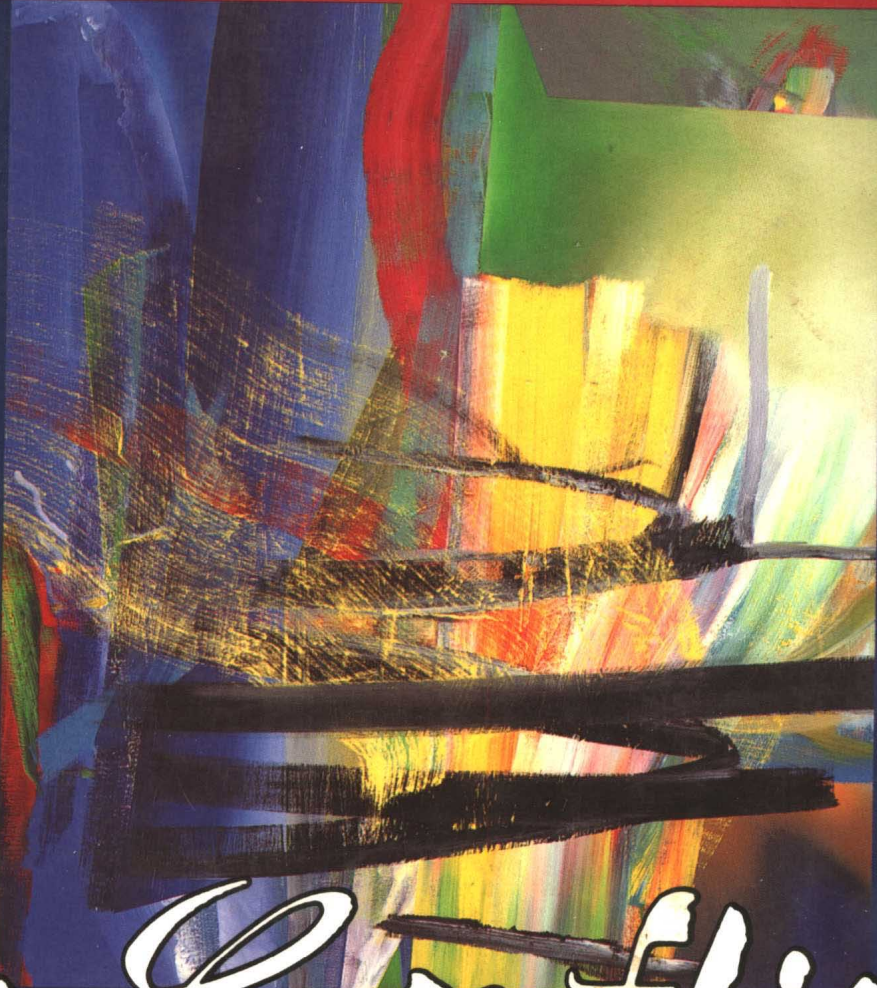


D. STANLEY EITZEN • MAXINE BACA ZINN



In Conflict and Order

Understanding Society

SIXTH EDITION

IN CONFLICT AND ORDER

Understanding Society

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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*, Sixth 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, Sixth 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 slight 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 sixth 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 televangelism, 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, rights for the disabled, and better working conditions for underpaid workers). 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 sixth 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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LIFE APPEARS TO BE A series of choices for each of us. We decide how much schooling is important and what field to major in. We choose a job, a mate, and a life-style. But how free are we? Have you ever felt trapped by events and conditions beyond your control? Your religious beliefs may make you feel guilty for some behaviors. Your patriotism may cost you your life—even willingly. These ideological traps are powerful, so powerful that we usually do not even see them as traps.

Have you ever felt trapped in a social relationship? Have you ever continued a relationship with a friend, group of friends, a lover, or a spouse when you were convinced that this relationship was wrong for you? Have you ever participated in an act because other people wanted you to that later seemed absolutely ridiculous, even immoral? Most likely your answers to these questions are in the affirmative because those people closest to us effectively command our conformity.

At another level, have you ever felt that because of your race, gender, age, ethnicity, or social class certain opportunities were closed to you? For example, if you are an African-American football player your chances to play certain positions on the team (usually quarterback, center, offensive guard, and kicker) will probably be limited to you regardless of your abilities. If you are a woman you may want to try certain sports or jobs, but to do so is to call your femininity into question.

