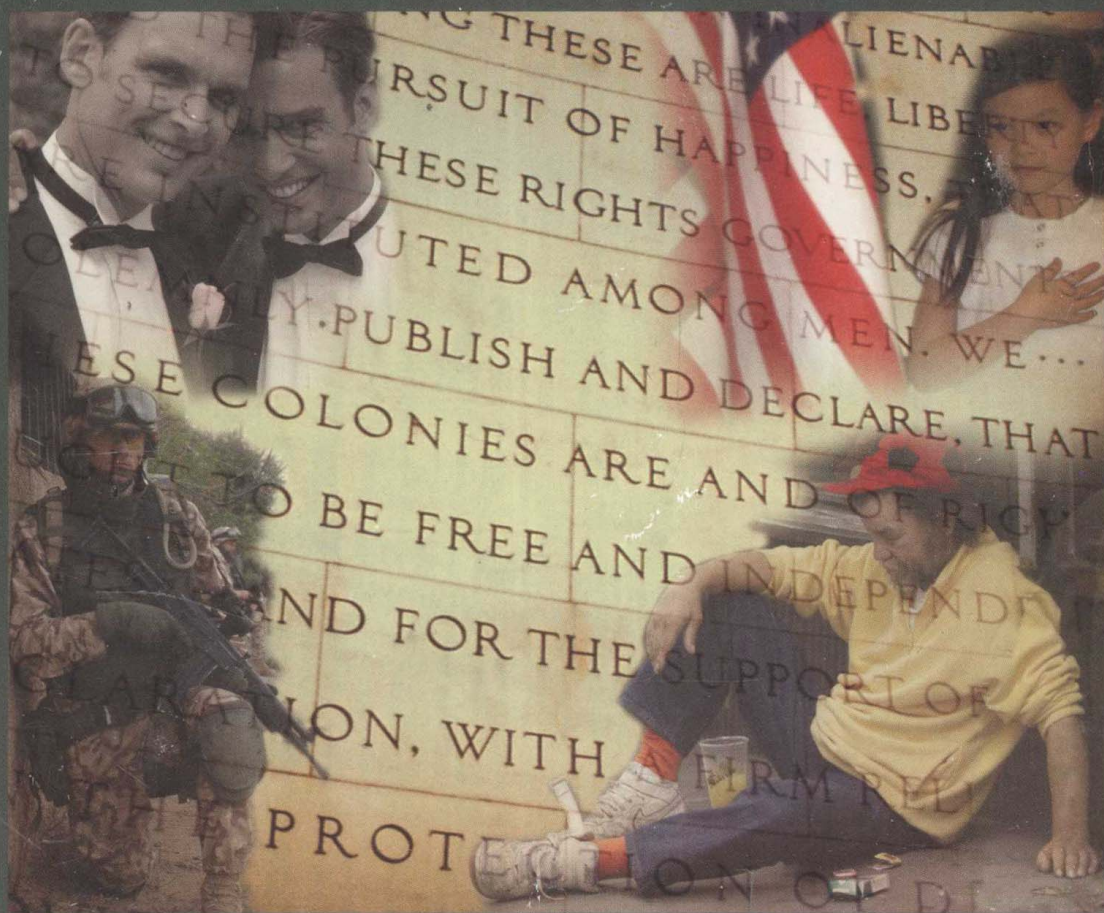


TAKING SIDES



Clashing Views on **Social Issues**

FOURTEENTH EDITION

Kurt Finsterbusch

www.mhcls.com

See inside front cover for details.

