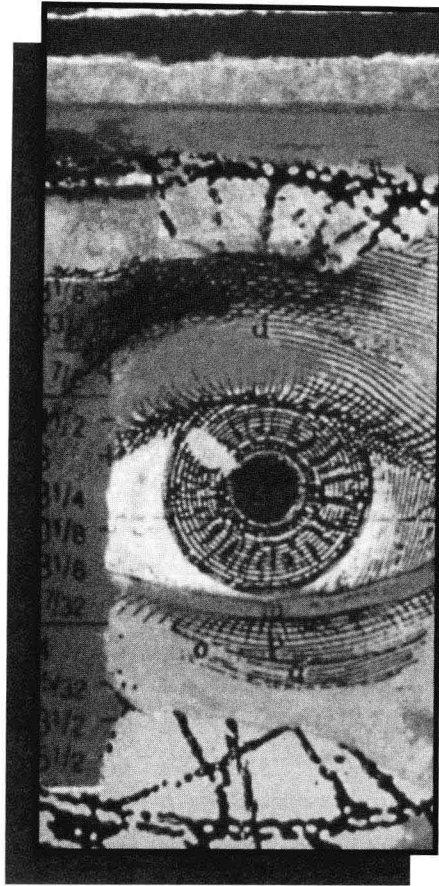




# INTRODUCTION



# 1 CHAPTER



## WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

- ◇ Sociology
- ◇ The Other Social Sciences
- ◇ A Brief Historical Survey of Sociology
- ◇ The Dominant Perspectives in Sociology



delightful scene in an old French play features a character who becomes proud of himself when he finds out that he has been speaking prose all his life. You may be just as surprised to learn that you have been “speaking sociology” all your life. For example, you may have had conversations on the subject of why some youngsters become delinquent and others do not; or whether women are paid as much as men; or whether it is lonelier to live in a city than in a small town; or

whether the portrayal of violence on television leads to violent actions by members of the TV audience. If so, you have discussed sociological issues. But just as some people speak prose better than others, so also some people talk about sociological issues with more knowledge than others. In this book you will become acquainted with some of the most important contributions made by people who study social relationships. This field is sociology.

## SOCIOLOGY

*Sociology* can be defined as the study of human group life. As social beings, we have to make countless decisions in daily life. How should we discipline an aggressive child? How much shall we offer to pay a new temporary female employee? Would we be happier if we moved to a smaller town? Should we protest on an airplane when they show a violent film in the presence of small children? These issues are the stuff of social life—and sociologists seek to make sense of them.

We live together collectively, you and I, as part of a social system. A *system* is a connected and regularly arranged scheme of parts that, taken together, form a unified whole. To say *society* is a *system* implies that group actions have results that cannot be explained in terms of the intentions of their individual members.

Throughout this book, we will look for general principles that explain how social life works. This involves logical reasoning—“theorizing”—about human groups. We will also pay attention to empirical research. We cannot merely reason or speculate about human affairs; we must also check to find out whether events have occurred as we supposed or otherwise. This fact-checking is no small matter; we often think we know what’s so, and then discover that it is not. Let’s begin with a quick test to see whether you know as much as you think. Can you find a single false proposition in the following list of obvious truths?

1. Children from large families are generally happier and better able to cope than children from small families.
2. As a result of the women’s movement, pay scales between men and women are now considerably more equal than 10 years ago.
3. Now that birth control and abortion are widely available, the rate of illegitimate births is decreasing in Canada.

