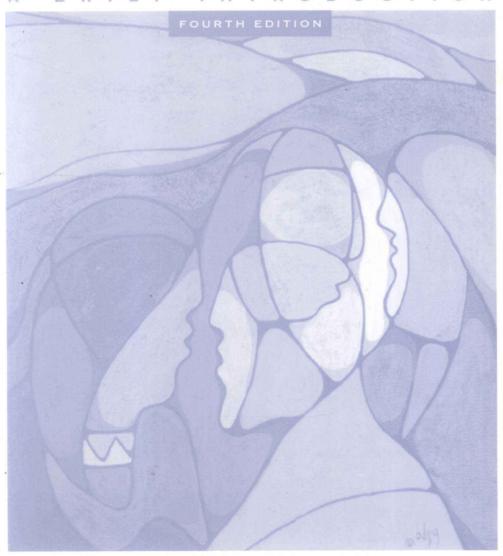
SOCIETIES

A MULTICULTURAL READER FOR





PETER B. MORRILL

Societies A Multicultural Reader

for

Thio
Sociology
A Brief Introduction
Fourth Edition

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Bronx Community College

Allyn and Bacon
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Preface

This book of thirty readings accompanies SOCIOLOGY: A Brief Introduction, 4th Edition, by Alex Thio. Its purpose is to further illustrate the text's concepts so that students can more fully explore the diversity of American culture and other societies.

The reader contains two selections for each chapter of the text. They are divided between descriptions of an American subculture or group and accounts of social life in another society. In addition, each reading begins with a short introduction that relates the material to key concepts in the text.

I have also provided students with a "resource page" for each chapter's set of readings. This page includes study questions and a list of key concepts for each reading. I have also provided a list of additional books related to the reading which provides sources for more reading or the beginnings of a term paper or book report.

I have selected articles that will provide students with interesting descriptions of diverse subcultures and groups. The articles come from a wide variety of sources, including magazines like The New York Times Magazine, Science, and The New Republic, and several recently published books.

The readings can be used in several ways. They can help stimulate classroom discussion. They can become the basis of student review or exam questions, especially through the use of each reading's study questions. They can also help students explore some of the major changes underway in America and throughout the world. The reader contains articles on such key international issues as changes in the Soviet Union, the destruction of the Guatemala rain forest, changes in the global economy , and important domestic concerns like racial and ethnic conflict and immigration.

I would like to thank Jeff Lasser of Allyn & Bacon for his many suggestions and guidance.

JANUARY, 2000

PETER B. MORRILL

Student Introduction

This reader, which accompanies Alex Thio's SOCIOLOGY: A Brief Introduction, 4th Edition, is designed to help you understand a range of sociological concepts through examples of diverse cultural groups in the United States and other countries. The text introduces you to the sociological perspective and a wide variety of concepts sociologists use to describe human behavior. This reader, in turn, provides a rich set of examples of various cultures that will help you apply the concepts found in the text.

The theme that runs through all 30 readings is how sociology helps us understand the diversity of human behavior. This theme is reflected in readings such as Chapter 15's "A Force Now in the World, Citizens Flex Social Muscle" and Chapter 2's "Culture, Not Race, Explains Human Diversity." I have included readings on specific cultural groups such as Indo-American families and Japanese children. These readings, which come from many sources, show how diverse peoples live, how societies like America and China are changing, and how to understand other ways of life.

Here are some suggestions for how to use this reader to better understand the concepts of sociology:

- Before looking at the reading, study the related chapter in the textbook and review relevant lecture notes. You will better understand the lives of people described in the reading if you have a grasp of basic concepts.
- Read the short introductions provided at the beginning of each reading. These
 introductions are designed to link the text's concepts to the selection and to help you focus
 your reading.
- Read each article thoroughly. The selections are short and interesting, and you should be able to read them with little difficulty.
- Use the Resource Page provided for each chapter's set of readings. Here, write down your answers to the study questions provided for each reading. These questions are designed to help you summarize each reading's main ideas and to apply the related sociological concepts to them. Also, define the list of key concepts provided and read more about the groups discussed in the readings.

Sociology can greatly help us understand the ways of mankind and I hope you will successfully use this reader to gain this important skill of sociological analysis.