TAKING SIDES

Clashing Views on
Social Issues

FOURTEENTH EDITION

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

Photo Acknowledgment

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Cover Art Acknowledgment

Maggie Lytle

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Manufactured in the United States of America

Fourteenth Edition

123456789DOCDOC9876

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Taking sides: clashing views on social issues/selected, edited, and
with introductions
by Kurt Finsterbusch.—14th ed.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Social behavior. 2. Social problems. I. Finsterbusch, Kurt, *comp.*
302

0-07-351496-9
978-0-07-351496-3
95-83865



Printed on Recycled Paper



Preface

The 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 *postscript* 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 three completely new issues: *Should Mothers Stay Home with Their Children?* (Issue 5), *Are Boys and Men Disadvantaged Relative to Girls and Women?* (Issue 10), and *Should Biotechnology Be Used to Alter and Enhance Humans?* (Issue 15). In addition, one or both of the selections were replaced to bring a fresh perspective to the debates for the issues on moral decline (Issue 1), crisis of the family (Issue 4), gay marriage (Issue 6), affirmative action (Issue 9), business control of the government (Issue 11), government intervention (Issue 12), welfare reform (Issue 13), public education (Issue 14), the environment (Issue 19), and globalization (Issue 20). 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.mhcls.com/usingsides/>.

Taking Sides: Clashing Views on 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.mhcls.com/takingsides/>.

Acknowledgments I wish to acknowledge the encouragement and support given to this project by Larry Loeppeke, former and present list managers for the Taking Sides series, and Nichole Altman, 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
University of Maryland



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, Kay S. Hymowitz challenges the common perception that morals have declined in America, while Robert H. Bork argues 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 whether the news reporters and anchormen report and comment on the news with professional objectivity and relatively bias free. William McGowan argues that the objectivity of most reporters is sacrificed to political cor-

rectness, which supports the liberal social agenda. In contrast, Robert W. McClesney and John Bellamy Foster argue that even though newsmen may lean to the left on average, they largely use official sources for their reports, and the net result supports the status quo.

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 asks if the traditional family is in crisis. David Popenoe is deeply concerned about the decline of the traditional family while Frank Furstenberg points out that the diversity of current family patterns is not a crisis but such diversity is fairly normal throughout history. Issue 5 considers one of the current strains on mother, the conflict of career and childrearing. Claudia Wallis presents the case for mothers staying home and Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels argue against those who say that women's place is in the home. Issue 6 debates whether same-sex marriages should be legal. The Human Rights Campaign presents all the arguments in its favor and Peter Sprigg presents all the arguments against it.

Stratification and Inequality

Issue 7 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 8. 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 justice promoted or undermined by such policies? Curtis Crawford and Lawrence D. Bobo take opposing sides on this question in Issue 9.

Issue 10 deals with male-female advantages and disadvantages. Michelle Conlin explains that the way schools operate and the behaviors that they reward or sanction favor females over males. As a result females are graduating from high school, colleges, and most grad schools at higher rates than males. Joel Wendland points out the substantial advantages that males have over females in employment and wages and argues that the gender gap still favors males.

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, Bill Moyers argues that the business elite and the rich 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. Eliot Spitzer and Andrew F. Celli Jr. argues that government intervention is necessary to make markets work well and to prevent various harms to society. John Stossel 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). Scott Winship and Christopher Jencks show how the welfare reform was a great success because it greatly reduced welfare rolls and dramatically increased the employment of welfare mothers. Sharon Hayes 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. The situation of some ex-welfare families has become unmanaged and very stressful.

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. The main debate on how to improve public schools concerns school choice as presented in Issue 14. Clint Bolick argues that competition improves performance in sports and business so it should do the same in education, and the data support this theory. Also parents should be allowed to send their children to the school of their choice. Ron Wolk presents a more radical view of school reform. Many reform proposals today, including school choice, will do little to improve schools. He proposes shifting more responsibility for education from teachers to students.

The final issue in this section deals with a set of concerns about the use of present and soon-to-emerge biotechnologies. The value of biotechnologies for therapy, to make well, is accepted by all. Issue 15, however, debates their use to alter and enhance humans. The President's Council on Bioethics presents both pro and con arguments but only the pro arguments are present here. The con arguments are present by Michael Sandel.