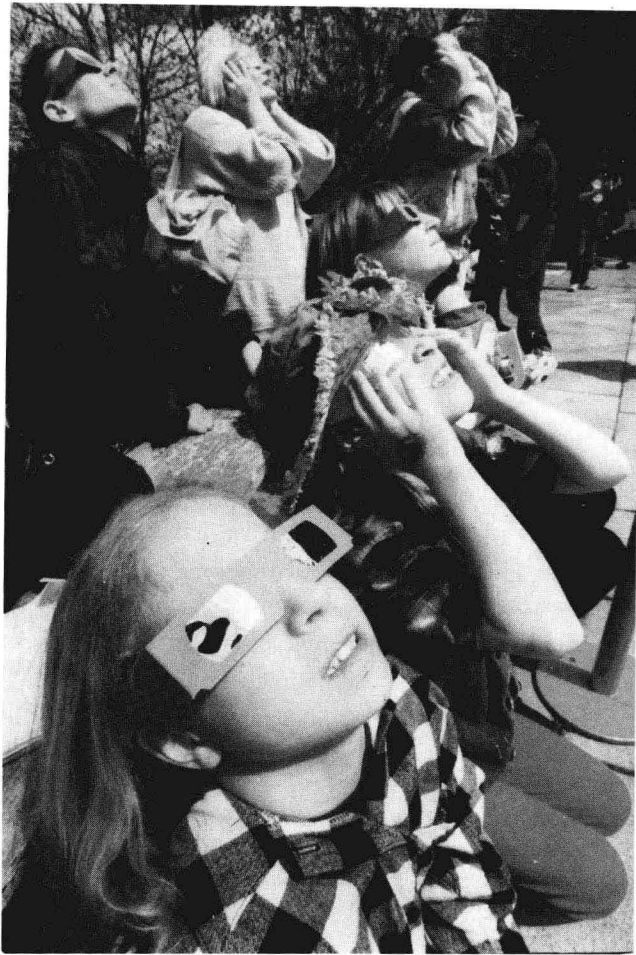
4. People who live in cities have more trouble making close friends and keeping warm relationships than people who live in small towns or in the country.
5. Most mothers have an upsetting time adjusting when their children move away from home.
6. The reason so many people in underdeveloped countries starve is that not enough food is produced on earth to feed them.
7. Big bureaucratic organizations are less efficient than small, friendly, personal organizations.
8. Nations that are well-armed are less likely to get into a war than nations that are militarily unprepared.

Obvious? Perhaps; yet all eight “facts” are false! If you act on the assumption that they are true, you may make decisions in your personal life that will backfire, or you may hold to policies about group life that will not work. That is why sociology can contribute so much by clearing up misinformation. Sociology’s basic goal is to understand how human beings fit their activities together into a system of stable social arrangements.

A *society* is a large, permanent, self-sufficient, self-perpetuating group of interacting people who share certain common values and beliefs. Japan is a society, and so is Canada, for example. There is a debate as to whether Canada contains another distinct society—Québec.

Collectively, the members of a society perform billions of social acts during a single day. Yet the usual outcome is not total confusion but enough order to permit each person to do his or her own thing while others do theirs. Indeed, our actions generally help other people attain their goals and vice versa. One major purpose of sociology is to explain how this happens, how the activities of individuals fit together to produce orderly collective life. Equally, sociology helps explain the conflicts that exist when people *fail* to produce orderly collective life.





Society consists of people acting in organized ways together, doing all manner of things, including watching a solar eclipse together.

Society was here before we were born. We did not invent it. We enter social systems that are already working, and we learn how they work by participating in them. Our lives take place within *social structures* (predictable, recurring arrangements) that define the limits and opportunities within which we exercise our choice. To study sociology is to become aware of powerful social forces that affect our lives in ways that are not normally apparent.

Sociologists can study almost anything human beings do. What is special about their work is the way they study any given topic—the kinds of questions they ask and the methods they use in trying to answer those questions. Of course, sociologists experience social life personally just as other people do. They fall in love, they work and play, they go to war, and so on. But as sociologists they do not

think of love the way a bride does, nor of war the way an admiral does, nor of work and play the way grocers and children do. In their work they think of these topics as social patterns to be explained in a scientific way, for sociology is a social science.

## THE OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

A science is a branch of study that is concerned with discovering and organizing facts, principles, and methods. The *natural sciences* (for example, physics, biology, astronomy) study physical phenomena; the *social sciences* deal in a scientific way with human relationships. All of the social sciences overlap, but since the different social sciences tend to cover somewhat different aspects of human relationships, a description of some of the other social sciences may help clarify your understanding of sociology.

### ECONOMICS

Economics is concerned with the production and distribution of goods and services. It deals with such factors as the flow of money and the relationship of prices to supply and demand. Few economists pay much attention to an individual's motives or attitudes toward his or her job or toward money. Economists today are becoming more concerned with empirical realities, rather than abstract theories. However, they do not study business enterprises or governments as social organizations. They leave such matters to the *psychologists* or the *sociologists*, who often study topics that are related to economics—for example, the social backgrounds of business people, the contributions of education to productivity, and the factors people consider when deciding whether to buy a house or car.

### POLITICAL SCIENCE

Until about 40 years ago, political science was concerned largely with how to make government more efficient. It left to political sociologists the study of political *behavior*—such as the workings of lobbyist groups, the social backgrounds of politicians, and the way people get their political beliefs.<sup>1</sup> Today, however, political scientists are concerned with behavioral patterns too—for example, popular attitudes and values, the membership of separatist movements, and decision-making in cities and bureaucracies. Moreover, many sociologists today con-