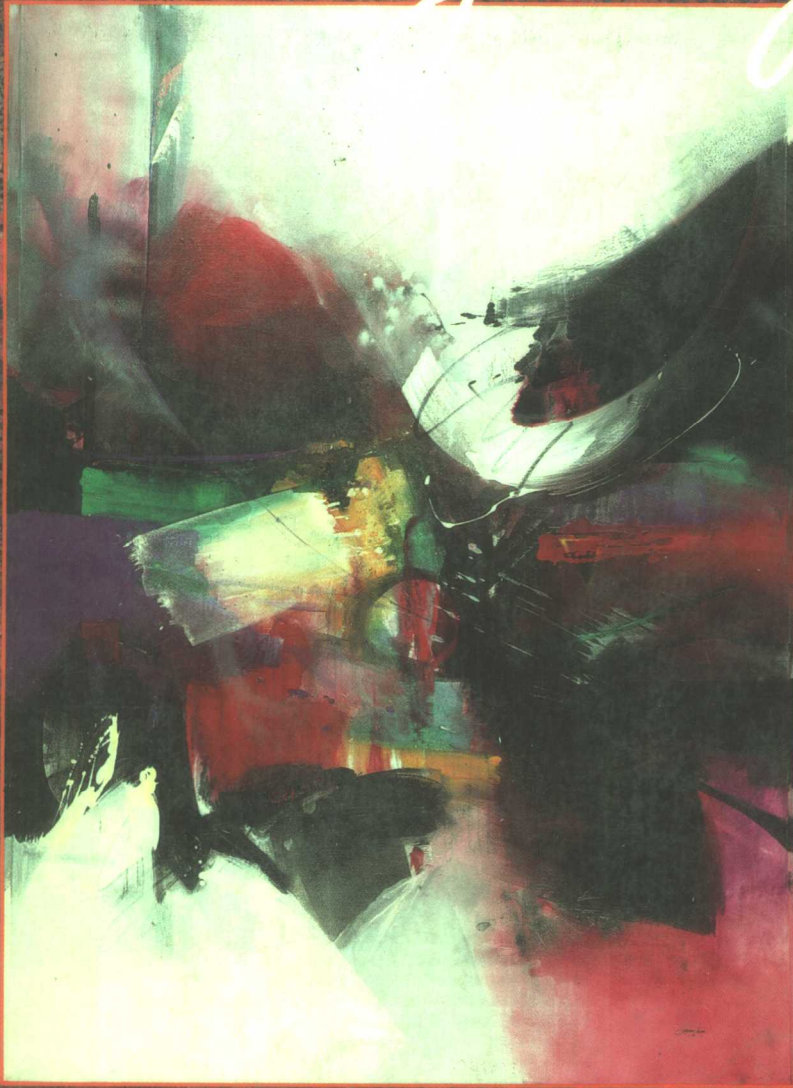


SEVENTH EDITION

In CONFLICT and ORDER

Understanding Society



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D. STANLEY EITZEN
MAXINE BACA ZINN

IN CONFLICT AND ORDER

Understanding Society

SEVENTH ♦ EDITION

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PREFACE

Many introductory students will be exposed to sociology only once. They should leave that course with a new and meaningful way of understanding themselves, other people, and society. The most fundamental goal of this book is to help the student develop a sociological perspective.

This goal is emphasized explicitly in the first chapter and implicitly throughout *In Conflict and Order: Understanding Society*, Seventh Edition. The sociological perspective focuses on the social sources of behavior. It requires the shedding of existing myths and ideologies by questioning all social arrangements. One of the most persistent questions of the sociologist is, Who benefits from the existing customs and social order and who does not? Because social groups are created by people, such groups are not sacred. Is there a better way? One editorial writer has posed a number of questions that illustrate the critical approach typical of the sociological perspective:

Must we Americans try to perpetuate our global empire, maintaining far-flung military outposts, spending billions on the machinery of death, meddling in the affairs of other nations—or is there a better way? Must we continue to concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a few, preserving the income gaps that have remained virtually undisturbed through the New Deal, Fair Deal, New Frontier, and Great Society—or is there a better way? Must millions of our people be subjected to the cruel displacements of an irrational economy—or is there a better way? Must we stand by while our liberties are undermined, our resources squandered, our environment polluted—or is there a better way? Must private profit be the nation's driving force—or is there a better way? (*The Progressive*, 1976:5)

Although there will be disagreement on the answers to these questions, the answers are less important, sociologically, than is the willingness to call into question existing social arrangements that many people consider sacred. This is the beginning of the sociological perspective. But being critical is not enough. The sociologist must have a coherent way to make sense of the social world, and this leads us to the second goal of *In Conflict and Order*—the elaboration of a consistent framework from which to understand and interpret social life.

In Conflict and Order, Seventh Edition, is guided by the assumption that there is an inherent duality in all societies. The realistic analysis of any one society must include both the integrating and stabilizing forces, on the one hand, and the forces that are conducive to malintegration and change, on the other. Society in the United States is characterized by harmony and conflict, integration and division, stability and change. This synthesis is crucial if the intricacies of social structure, the mechanisms of social change, and the sources of social problems are to be understood fully.

This objective of achieving a balance between the order and conflict perspectives is not fully realized in this book, however. Although both perspectives are incorporated into each chapter, the scales tend to be tipped toward the conflict perspective. This imbalance is the conscious product of how the authors, as sociologists and teachers, view the structure and mechanisms of society. In addition to presenting what we believe is a realistic analysis of society, this imbalance counters the prevailing view of the order perspective with its implicit sanctification of the status quo. Such a stance is untenable to us, given the spate of social problems that persist in U.S. society. The emphasis of the conflict approach, on the other hand, questions the existing social arrangements, viewing them as sources of social problems, a position with which we agree. Implicit in such a position is the goal of restructuring society along more humane lines.

That we stress the conflict approach over the order model does not suggest that *In Conflict and Order* is a polemic. To the contrary, the social structure is also examined from a sympathetic view. The existing arrangements do provide for the stability and maintenance of the system. But the point is that by including a relatively large dose of the conflict perspective, the discussion is a realistic appraisal of the system rather than a look through rose-colored glasses.

This duality theme is shown primarily at the societal level in this book. But even though the societal level is the focus of our inquiry, the small group and individual levels are not ignored. The principles that apply to societies are also appropriate for the small social organizations to which we belong, such as families, work groups, athletic teams, religious organizations, and clubs. Just as important, the sociological perspective shows how the individual is affected by groups of all sizes. Moreover, it shows how the individual's identity is shaped by social forces and how in many important ways the individual's thoughts and actions are determined by group memberships.

The linkage of the individual to social groups is shown throughout *In Conflict and Order*. The relationship of the individual to the larger society is illustrated in special panels that examine societal changes and forces impinging on individuals and the choices available to us as we attempt to cope with these societal trends.

The book is divided into four parts. Chapters 1 through 4 introduce the reader to the sociological perspective, the fundamental concepts of the discipline, and the duality of social life. These chapters set the stage for an analysis of the structure (organization) and process (change) of U.S. society. The emphasis is on the characteristics of societies in general and of the United States in particular.

Chapters 5 through 8 describe the way human beings are shaped by society. The topics include the values that direct our choices, the social bases of social identity and personality, the mechanisms that control individual and group behavior, and the violation of social expectations—deviance. Throughout these chapters we examine the forces that, on the one hand, work to make all of us living in the United States similar and those that, on the other hand, make us different.

Chapters 9 through 12 examine in detail the various forms of social inequality present in U.S. society. We examine how societies rank people in hierarchies. Also examined are the mechanisms that ensure that some people have a greater share of wealth, power, and prestige than do others and the positive and negative

consequences of such an arrangement. Other chapters focus on the specific hierarchies of stratification—class, race, and gender.