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, David A. Anderson calculates the full costs of crime, both direct and indirect, and concludes that the costs of murder and theft far exceed the cost of white collar crime. These contradictory findings result from differing definitions of white collar crime. A prominent aspect of the crime picture is the illegal drug trade. It has 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 deals with terrorism, perhaps the major problem in America today. We must defend against and prevent it. To do so effectively requires the expansion of police powers, so we passed the Patriot Act. But did the Patriot Act go too far and trample America's liberties? Barbara Dority examines several provisions of the act and observes how extremely unjust their enforcement has been. On the other hand, Robert H. Bork believes that the complaints of people like Dority have tied the hands of the law in the past and that the grave danger we face today requires the strengthening, not weakening, of the act.

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, Lester R. Brown shows how human actions are degrading 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. Johan Noerberg 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. 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>



Contents In Brief

PART 1	Culture and Values	1
Issue 1.	Is America in Moral Decline?	2
Issue 2.	Does the News Media Have a Liberal Bias?	22
Issue 3.	Is Third World Immigration a Threat to America's Way of Life?	42
PART 2	Sex Roles, Gender, and the Family	61
Issue 4.	Is the Decline of the Traditional Family a National Crisis?	62
Issue 5.	Should Mothers Stay Home with Their Children?	80
Issue 6.	Should Same-Sex Marriages Be Legally Recognized?	98
PART 3	Stratification and Inequality	117
Issue 7.	Is Increasing Economic Inequality a Serious Problem?	118
Issue 8.	Is the Underclass the Major Threat to American Ideals?	134
Issue 9.	Has Affirmative Action Outlived Its Usefulness?	154
Issue 10.	Are Boys and Men Disadvantaged Relative to Girls and Women?	174
PART 4	Political Economy and Institutions	189
Issue 11.	Is Government Dominated by Big Business?	190
Issue 12.	Should Government Intervene in a Capitalist Economy?	208
Issue 13.	Has Welfare Reform Benefited the Poor?	226
Issue 14.	Is Competition the Reform That Will Fix Education?	242
Issue 15.	Should Biotechnology Be Used to Alter and Enhance Humans?	260
PART 5	Crime and Social Control	281
Issue 16.	Is Street Crime More Harmful Than White-Collar Crime?	282
Issue 17.	Should Drug Use Be Decriminalized?	304
Issue 18.	Does the Threat of Terrorism Warrant Curtailment of Civil Liberties?	320
PART 6	The Future: Population/Environment/Society	337
Issue 19.	Is Mankind Dangerously Harming the Environment?	338
Issue 20.	Is Globalization Good for Mankind?	356



Contents

Preface	v
Introduction	xv

PART 1 CULTURE AND VALUES 1

Issue 1. Is America in Moral Decline? 2

YES: Robert H. Bork, from *Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline* (Regan Books, 1996) 4

NO: Kay S. Hymowitz, from "Our Changing Culture: Abandoning the Sixties," *Current* (June 2004) 11

Robert H. Bork, famous for being nominated for the Supreme Court but not confirmed by the Senate, argues that modern liberalism is responsible for the decline in morals. Journalist Kay S. Hymowitz argues that the permissive culture of the sixties, which led to less respect for authority, crime, sexual promiscuity, and other indicators of moral decline, is waning. The cultural pendulum is swinging back to a more traditional culture of commitment, moderation, and family values.

Issue 2. Does the News Media Have a Liberal Bias? 22

YES: Willam McGowan, from *Coloring the News: How Crusading for Diversity Has Corrupted American Journalism* (Encounter Books, 2001) 24

NO: Robert W. McChesney and John Bellamy Foster, from "The 'Left-Wing' Media?" *Monthly Review* (June 2003) 31

Journalist Willam McGowan argues that political correctness pertaining to diversity issues has captured media newsrooms and exerts a constraining pressure on reporters. Robert W. McChesney and John Bellamy Foster argue that news reporting is bent in the direction of the political and commercial requirements of media owners, and heavy reliance on government officials and powerful individuals as primary sources biases news toward the status quo.