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IN DEFENCE OF SOCIOLOGY*

Sociology has lost some of its appeal since the 1960s because fewer persons seek to reform society and the field has split into many specialties. Several articles and books have attacked the field and enrollment in sociology courses has declined. However, sociology's mission, which originated in the effort to understand the Industrial Revolution, remains strong. Anthony Giddens, a leading British sociologist, argues that sociology continues to provide knowledge for modern society and insight into the many problems created by global economic and social changes. Sociology has become a part of the fabric of modern life even though the academic field is experiencing changes.

There's something about sociology that raises hackles that other academic subjects fail to reach. Economics may be the dismal science, full of jargon that few can understand and seemingly irrelevant to the practical tasks of economic life. But sociology is often indicted on all counts—diffuse and lacking a coherent subject matter, as well as being jargon-ridden. What do you get when you cross a sociologist with a member of the Mafia? An offer you can't understand.

What is it with sociology? Why is it so irritating to so many? Some sociologists might answer: ignorance; others: fear. Why fear? Well, because many sociologists like to think of their subject as a dangerous and discomfiting one. Sociology, they are prone to say, is an intrinsically subversive subject: it challenges our assumptions about ourselves as individuals and about the wider social contexts in which we live. And in the 1960s, for many people the heyday of sociology, the discipline seemed to live up to this firebrand reputation. In truth, however, even in the 1960s and early 1970s, sociology wasn't intrinsically associated with the left, let alone with the revolutionaries.

Sociology has currently been going through a hard time in the very country where it has long been most well developed, the U.S. A prominent American sociologist, Irving Louis Horowitz, recently published a book entitled *The Decomposition of Sociology*, a work which he says was "more a matter of pain rather than pride to have felt the need to write". The discipline, he says, has gone sour. Sociology has largely become the home of the discontented, a gathering of groups with special agendas, from the proponents of gay rights to liberation theology. Sociology is decomposing partly because it has come to be just what its critics always took it to be, a pseudo-science; and because there has been an outflow of respectable, empirically-oriented social scientists into other, more narrowly

^{*} Excerpted from Anthony Giddens, "In Defence of Sociology," NEW STATESMAN AND SOCIETY, March 20, 1995, pp. 33-34.

defined areas-such as urban planning, demography, criminology or jurisprudence. Let's deal first of all with the old chestnut that sociology doesn't have a proper field of investigation. The truth of the matter is that the field of study of sociology, as understood by the bulk of its practitioners, is no more, but no less, clearly defined than that of any other academic discipline. Consider, for example, history. There's an obvious subject-matter there, it would seem—the past. But the past embraces everything! No clear or bounded field of study here, and history is an academic discipline is every bit as driven by methodological disputes about its true nature as sociology ever has been.

Sociology is a generalizing discipline that concerns itself above all with modernity—with the character and dynamics of modern or industrialised societies. It shares many of its methodological strategies—and problems—not only with history, but with the whole gamut of the social sciences. The more empirical issues it deals with are very real. Of all the social sciences, sociology bears most directly on the issues that concern us in our everyday lives—the development of modern urbanism, crime and punishment, gender, the family, religion, social and economic power.

Given that sociological research and thinking is more or less indispensable in contemporary society, why has the subject so often attracted the criticism that it is unenlightening, that it is common sense wrapped up in somewhat unattractive jargon? Although specific pieces of research could always be questioned, it would be difficult to argue that there was no point in carrying out, say, comparative studies of the incidence of divorce in different countries. Sociologists engage in all sorts of research which, once one has some sense of them, would prove interesting and be thought important by most reasonably neutral observers.

There is, however, another more subtle reason why sociology may appear quite often to proclaim what is in any case obvious to common sense. This is that social research doesn't, and can't, remain separate from the social world it describes. Social research forms so much a part of our consciousness today that we take if for granted. But all of us depend upon such research for what we regard as common sense—as "what everybody knows." Everyone knows, for example, that divorce rates are high in today's society; yet such "obvious knowledge," of course, depends upon regular social research, whether it happens to be carried out by government researchers or academic sociologists.

These considerations, obviously, don't help with the issue of whether sociology as an academic discipline is in a state of sorry decline or even dissolution since its heyday in the 1960s, if that period was indeed its apogee. Things have changed in sociology over the past 3O years, but not all for the worse. For one thing, the centre of power has shifted. American sociology used to dominate world sociology, but it does so no longer.

Especially so far as sociological theorising is concerned, the centre of gravity has shifted elsewhere, particularly to Europe. The major sociological thinkers now are over here.

Sociology in the U.S. appears to have become over-professionalised, with research groups concentrating on their own patches, having little knowledge of, or interest in, anyone else's. Everyone in U.S. sociology has a "field" and whatever specialty it happens to be effectively defines his or her identity. Quantophrenia is rife in American sociology departments. For many, if you can't count it, it doesn't count; the result, to say the least, can be a certain lack of creativity.