Even more remotely, each of us is controlled by decisions made in corporate boardrooms, in government bureaus, and in foreign capitals. Our tastes in style are decided on and manipulated by corporate giants through the media. Rising or declining interest rates can encourage corporate decisions to expand or contract their businesses, thus affecting employment. Those same interest rates can stimulate or deter individuals and families to purchase housing and automobiles. A war in the Middle East reduces the supply of oil, raises the price dramatically, and thus restricts personal use in the United States. That same war may mean that you will be called to action because you are the right age and sex. The weather in China and Russia affects grain prices in the United States, meaning bankruptcy or prosperity for individual farmers and high or low prices for individual consumers.

Finally, we are also trapped by our culture. We do not decide what is right or wrong, moral or immoral. These are decided for us and incorporated inside us. We do not decide what is beautiful and what is not. Even the decision on what is important and what is not is a cultural bias embedded deep inside each of us.

Sociology is the science that attempts to understand these social forces—the forces outside us that shape our lives, interests, and personalities. In John Walton's words, "Sociology explores the determinants of individual and collective behavior that are not given in our psychic or biological makeup, but fashioned in the broader arena of social interaction" (Walton, 1990:5). As the science of society and social behavior, sociology is interesting, insightful, and important. This is true because sociology explores and analyzes the ultimate issues of our personal lives, of society, and of the world. At

the personal level, sociology investigates the causes and consequences of such phenomena as romantic love, violence, identity, conformity, deviance, personality, and interpersonal power. At the societal level, sociology examines and explains poverty, crime rates, racism, sexism, pollution, and political power. At the global level, sociology researches such phenomena as war, conflict resolution, immigration patterns, and population growth. Other disciplines are also helpful in understanding these social phenomena, but sociology makes a unique contribution.

The insights of sociology are important for the individual because they help us understand why we behave as we do. This understanding is not only liberating but also is a necessary precondition for meaningful social action to bring social change. As a scholarly discipline, sociology is important because it complements and in some cases supersedes other disciplines concerned with understanding and explaining social behavior.

ASSUMPTIONS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

To discover the underlying order of social life and the principles that explain human behavior, scientists have focused on different levels of phenomena. The result of this division of labor has been the creation of scholarly disciplines, each concentrating on a relatively narrow sphere of phenomena. Biologists interested in social phenomena have focused on the organic bases for behavior. Psychological explanations assume the source of human behavior in the psyches of individuals.

The understanding of human behavior benefits from the emphases of the various disciplines. Each discipline makes important contributions to knowledge. Of the three major disciplines focusing on human behavior, sociology is commonly the least understood. The explicit goal of this book is to remedy this fault by introducing the reader to the sociological ways of perceiving and interpreting the social world. Let us begin by considering the assumptions of the sociological approach that provide the foundation for this unique, exciting, and insightful way of viewing the world.

Individuals are, by their nature, social beings. There are two fundamental reasons for this assumption. First, human babies enter the world totally dependent on other people for their survival. This initial period of dependence means, in effect, that each of us has been immersed in social groups from birth. A second basis for the social nature of human beings is that throughout history people have found it to their advantage to cooperate with other people (for defense, for material comforts, to overcome the perils of nature, and to improve technology).

Individuals are, for the most part, socially determined. This essential assumption stems from the first assumption, that people are social beings. Individuals are products of their social environments for several reasons.

During infancy, the child is at the mercy of adults, especially parents. These persons can shape the infant in an infinite variety of ways, depending on their proclivities and those of their society. The parents will have a profound impact on that child's ways of thinking about himself or herself and about other people. The parents will transmit religious views, political attitudes, and attitudes toward how other groups are to be rated. The child will be punished for certain behaviors and rewarded for others. Whether that child becomes a bigot or integrationist, traditionalist or innovator, saint or sinner depends in large measure on the parents, peers, and other people who interact with him or her.

The parents may transmit to their offspring some idiosyncratic beliefs and behaviors, but most significantly they act as cultural agents, transferring the ways of the society to their children. Thus, the child is born into a family and also into a society. This society into which the individuals are born shapes their personalities and perceptions. Berger has summarized the impact of society:

Society not only controls our movements, but shapes our identity, our thoughts and our emotions. The structures of society become the structures of our own consciousness. Society does not stop at the surface of our skins. Society penetrates us as much as it envelops us. (Berger, 1963:121)

