

CONFORMITY & CONFLICT

READINGS IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

JAMES P. SPRADLEY  DAVID W. MCCURDY

Eighth Edition

Conformity & Conflict

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JAMES P. SPRADLEY
LATE

DAVID W. McCURDY
MACALESTER COLLEGE

To Barbara Spradley and Carolyn McCurdy

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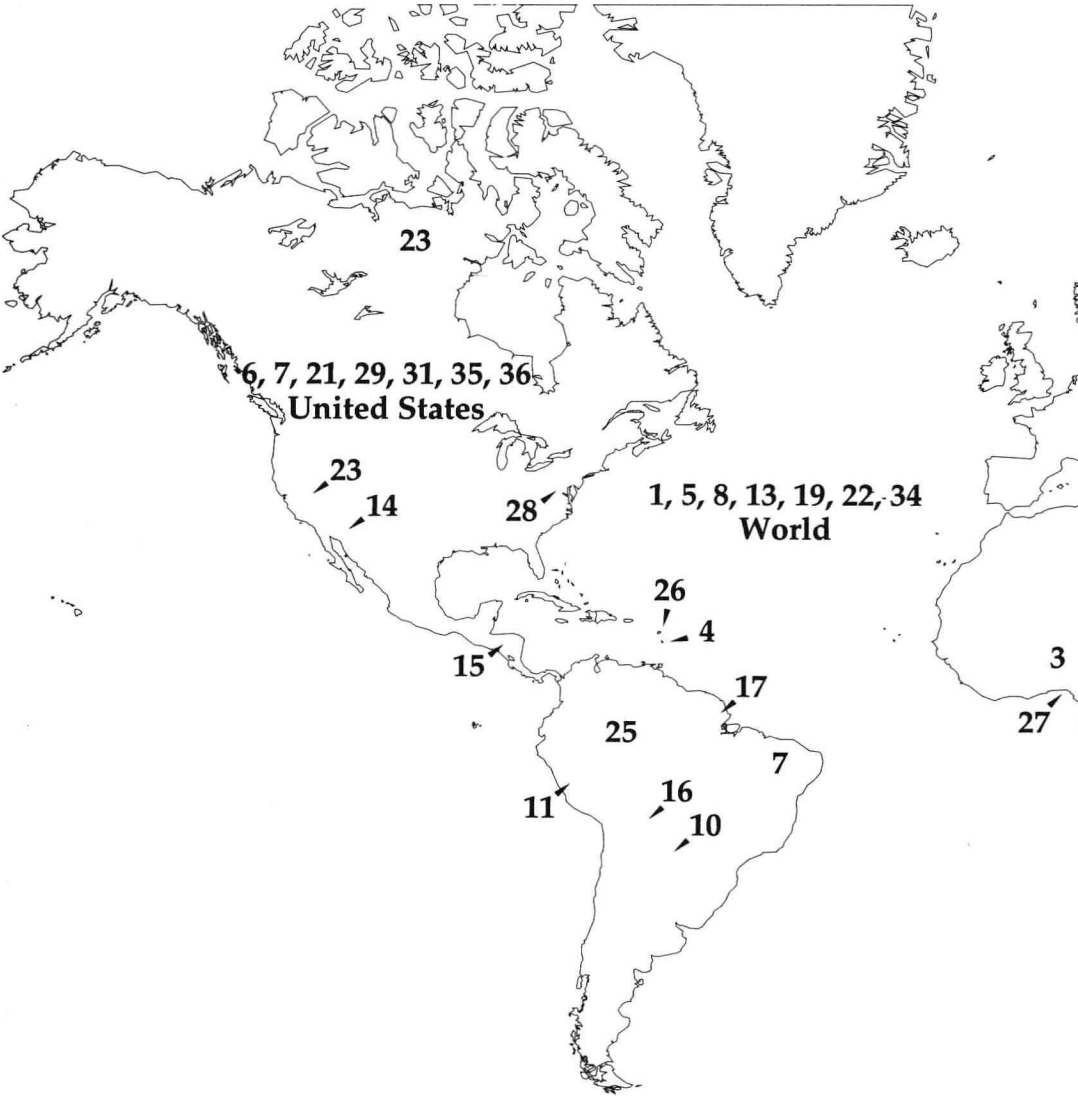
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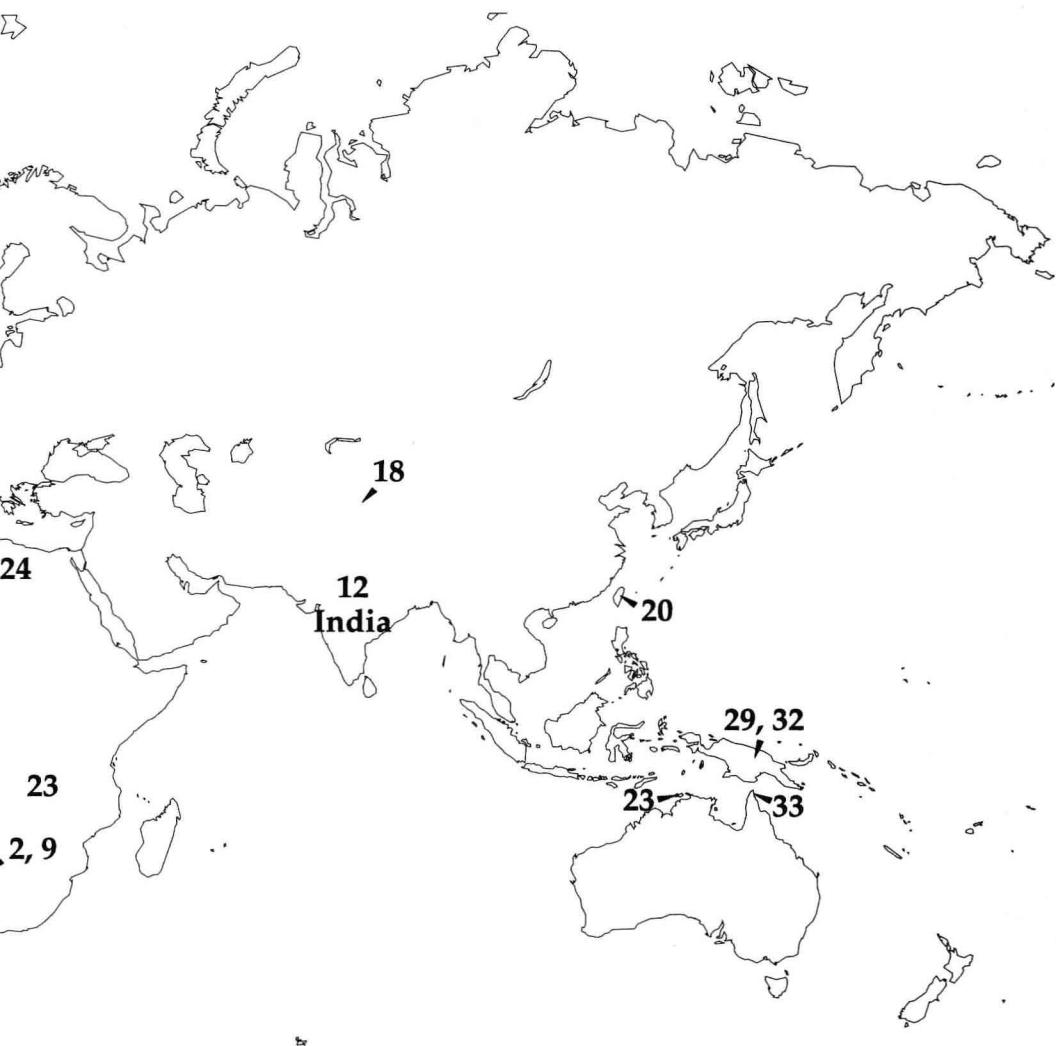
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World Map and Geographical Placement of Readings

