



# ESSENTIALS OF SOCIOLOGY



**Anthony Giddens • Mitchell Duneier • Richard P. Appelbaum**



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his book was written in the belief that sociology has a key role to play in modern intellectual culture and a central place within the social sciences. Our aim has been to write a book that combines some originality with an analysis of the basic issues that interest sociologists today. In some places, we attempt to bring the reader into a subject through the use of ethnographies written for this book. The book does not try to introduce overly sophisticated notions; nevertheless, ideas and findings drawn from the cutting edge of the discipline are incorporated throughout. We hope it is not a partisan treatment; we endeavored to cover the major perspectives in sociology and the major findings of contemporary American research in an evenhanded, although not indiscriminate, way.

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## About the Essentials Edition

The *Essentials of Sociology* is based on the Fifth Edition of our best-selling text, *Introduction to Sociology*. We created the Essentials edition for instructors and students who are looking for a briefer book that could fit into a compressed academic schedule. We have reduced the length of the book by roughly one-third, and we reduced the number of chapters from 20 to 16. We made the abridgements by cutting topics to focus the chapters on the core ideas of sociology, while still retaining the themes that have made the text a successful teaching tool.

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## Major Themes

The book is constructed around a number of basic themes, each of which helps to give the work a distinctive character. The newest theme is *public sociology*, reflected in a series of boxes inspired by the 2004 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association. At this meeting, Michael Burawoy's pathbreaking presidential address called for the discipline to draw on the insights and methods of sociology to involve ordinary people in studying and solving the social problems that afflict them. The book features thirteen boxes that profile sociologists engaged in public sociology in diverse arenas: for example, Boston sociology professor Diane Vaughan's influential research on the *Challenger* shuttle disaster, which helped shape subsequent governmental investigations; a report on the working conditions of the University of California-Berkeley's service staff by three Berkeley grad students, which garnered wide spread publicity; and an essay by Brandeis professor David Cunningham about his annual social movements course, in which he takes students around the country to visit different communities and participate in various social and political movements. It is our hope that the Public Sociology boxes will inspire students to draw on their sociological imaginations to become more publicly involved and will provide some useful ideas for instructors who wish to generate class projects that directly engage students in the real world. In his speech, Burawoy also emphasized that public sociology cannot exist without a professional sociology that develops a body of theoretical knowledge and



empirical findings. The central task of the book is to explain what the discipline of sociology has to offer along these lines.

A second theme of the book is that of the *world in change*. Sociology was born of the transformations that wrenched the industrializing social order of the West away from the ways of life characteristic of earlier societies. The world that was created by these changes is the primary object of concern of sociological analysis. The pace of social change has continued to accelerate, and it is possible that we stand on the threshold of transitions as significant as those that occurred in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sociology has prime responsibility for charting the transformations of the past and for grasping the major lines of development taking place today.

Another fundamental theme of the book is the *globalizing of social life*. For far too long, sociology has been dominated by the view that societies can be studied as independent entities. But even in the past, societies never really existed in isolation. In current times, we can see a clear acceleration in processes of global integration. This is obvious, for example, in the expansion of international trade across the world. The emphasis on globalization also connects closely with the weight given to the interdependence of the industrialized and developing worlds today.

The book also focuses on the importance of *comparative* study. Sociology cannot be taught solely by understanding the institutions of any one particular society. While we have slanted the discussion toward the United States, we have also balanced it with a rich variety of materials drawn from other cultures. These include research carried out in other Western countries, as well as Russia and the Eastern European societies, which are currently undergoing substantial changes. The book also includes much more material on developing countries than has been usual in introductory texts. In addition, we strongly emphasize the relationship between sociology and anthropology, whose concerns overlap comprehensively. Given the close connections that now mesh societies across the world with one another, and the virtual disappearance of traditional social systems, sociology and anthropology have increasingly become indistinguishable.

A fifth theme is the necessity of taking a *historical approach* to sociology. This involves more than just filling in the historical context within which events occur. One of the most important developments in sociology over the past few years has been an increasing emphasis on historical analysis. This should be understood not solely as applying a sociological outlook to the past, but as a way of contributing to our understanding of institutions in the present. Recent work in historical sociology is discussed throughout the text and provides a framework for the interpretations offered in the chapters.

Throughout the text, particular attention is given to *issues of gender*. The study of gender is ordinarily regarded as a specific field within sociology as a whole—and this volume contains a chapter that specifically explores thinking and research on the subject (Chapter 9). However, questions about gender relations are so fundamental to sociological analysis that they cannot simply be considered a subdivision. Thus, many chapters contain sections concerned with issues of gender.

A seventh theme is the *micro and macro link*. At many points in the book, we show that interaction in micro-level contexts affects larger social processes and that such macro-level processes influence our day-to-day lives. We emphasize that one can better understand a social situation by analyzing it at both the micro and macro levels.