There's a good deal of sense in William Julius Wilson's exhortation to sociologists to engage in research immediately relevant to public policy issues and to participate forcefully in the wide debates their work may arouse. After all, many of the questions raised in the political arena are sociological—questions to do, for instance, with welfare, crime or the family. Sociological work is relevant, not just to their formulation as particular types of policy question, but to grasping the likely consequences of whatever policies might be initiated in relation to them.

But reconnecting sociology to a public policy-making agenda wouldn't address the other issues raised about the so-called decline of sociology. Is it a discipline without a common conceptual core, in danger of breaking up into unconnected specialties? And have the most innovative authors moved elsewhere? Most important of all, perhaps, has it lost its cutting edge?

If one compares sociology to economics, it would have to be conceded that sociology is much more internally diverse. In economics there exists a variety of different schools of thought and theoretical approaches, but the neo-classical view tends to dominate almost everywhere, and forms the basic stuff of virtually all introductory texts. Sociology isn't to the same degree in the thrall of a single conceptual system. A welter of different theoretical perspectives jostle for supremacy. I don't believe this situation has produced complete disarray, but instead accurately gives voice to the pluralism that must exist when one studies something so complex and controversial as human social behavior and institutions.

Is there any evidence that talented scholars who might once have been attracted to working in sociology have now migrated elsewhere? There's no doubt that in the 1960s some were drawn into sociology because they saw it, if not offering a route to revolution, as trendy and new; and it doesn't have that reputation any longer. But most such individuals probably weren't interested in a career within the confines of the academy. More relevant are factors that have affected the academic world as a whole, not sociology in particular. Many talented people who might once have gone into academic life probably

won't do so today, because academic salaries have fallen sharply in relative terms over the last two decades—and working conditions have deteriorated.

A good case could actually be made for saying that British sociology is doing *better* than in previous generations. Compare, for instance, the fortunes of British sociology over recent years with those of anthropology. In the early postwar period, this country boasted anthropologists of worldwide reputation and no crop of comparably distinguished sociological authors was to be found in Britain at that time. Now things are more or less reversed. There are few, if any, anthropologists of a subsequent generation who can match their achievements. British sociology, however, can offer a clutch of individuals with a worldwide reputation, such John Goldthorpe, Steven Lukas and Ray Pahl. Moreover, in sheer statistical terms, sociology isn't in decline in this country in the way it has been in the U.S. A-Level sociology is extremely popular and flourishing rather than shrinking. University admissions in sociology are, at worst, stable in relation to other subjects.

Everything in the sociological garden certainly isn't rosy—although was it ever? Funding for social research has dropped off sharply since the early 1970s—there isn't the scale of empirical work there once was. But it would be difficult to argue that sociology is off the pace intellectually, especially if one broadens the angle again and moves back to a more international perspective. Most of the debates that grab the intellectual headlines across the social sciences, and even the humanities, today carry a strong sociological input. Sociological authors have pioneered discussions of postmodernism, the post-industrial or information society, globalisation, the transformation of everyday life, gender and sexuality, the changing nature of work and the family, the "underclass," and ethnicity.

You might still ask: what does it all add up to? And here indeed there is a lot of sociological work to be done. Some of that work has to be investigatory or empirical, but some must be theoretical. More than any other intellectual endeavour, sociological reflection is central to grasping the social forces remaking our lives today. Social life has become episodic, fragmentary and dogged with new uncertainties, which it must be the business of creative sociological thought to help us understand better. William Julius Wilson's argument is important here: sociologists should focus their attention on the practical and policy-making implications of the changes currently transforming social life. Yet sociology would indeed become dreary, and quite possibly desegregated, if it didn't also concern itself with the big issues.

Sociology should rehone its cutting edge, as neo-liberalism disappears into the distance along with orthodox socialism. Some questions to which we need new answers have a perennial quality, while others are dramatically new. Tackling these, as in previous times, calls for a healthy dose of what C. Wright Mills famously called the

sociological imagination. Sociologists, don't despair! You still have a world to win, or at least interpret.