The numbers on this map correspond to the reading numbers and indicate the places on which the articles focus. Screened maps also accompany readings themselves, and white areas on these maps highlight the subject locations. Readings labeled as *world* on this global map do not include white areas.





PREFACE

Cultural anthropology has a twofold mission: to understand other cultures and to communicate that understanding. Twenty-four years ago, in preparing the first edition of this book, we sought to make communication easier and more enjoyable for teachers and students alike. We focused on the twin themes stated in the title—conformity, or order, and conflict, or change—while organizing selections into sections based on traditional topics. We balanced the coverage of cultures between non-Western and Western (including American) so students could make their own cultural comparisons and see the relation between anthropology and their lives. We chose articles that reflected interesting topics in anthropology, but we also looked for selections that illustrated important concepts and theories because we believed that anthropology provides a unique and powerful way to look at experience. We searched extensively for scholarly articles written with insight and clarity. Students and instructors in hundreds of colleges and universities responded enthusiastically to our efforts, and a pattern was set that carried through six subsequent editions.

This eighth edition retains the features of earlier editions: the focus on stability and change, the coverage of a broad range of societies, the combination of professionalism and readability in selections, the view that anthropology provides a perspective on experience, and carefully integrated organization. As in previous editions, we have revamped topics and added or subtracted selections in response to the suggestions of instructors and students across the country.

Anthropology and the world it seeks to understand have changed since the first edition of *Conformity & Conflict*. New articles were chosen to reflect these changes. Most new selections were written within the last four years; several were created especially for this volume and two are updated versions of previous selections. Many new articles are written by women, reflecting a change from the time when anthropology was largely

a male enterprise. There are major revisions to the sections on language and communication, kinship and family, roles and inequality, and law and politics. The section on economic systems now follows the one on cultural ecology, reflecting the organization of most popular textbooks. In all, there are 14 new articles and two others brought back from earlier editions. Every section has at least one new selection.

We have also retained some older classic articles in this edition. Many of these teach fundamental concepts and theories that we believe are timeless in anthropology and that are essential ideas for students who are new to the discipline.

We have also continued the expanded special features that have appeared in past editions. Part introductions include discussion of many basic anthropological definitions for instructors who do not wish to use a standard textbook but find it helpful to provide students with a terminological foundation.

Several student aids are retained in the eighth edition. Lists of key terms accompany each part introduction. Each article is followed by several review questions. Maps locating societies discussed in articles accompany each selection. There is also a glossary and subject index at the end of the book.

A complimentary instructor's manual and test bank is available from the publisher. The manual contains a summary of each article along with a large selection of true or false and multiple-choice questions for articles and part introductions.

It has always been our aim to provide a book that meets the needs of students and instructors. To help us with this goal we encourage you to send us your comments and ideas for improving *Conformity & Conflict*.

Many people have made suggestions that guided this revision of *Conformity & Conflict*. We are especially grateful to Brian L. Foster, Arizona State University; Kathleen Godel Gengenbach, Red Rocks Community College; Barry H. Michie, Kansas State University; Richard H. Moore, The Ohio State University; and John Alan Ross, Eastern Washington University for their advice. We would also like to thank Alan McClare, Michael Kimball, Ellen MacElree, and Julie Conway for their editorial support, and Kathryn Hyde, Meridith Cooley, and Samantha Grosby for their advice and help in production. Finally, we are grateful to our students at Macalester College for their advice and inspiration.

David W. McCurdy

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Conformity & Conflict

I



CULTURE AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Many students associate cultural anthropology with the study of primitive peoples. They picture the anthropologist as that slightly peculiar person who, dressed in khaki shorts and pith helmet, lives among some exotic tribe in order to record the group's bizarre and not altogether pleasant customs. Like most stereotypes, this one is not completely true but it does reflect anthropology's traditional interest in describing the culture of less complex societies. In the last century, when anthropology became a recognized discipline, its members collected and analyzed the growing numbers of reports on non-Western peoples by missionaries, travelers, and colonial administrators. This tradition continued into the twentieth century, although the collection of data was refined by actual fieldwork. Impressed by the variety of human behavior, anthropologists sought to record these cultures that were vanishing before the onslaught of Western civilization. Such studies continue among remote groups, and reports of this research are regularly found in professional journals.

During recent decades, however, anthropologists have developed wider interests. As primitive groups have been obliterated or assimilated, anthropologists have increasingly studied subcultures within more complex societies. Certainly World War II and the Cold War stimulated this trend. The United States government employed anthropologists to describe societies in whose territories we fought. The Cold War years, marked by competition with the Russians for influence in developing nations, led to studies of peasant lifestyles and culture change.

Today, however, our position in the world has changed. Americans are less welcome in developing nations. Concurrently, problems in our own country have multiplied and taken the center stage of national concern. It is not surprising that anthropologists have extended their attention to subcultures within our own society.