Sixth Edition

SOCIOLOGY

Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life READINGS



DAVID M. NEWMAN • JODI A.OBRIEN

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SOCIOLOGY Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life READINGS

DAVID M. NEWMAN JODI A.OBRIEN

DePauw University

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EDITORS



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Preface

ne of the greatest challenges we face as teachers of sociology is getting our students to see the relevance of the course material to their own lives and to fully appreciate its connection to the larger society. We teach our students to see that sociology is all around us. It's in our families, our careers, our media, our jobs, our classrooms, our goals, our interests, our desires, even our minds. Sociology can be found at the neighborhood pub, the maintenance bay at the local gas station, and the highest offices of government. It's with us when we're alone and when we're in a mob of people. Sociology can answer questions of global as well as private significance—from how some countries create and maintain dominance over others to why we find some people attractive and not others; from why poverty, discrimination, crime, and homelessness exist to why many Americans eat scrambled eggs rather than rice for breakfast.

With these ideas in mind we set out to compile this collection of short articles, chapters, and excerpts designed to help introduce you to sociology. Instructors and students alike responded quite positively to the readings in the first five editions of this book. It would have been easy simply to include those same readings in this sixth edition. But we very much wanted the book to stay fresh and contemporary. And we especially wanted to emphasize the importance of race, social class, and gender in people's everyday lives. Of the 36 selections in this edition, 14 are new. Four others are articles that appeared in earlier editions, were taken out, but are now back "by popular demand." We have also moved several readings to chapters different from the ones in which they appeared in previously because they fit better in their new locations.

As in the first five editions, these selections are intended to be vivid, provocative, and eye-opening examples of the practice of sociology. Many of the readings are drawn from carefully conducted social research. They provide important illustrations of how sociologists support their theories, insights, and ideas with empirical evidence. Others are personal narratives that put human faces on matters of sociological relevance. Some were written quite recently; others are sociological "classics." In addition to accurately representing the sociological perspective and providing rigorous coverage of the discipline, we hope the selections are thought-provoking, generate lots of discussion, and are enjoyable to read.

The readings represent a variety of styles. Some use common, everyday experiences and phenomena (such as drug use, disability, employment, athletic performance, religious devotion, the experience of time, the balance of work and family) to illustrate the relationship between the individual and society. Others focus on important social issues or problems (imprisonment, race relations, poverty, educational inequalities, sexuality, immigration, global economics, environmental degradation, political extremism) or on specific historical events (massacres during war, drug scares,

anti-smoking legislation, early movements for women's rights). You needn't be a trained sociologist to see the world sociologically. So this book includes articles written by psychologists, anthropologists, social commentators, and journalists as well as by sociologists.

To help you get the most out of these selections, we've written brief introductions to each chapter that provide the sociological context for the readings and include some reflections points for comparing and contrasting the readings in each section and across sections. For those of you who are also reading the accompanying textbook, these introductions will furnish a quick intellectual link between the readings and information in the textbook. We have also included in these introductions, brief instructions on what to look for when you read the selections in a given chapter. After each reading you will find a set of discussion questions to ponder. Many of these questions ask you to apply a specific author's conclusions to some contemporary issue in society or to your own life experiences. It is our hope that these questions will generate a lot of classroom debate and help you see the sociological merit of the readings.

A Web site established for this sixth edition includes do-it-yourself reviews and tests for students, Web-based activities designed to enhance learning, and a chat room where students and teachers can post messages and debate matters of sociological significance. The site can be accessed via the Pine Forge Web site at www.pineforge.com.

Books like these are enormous projects. We would like to thank Jerry Westby, Ben Penner, Diana Axelsen, Annie Louden, Astrid Virding, Margo Crouppen, and the rest of the staff at Pine Forge Press for their useful advice and assistance in putting this reader together. We are especially grateful to the following people for their helpful suggestions regarding the various readings that are new to this edition: Lise Nelson, Val Jenness, Rebecca Bordt.

Enjoy!

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PART I

The Individual and Society

Taking a New Look at a Familiar World

The primary theme of sociology is that our everyday thoughts and actions are the product of a complex interplay between massive social forces and personal characteristics. We can't understand the relationship between individuals and their societies without understanding the connection between both. As C. Wright Mills discusses in the introductory article, the "sociological imagination" is the ability to see the impact of social forces on our private lives. When we develop a sociological imagination, we gain an awareness that our lives unfold at the intersection of personal biography and social history. The sociological imagination encourages us to move beyond individualistic explanations of human experiences to an understanding of the mutual influence that individuals and society have on one another. So, rather than study what goes on within people, sociologists study what goes on between and among people, as individuals, groups, organizations, or entire societies. Sociology teaches us to look beyond individual personalities and focus instead on the influence of social phenomena in shaping our ideas of who we are and what we think we can do.

When we examine the social influences on our behavior, things that were once familiar and taken for granted suddenly become unfamiliar and curious. During the course of our lives we are rarely forced to examine *why* we do the common things we do; we just do them. But if we take a step back and examine our common customs and behaviors, they begin to look as strange as the "mystical" rituals of some far off, exotic land. It is for this reason that Horace Miner's article, "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema," has become a classic in sociology and anthropology. As you read these two well-known articles, consider the process of using the sociological imagination to understand your own life and the lives of others. When you think about other cultures, how can you be sure that your perceptions, as an outsider, are not as bizarre as Miner's perspective on the Nacirema? When done well, sociological research helps us to understand different points of view and different cultural contexts from the perspective of insiders. As you read the selections in this book, consider what kind of insight and training you need in order to develop not only a sociological imagination, but a sociological eye, or point of view.