THE USES AND ABUSES OF TUSKEGEE*

Persons who participate in scientific research are sometimes exposed to risk, and scientists are expected to protect them through alligence to strict ethical guidelines. These guidelines include informed consent, fully informing subjects about the nature of the research project, and not harming subjects in any way. However, some studies have not followed these guidelines and have greatly harmed patrticipants. This reading reviews the infamous "Tuskegee" experiment where African American were exposed to syphilis and left untreated and current research in Africa on the causes of AIDS, and fully discusses their respective ethical implications.

The Tuskegee syphilis study has come to symbolize the most egregious abuse of authority on the part of medical researchers. Tuskegee has also come to serve as a point of reference for African Americans distrustful of those with power, emblematic of the history of a people enslaved and then subjected to social, legal, and political oppression after the end of formal servitude. When Tuskegee, as a symbol of research abuse and racial oppression are merged, a potent device is at hand for uncovering profound social injustice. When, however, the legacy of Tuskegee is incautiously invoked, it can serve to make consideration of complex matters involving research with socially vulnerable people all but impossible.

To understand both the uses and abuses of Tuskegee requires that we understand the story of what happened in rural Alabama between 1932 and 1972. As part of its study of the long-term effects of syphilis, the United States Public Health Service (PHS) denied treatment to 399 poor African American men suffering from the temporary effects of the disease. Researchers and physicians involved in Tuskegee chose not to inform the study's participants that they were infected with syphilis or educate them regarding its treatment or prevention. Rather, they lured men to the study by offering free treatment for "bad blood"—a generic term that referred to a variety of ailments. The PHS thwarted all efforts the men made to receive treatment from other sources. When penicillin dramatically altered the treatment of syphilis in the 1940s, the PHS withheld it, arguing that never again would they find such a group of untreated individuals.

Although Tuskegee was a study that the PHS adapted to changing circumstances, it is possible to derive three features that characterize the consistent research abuses that

^{*}Excerpted from Amy L. Fairchild and Ronald Bayer, "Uses and Abuses of Tuskegee," SCIENCE, May 7, 1999, pp. 919-921.

occurred. First, the study involved deceptions regarding the very existence and nature of the inquiry into which individuals were lured. As such, it deprived those seeking care of the right to choose whether or not to serve as research subjects. Second, it entailed an exploitation of social vulnerability, to recruit and retain research subjects. Third, Tuskegee researchers made a willful effort to deprive subjects of access to appropriate and available medical care as a way of furthering the study's goals.

Thus viewed, Tuskegee touched on issues central to research ethics and can serve as a standard against which to judge contemporary examples of research abuse. But, as a historical event involving the exploitation of African Americans that entailed the examination of a racist thesis, the legacy of Tuskegee and the outrage it has spawned is suffused with race. Within weeks of the first news reports of Tuskegee, the African American press and African American political leaders began to view a host of medical and public policy issues through the lens of Tuskegee. "Tuskegee," which quickly became a metaphor for genocide, crystallized a history of medical neglect and abuse that was a consequence of social and political disempowerment. In this article, we examine the uses and abuses of Tuskegee in two highly visible AIDS-related debates, which spanned the past decade.

Needle exchange. The provision of sterile injection equipment to intravenous drug users has been proposed as a way of interrupting the spread of HIV infection since the mid-1980s. Wherever needle exchange programs emerged, African American leadership gave voice to their dismay and fury, rooted in suspicions that the failure to provide adequate treatment to drug users represented a form of genocidal neglect.

In New York City, because of political opposition to needle exchange from both law enforcement proponents and the African American community, the city's health commissioner was compelled to present his 1988 needle exchange effort as a small experiment designed to determine whether such a radical innovation could reduce the incidence of infection among drug users without encouraging drug use. Ironically, the very political cover that the experiment was designed to provide set the stage for the charge of "Tuskegee." In denouncing the experiment, Benjamin Ward, the City's African American Police Commissioner, alluded to the Tuskegee syphilis trials when he explained that his community felt "a particular sensitivity to doctors conducting experiments, and they too frequently seem to be conducted against blacks." Reverend Reginald Williams echoed his sentiments, combining the imagery of Tuskegee and genocide: "Why," he demanded "must we again be the guinea pigs in this genocidal mentality?" When David Dinkins, long opposed to needle exchange, became the city's first Affican American mayor, he almost immediately ended the trial. Yet by the mid-1990s, the intense African American

opposition to needle exchange had all but vanished—eroded by the apparent effectiveness of such efforts and by the fragmentation of opinion among African American leaders. As Tuskegee ceased to serve as a tool for critics of needle exchange it increasingly became a symbol for the advocates of such efforts. It was in this context that a furious debate emerged when the NIH funded a clinical trial in Anchorage, Alaska, to determine whether over-the-counter sale of injection equipment—a practice permitted in Alaska but prohibited in many jurisdictions with serious drug problems—was more effective than formal needle exchange programs.