Issue 3. Is Third World Immigration a Threat to America's Way of Life? 42

YES: Patrick Buchanan, from "Shields Up!" *The American Enterprise* (March 2002) 44

NO: Ben Wattenberg, from "Immigration Is Good," *The American Enterprise* (March 2002) 51

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 61

Issue 4. Is the Decline of the Traditional Family a National Crisis? 62

YES: David Popenoe, from "The American Family Crisis," *National Forum: The Phi Kappa Phi Journal* (Summer 1995) 64

NO: Frank Furstenberg, from "Can Marriage Be Saved?" *Dissent* (Summer 2005) 72

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. Sociologist Frank Furstenberg argues that diversity of and change in family forms are common throughout history, and the move away from the unusual family form of the 1950s does not indicate a crisis. It does present some problems for children but the worst problem for children is the lack of resources that often results from divorce or single parenting.

Issue 5. Should Mothers Stay Home with Their Children? 80

YES: Claudia Wallis, from "The Case for Staying Home," *Time* (March 22, 2004) 82

NO: Susan J. Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels, from *The Mommy Myth* (Free Press, 2004) 88

Journalist Claudia Wallis reports that more and more mothers are choosing to quit work and stay home to care for the children. The work demands on professional women have increased to the point that very few can do both work and family. Forced to choose, growing numbers choose family. Communication studies professor Susan Douglas and writer Meredith Michaels attack the media for promoting the mommy myth, that "motherhood is eternally fulfilling and rewarding, that it is always the best and most important thing to do, ... and that if you don't love each and every second of it there's something really wrong with you." They object to the subtle moral pressure that the media puts on mothers to stay home with their children.

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

YES: Human Rights Campaign, from "Answers to Questions about Marriage Equality" (HRC's FamilyNet Project, 2004) 100

NO: Peter Sprigg, from "Questions and Answers: What's Wrong with Letting Same-Sex Couples 'Marry'?" (Family Research Council, 2004) 107

America's largest lesbian and gay organization, The Human Rights Campaign, presents many arguments for why same-sex couples should be able to marry. The main argument is fairness. Marriage confers many benefits that same-sex couples are deprived of. Researcher Peter Sprigg presents many arguments for why same-sex couples should not be able to marry. The main argument is that the state has the right and duty to specify who a person, whether straight or gay, can marry so no rights are violated.

PART 3 STRATIFICATION AND INEQUALITY 117

Issue 7. Is Increasing Economic Inequality a Serious Problem? 118

YES: Christopher Jencks, from "Does Inequality Matter?" *Daedalus* (Winter 2002) 120

NO: Christopher C. DeMuth, from "The New Wealth of Nations," *Commentary* (October 1997) 128

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 8. Is the Underclass the Major Threat to American Ideals? 134

YES: Charles Murray, from "And Now for the Bad News," *Society* (November/December 1999) 136

NO: Barry Schwartz, from "Capitalism, the Market, the 'Underclass,' and the Future," *Society* (November/December 1999) 142

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 9. Has Affirmative Action Outlived Its Usefulness? 154

YES: Curtis Crawford, from "Racial Preference Versus Nondiscrimination," *Society* (March/April 2004) 156

NO: Lawrence D. Bobo, from "Inequalities that Endure?" in Maria Krysan and Amanda E. Lewis, eds., *The Changing Terrain of Race and Ethnicity* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2004) 164

Curtis Crawford, editor of the Web site <http://www.DebatingRacialPreferences.org>, explores all possible options for bettering the situation of disadvantaged minorities in a truly just manner. He argues that the right of everyone, including white males, to nondiscrimination is clearly superior to the right of minorities to affirmative action. Sociologist Lawrence D. Bobo demonstrates that racial prejudice still exists even though it has become a more subtle type of racism, which he calls laissez-faire racism. Though it is harder to identify, it has significant effects that Bobo illustrates. In fact, it plays a big role in current politics.