The final major theme is the relation between the *social* and the *personal*. Sociological thinking is a vital help to self-understanding, which in turn can be focused back on an improved understanding of the social world. Studying sociology should be a liberating experience: The field enlarges our sympathies and imagination, opens up new perspectives on the sources of our own behavior, and creates an awareness of cultural settings different from our own. Insofar as sociological ideas challenge dogma, teach appreciation of cultural variety, and allow us insight



into the working of social institutions, the practice of sociology enhances the possibilities of human freedom.

All of the chapters in the book have been updated and revised to reflect the most recent available data. Additionally, four chapters have received special attention: Chapter 6 (*Conformity, Deviance, and Crime*) has significant new material on the increasing trend to use the criminal justice system to regulate poverty in the United States. Since the 1970s, the U.S. penal system has grown continuously to the point where today nearly two million people are in prison or jail. We examine the effect of incarceration on the future life chances of inmates and on inequality trends in the United States. Increasingly, we recognize that penal institutions are also stratification institutions. Chapter 10 (*Ethnicity and Race*) works toward new definitions of race and ethnicity that take account of the need to transcend simple folk understandings. In particular, we no longer accept at face value the clear-cut distinction between race and ethnicity, which has been forcefully challenged by many scholars in recent years. The chapter also includes new research on mixed race identity, which is included to illustrate clearly the complexities associated with definitions of race and ethnicity. Chapter 12 (*Education and Religion*) features an examination of religious nationalism and violence that draws on recent research to argue that under certain conditions, ordinary conflicts can be recast as “cosmic wars” that must be won at all costs. The chapter shows that religious violence is found today among all major religious groups—Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, Hindus, Christians, and even Buddhists. Chapter 13 (*Politics and Economic Life*) has significant new material on politics and voting to reflect recent trends (through the 2004 election) in party identification and voter turnout, including an examination of some possible reasons for voter apathy. There is also an expanded discussion of interest groups, Political Action Committees, and campaign finance reform.

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## Organization

There is very little abstract discussion of basic sociological concepts at the beginning of this book. Instead, concepts are explained when they are introduced in the relevant chapters, and we have sought throughout to illustrate them by means of concrete examples. While these are usually taken from sociological research, we have also used material from other sources (such as newspaper articles). We have tried to keep the writing style as simple and direct as possible, while endeavoring to make the book lively and full of surprises.

The chapters follow a sequence designed to help achieve a progressive mastery of the different fields of sociology, but we have taken care to ensure that the book can be used flexibly and is easy to adapt to the needs of individual courses. Chapters can be deleted or studied in a different order without much loss. Each has been written as a fairly autonomous unit, with cross-referencing to other chapters at relevant points.

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## Study Aids

The pedagogy in the Essentials edition is identical to the popular material in the Fifth Edition of *Introduction to Sociology*. Designed to facilitate critical thinking and reinforce important concepts, each chapter begins with a chapter organizer, which highlights the learning objectives of each section and allows students to preview that chapter’s discussion. *Essentials*

of *Sociology* includes an in-text study guide that includes keyword and concept-review questions and data exercises linking material in the text to real-world data on the Web.

Another helpful aid is the use of a global icon to indicate examples of the changing world or the globalization process, or comparisons of U.S. society with other societies. Social change, the globalization of social life, and comparative analysis are all important themes of this text. The icon will help alert readers to discussions of these themes.

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## Further Research: Reading and Libraries

Libraries contain abundant sources of information that can be used to follow up or expand on issues discussed here. References are given throughout the text and are listed fully in the bibliography at the end. We have also included a short appendix that provides a guide to library resources and how to use them.

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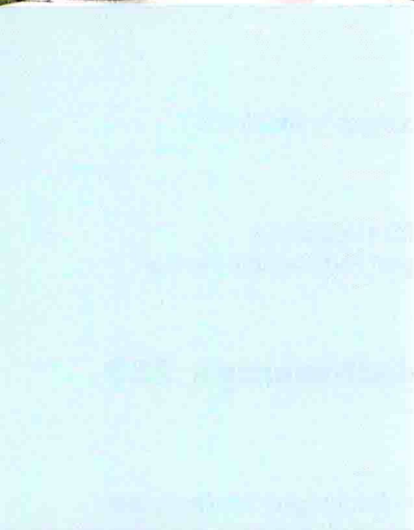
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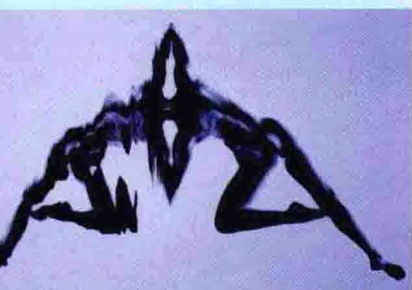
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