In October 1996, Peter Lurie and Sidney Wolfe, physicians at Ralph Nader's Public Citizen's Health Research Group, sharply attacked the \$2.4 million study. They charged that the study was "deceptive" in failing to inform participants of the relative benefits of the needle exchange and that it "actively prevented [those assigned to the pharmacy arm] from obtaining access to clean needles through the needle exchange." Equally troubling, one of the study's measures of efficacy—the incidence of hepatitis B infection—was utterly preventable by a vaccine. Lurie and Wolfe concluded, "The parallels here to the Tuskegee Syphilis Study ... are clear." In an unprecedented reaction, NIH director Harold Varmus suspended the study pending review by an outside committee, which concluded that the study was no Tuskegee, describing the critique of the study as "misunderstanding, mischaracterization, or both."

Both iterations of the needle exchange debate revolved around pressing questions of fairness in dealing with vulnerable populations. However, the charge of the Tuskegee-like abuse of research subjects was inappropriate in each instance. The failure to provide adequate treatment options for drug addiction, central to the complaint of African American opponents of needle exchange, most certainly represents tragic neglect and an example of gross inequity. But not all injustices are the equivalent of those represented by Tuskegee. Whereas in Tuskegee the PHS used the social circumstances of poor African American men to manipulate them into a study that would deprive them of treatment, proposals to provide sterile injection equipment seek to address the vulnerable situation of those exposed to HIV by offering a potentially life-saving intervention. Strong as is the evidence for the relative efficacy of needle exchange, the failure to establish such programs also does not constitute Tuskegee-like abuse. Those who were to be enrolled in the Alaska study would not suffer covert manipulation designed to deprive individuals of access to potentially effective care. Only insofar as the original study failed to offer hepatitis B vaccination to participants did it arguably involve an ethical lapse, a lapse addressed by the NIH despite the recommendations of its ethical review panel. But that lapse, in and of itself, did not constitute the kind of abuse represented by Tuskegee.

Third World HIV Prevention Trials. In February 1994, the Data Safety and Monitofing Board of the U.S. National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases interrupted AIDS Clinical Trial Group (ACTG) Study 076. The preliminary data revealed a statistically significant and dramatic difference in vertical HIV transmission rates from mothers to their newborns, between women who received the active regimen and the placebo group.

The regimen quickly became the standard of care in industrialized nations, where no trial that would deny access to the ACTG 076 regimen or to a potentially equivalent intervention would satisfy the requirements of ethical review. In developing countries, however, the costs of the 076 regimen (\$800 for the drug alone) put it out of reach. It was, therefore, a matter of some urgency that trials begin to determine whether radically cheaper alternatives could reduce maternal-fetal HIV transmission. The CDC and NIH launched nine placebo-controlled trials, all subject to careful ethical review, in developing countries.

Nevertheless, on 18 September 1997, Marcia Angell, executive editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, denounced the placebo-control trials in Affica, Asia, and the Caribbean. Citing the Declaration of Helsinki for authority, she noted that control groups had to be provided with the best current therapy, not simply that which was available locally. Taking her lead from Lufie and Wolfe, who first drew the comparison to Tuskegee in regard to the Third World studies as they had in Alaska, she argued, "The justifications are reminiscent of those for the Tuskegee study: Women in the Third World would not receive antiretroviral treatment anyway, so the investigators are simply observing what would happen to the subject's infants if there were no study."

However problematic the efforts to obtain informed consent in the Third World, investigators clearly made efforts to inform the enrolled women that they would be part of a study to reduce maternal transmission of HIV and that some would receive a placebo. No attempt was made to exploit the social vulnerability of the women involved. Indeed, it was the very poverty of the nations within which these women lived that served as the predicate for the challenged studies. Only to the extent that these women could be said to have a realizable claim on the care available in industrialized nations would the conduct of a placebo control trial have mirrored the deprivation of Tuskegee. But then any trial to find a cheaper and potentially less effective regimen—whether placebo controlled or not—would have been unethical as well. To the extent that the search for a less costly and potentially less effective intervention could be justified by the desperate need to find affordable interventions, the analogy to Tuskegee entailed a gross distortion.

Yet to the extent that women in poor countries have a moral—as contrasted with a realizable claim—on the care available to women in industrialized nations, critics helped to