Chapters 13 through 17 discuss another characteristic of all societies—the presence of social institutions. Every society historically has developed a fairly consistent way of meeting its survival needs and the needs of its members. The family, for example, ensures the regular input of new members, provides for the stable care and protection of the young, and regulates sexual activity. In addition to the family, chapters are devoted to education, to the economy, to the polity, and to religion. The understanding of institutions is vital to the understanding of society because these social arrangements are part of its structure, resist change, and have such a profound impact on the public and private lives of people.

This seventh edition of *In Conflict and Order*, while retaining the structure of the earlier editions, is different and improved. Of course, the latest statistical data and research findings are included. Timely topics, such as corporate crimes, the abortion controversy, and the politics of the religious right, are discussed. More important, five themes are incorporated throughout. First, although there are separate chapters on race, class, and gender, these fundamental sources of differences are infused throughout the book and in the photographs. This emphasis is important when highlighting the diversity in society as well as furthering our understanding of the structural sources of inequality and injustice. Second, the tendency toward structural determinism is countered by examples of empowerment—when the powerless organize to achieve power and positive social changes (e.g., gay rights and rights for people with disabilities). Third, the sources and consequences of the structural transformation of the economy are examined. This is a pivotal shift in the United States economy with significant implications for individuals, communities, the society, and the global economy. Fourth, the focus is often shifted away from the United States through descriptions, panels, and tables to other societies. This global perspective is important for at least two reasons: to illustrate the universality of sociological concepts and to help us understand how the world is becoming ever more interdependent. A fifth theme—anticipating the year 2000 and beyond—is incorporated in a number of panels.

These five themes—diversity, the struggle by the powerless to achieve social justice, the transformation of the economy, a global perspective, and looking ahead to the near future—are important to consider sociologically. We see that social problems are structural in origin and that the pace of social change is increasing, yet society's institutions are slow to change and meet the challenges. The problems of U.S. society are of great magnitude, and solutions must be found. But understanding must precede action—and that is one goal of *In Conflict and Order*.

The analysis of U.S. society is a challenging task. It is frustrating because of the heterogeneity of the population and the complexity of the forces impinging on U.S. social life. It is frustrating because the diversity within the United States leads to many inconsistencies and paradoxes. Furthermore, it is difficult, if not impossible, for people in the United States to be objective and consistently rational about their society. Nevertheless, the sociological study of U.S. society is fascinating and rewarding. It becomes absorbing as people gain insights into their

own actions and into the behavior of other people. Understanding the intricate complex of forces leading to a particular type of social structure or social problem can be liberating and can lead toward collective efforts to bring about social change. This book attempts to give the reader just such a sociological perspective.

Finally, we are unabashedly proud of being sociologists. Our hope is that you will capture some of our enthusiasm for exploring and understanding the intricacies and mysteries of social life.

A Note on Language Usage

In writing this seventh edition of *In Conflict and Order*, we have been especially sensitive to our use of language. Language is used to reflect and maintain the secondary status of social groups by defining them, diminishing them, trivializing them, or excluding them. For example, traditional English uses masculine words (*man*, *mankind*, *he*) when referring to people in general. Even the ordering of masculine and feminine, or of Whites and Blacks, with the discussion or reference to one category consistently preceding its counterpart, subtly conveys the message that the one listed first is superior to the other. In short, our goal is to use language so that it does *not* create the impression that one social class, race, or gender is superior to any other.

The terms of reference for racial and ethnic categories are changing. Blacks increasingly use the term *African American*, and Hispanics often refer to themselves as *Latinos*. In this book, we use each of these terms for each social category because they often are used interchangeably in popular and scholarly discourse.

Also, we do *not* use the terms *America* or *American society* when referring to the United States. *America* should be used only in reference to the entire Western hemisphere—North, Central, and South America. Its use as a reference only to the United States implies that the other nations of the Western hemisphere have no place in our frame of reference.

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