The individual's identity is socially bestowed. Who we are, how we feel about ourselves, and how other people treat us are usually consequences of our social location (which is determined by our social class, race/ethnicity, and gender) in society. Individuals' personalities are also shaped by the way we are accepted, rejected, and/or defined by other people. Whether an individual is attractive or plain, witty or dull, worthy or unworthy depends on the values of society and the groups in which the individual is immersed. Although genes determine one's physiology and potential, the social environment determines how those characteristics will be evaluated. Suggesting that human beings are socially determined is another way of saying that they are similar to puppets. They are dependent on and manipulated by social forces. A major function of sociology is to identify the social forces that affect us so greatly. Freedom, as McGee has pointed out, can come only from a recognition of these unseen forces:

Freedom consists in knowing what these forces are and how they work so that we have the option of saying no to the impact of their operation. For example, if we grow up in a racist society, we will be racists unless we learn what racism is and how it works and then choose to refuse its impact. In order to do so, however, we must recognize that it is there in the first place. People often are puppets, blindly danced by strings of which they are unaware and over which they are not free to exercise control. A major function of sociology is that it permits us to recognize the forces operative on us and to untie the puppet strings which bind us, thereby giving us the option to be free. (McGee, 1975:3)

Thus, one task of sociology is to learn, among other things, what racism is and to determine how it works. This is often difficult because we typically

do not recognize its existence—because we have been puppets, socialized to believe and behave in particular ways.

To say that we are puppets is too strong, however. This assumption is not meant to imply a **total social determinism** (the assumption that human behavior is explained exclusively by social factors).^{*} The puppet metaphor is used to convey the idea that much of who we are and what we do is a product of our social environment. But there are nonconformists, deviants, and innovators. Society is not a rigid, static entity composed of robots. While the members of society are shaped by their social environment, they also change that environment. Human beings are the shapers of society as well as the shapees. This is the third assumption of the sociological approach.

Individuals create, sustain, and change the social forms within which they conduct their lives. Even though individuals are largely puppets of society, they are also puppeteers. Chapter 2 describes this process of how people in interaction are the architects of society. In brief, the argument is that social groups of all sizes and types (families, peer groups, work groups, corporations, communities, and societies) are made by people. What interacting persons create becomes a source of control over those individuals (that is, they become puppets of their own creation). But the continuous interaction of the group's members also changes the group.

There are three important implications of this assumption that groups are human-made. First, these social forms that are created have a certain momentum of their own that defies change. The ways of doing and thinking common to the group are natural and right. Although human-made, the group's expectations and structures take on a sacred quality—the sanctity of tradition—that constrains behavior in the socially prescribed ways.

A second implication is that social organizations, because they are created and sustained by people, are imperfect. Slavery benefited some segments of society by taking advantage of other segments. A competitive free enterprise system creates winners and losers. The wonders of technology make worldwide transportation and communication easy and relatively inexpensive but create pollution and waste natural resources. These examples show that there are positive and negative consequences of the way people have organized.

The third implication is that individuals through collective action are capable of changing the structure of society and even the course of history. Consider, for example, the social movement in India led by Gandhi that ended colonial rule by Great Britain, or the civil rights movement in the South led by Martin Luther King, Jr., that ended segregationist laws, or the failure of the attempted coup by Communist hardliners in the summer of 1991 because of the refusal of Soviet citizens and soldiers to accept it.

^{*}Advocates of social determinism are guilty of oversimplifying complex phenomena, just as are genetic determinists, psychological determinists, geographical determinists, and economic determinists.

Through collective action, oppressed groups sometimes can change the structure of society.



PROBLEMS WITH THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Sociology is not a comfortable discipline and therefore will not appeal to everyone. To look behind the closed doors of social life is fraught with danger. Sociology frightens some people because it questions what they normally take for granted. Sociologists ask such questions as How does society really work? Who really has power? Who benefits under the existing social arrangements and who does not? To ask such questions means that the inquirer is interested in looking beyond the commonly accepted official definitions. As Berger has put it, the "sociological perspective involves a process of 'seeing through' the facades of social structures" (Berger, 1963:31). The underlying assumption of the sociologist is that things are not as they seem. Is the mayor of your town the most powerful person in the community? Is the system of justice truly just? Is professional sport free of racism? Is the United States a meritocratic society where talent and effort combine to stratify the people fairly? To make such queries calls into question existing myths, stereotypes, and official dogma. The critical examination of society will demystify and demythologize. It sensitizes the individual to the inconsistencies present in society. Clearly, that will result if you ask Why does the United States, in the name of freedom, protect dictatorships around the world? Why do we encourage subsidies to the affluent but resent those directed to the poor? How high would George Bush have risen politically if his surname were Garcia? Why are people who have killed Whites more likely to be sentenced to death than people who have killed African Americans? Why are many women opposed to the Equal