

# *Seeing Ourselves*

*Classic, Contemporary,  
and Cross-Cultural Readings  
in Sociology*

*Third Edition*



*John J. Macionis • Nijole V. Benokraitis*

# SEEING OURSELVES

*Third Edition*

*Classic, Contemporary,  
and Cross-Cultural  
Readings in Sociology*

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## SEEING OURSELVES

# PREFACE

Beginning the study of human society is an exciting experience. It transforms the ways we understand the surrounding world so that we end up seeing ourselves in a new way. This extraordinary collection of readings is designed to make the discovery of sociology, and its application to the investigation of our own society and others around the world, rich and rewarding.

This anthology presents the very best of sociological thought, including the work of the discipline's pioneers as well as that of men and women conducting today's cutting-edge research or raising significant questions about human society. It provides excellent reading material for a number of courses, including introductory sociology, social problems, cultural anthropology, social theory, social stratification, American studies, women's studies, and marriage and the family.

## THE THREE C'S: CLASSIC, CONTEMPORARY, AND CROSS-CULTURAL

The third edition of *Seeing Ourselves*, the most popular reader in the discipline, has more outstanding scholarship than ever before—seventy-five selections that represent the breadth and depth of sociology. This unique anthology is not only extensive; it also systematically weaves together three different kinds of selections. For each general topic typically covered in a sociology course, three types of articles are included: *classic*, *contemporary*, and *cross-cultural*.

*Classic* articles—twenty-nine in all—are sociological statements of recognized importance and lasting significance. Included here are the ideas of sociology's founders and shapers—including Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Georg

Simmel, Ferdinand Toennies, as well as Margaret Mead, W. E. B. Du Bois, Louis Wirth, George Herbert Mead, and Charles Horton Cooley. Also found here are more recent contributions by Jessie Bernard, Robert Merton, Erving Goffman, Peter Berger, Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore, C. Wright Mills, Talcott Parsons, Leslie White, and Jo Freeman.

Of course, we recognize that not everyone will agree about precisely which selections warrant the term “classic.” We hope, however, that instructors will be pleased to see the work of so many outstanding men and women—carefully edited with students in mind—available in a single, affordable source.

Twenty-four *contemporary* selections focus on current sociological issues, controversies, and applications. These articles show sociologists at work and demonstrate the importance of ongoing research. They make for stimulating reading and offer thought-provoking insights about ourselves and the surrounding world. Among the contemporary selections in *Seeing Ourselves* are Shulamit Reinharz on feminist research, Dianne Herman pointing out the cultural roots of sexual violence, William Bennett’s contention that the United States is entering a period of cultural decline, Deborah Tannen’s view of why the two sexes often talk past each other, Sally Helgeson on the competitive edge women bring to the corporate world, Robert Reich’s investigation of the domestic consequences of the global economy, William Julius Wilson’s account of the ghetto underclass, William O’Hare’s profile of affluent Latinos, Naomi Wolf on the “beauty myth,” Stephanie Riger’s research on sexual harassment, Betty Friedan’s views on aging, James Woods on homosexuality in the workplace, Catharine MacKinnon’s analysis of pornography as a power issue, Norval Glenn’s argument that the trend in the United States is for people to put their individual interests ahead of loyalty to their families, Gerald Jaynes and Robin Williams’ comparative look at the health of black people and white people in the United States, Lester Brown’s survey of the state of the world’s environment, and Robert

Bellah’s thoughts about the difficulty of finding a sense of meaningful participation in modern society.

The twenty-two *cross-cultural* selections offer sociological insights about the striking cultural diversity of our world. Included are well-known works such as “The Nacirema” by Horace Miner, “India’s Sacred Cow” by Marvin Harris, and “The Amish: A Small Society” by John Hostetler. Other articles explore issues and problems including how race and class affect socialization, ways in which advertising depicts people of various backgrounds, differences between Japanese corporations and their U.S. counterparts, global patterns of crime, the staggering burden of African poverty, varying cultural attitudes toward homosexuality, traditional arranged marriage in India, Islam’s view of women, academic achievement among Southeast Asian immigrants, how the AIDS epidemic is ravaging other continents, and the plight of indigenous peoples worldwide. Cross-cultural selections broaden students’ understanding of other cultures as well as stimulate critical thinking about our own society.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE READER

This reader parallels the chapter sequence common to textbooks used in introductory sociology. Of course, instructors can easily and effectively use these articles in a host of other courses, just as teachers can assign articles in whatever order they wish. For each of the twenty-two general topics, a cluster of three or four articles is presented, including at least one classic, at least one contemporary, and at least one cross-cultural selection. The expansive coverage that these seventy-five articles provides ensures that instructors can choose readings well suited to their own courses.

The first grouping of articles describes the distinctive sociological perspective, brings to life the promise and pitfalls of sociological research, and demonstrates the discipline’s applications to a variety of issues. The selections that follow focus on key concepts: culture, society, socialization, social in-



teraction, groups and organizations, and deviance. The focus then turns to various dimensions of social inequality, with attention to class, race and ethnicity, gender, and aging. The major social institutions are covered next, including the economy and work; politics, government, and the military; family; religion; education; and health and medicine. The final sets of articles explore dimensions of global transformation—including population growth, urbanization, the natural environment, social movements, and social change.

## A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

All readings are presented in their original form; the editors have not altered any author's language. Readers should be aware that some of the older selections—especially the classics—use male pronouns rather than more contemporary gender-neutral terminology, and one article employs the term “Negro.” We have not changed the language in any article, wishing not to violate the historical authenticity of any document. We urge faculty and students, with the original articles in hand, to consider the significance of changing language in their analysis of the author's ideas.

## TEACHING FEATURES

This reader has two features that enhance the learning of students. First, a brief introduction, preceding each selection, presents the essential argument and highlights important issues to keep in mind while completing the reading. Second, each article is followed by “Critical-Thinking Questions,” which develop the significance of the reading, help students evaluate their own learning, and stimulate class discussion.

## INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL WITH TEST QUESTIONS

Prentice Hall now offers with *Seeing Ourselves* an Instructor's Manual, prepared by Leda A. Thomp-

son. For each selection, the Instructor's Manual provides a summary of the article's arguments and conclusions, eight multiple-choice questions (with answers), and several essay questions. The multiple-choice questions are also available on computer disk for users of IBM and Macintosh personal computers.

## CHANGES TO THE THIRD EDITION

We are grateful to our colleagues at hundreds of colleges and universities who have made *Seeing Ourselves* a part of their courses. Energized by this unparalleled reception, the editors have produced the strongest edition yet—one that includes more articles and better material. Here are the key changes:

1. **Thirty-one new articles** appear in the third edition, bringing the total to seventy-five. We have added eight new *classics* to this revision, including work by Toennies (“Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft”), Durkheim (“Anomy and Modern Life”), Simmel (“The Dyad and the Triad”), Margaret Mead (“Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies”), and Robert Merton (“Manifest and Latent Functions”). Twenty-three new *contemporary* and *crosscultural* selections reflect new developments in the field of sociology (such as Shulamit Reinharz's “Feminist Research Methods” and Deborah Tanne's sociolinguistic “You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation”), as well as changes in the United States (William Bennett's “The Decline of U.S. Society”) and the larger world (Jack Mendelsohn's “Arms Control and the New World Order”).
2. **New coverage of the natural environment** is represented by Rachel Carson's classic (“Silent Spring”), Lester Brown's contemporary survey (“The State of the World's Natural Environment”), and Alan Durning's global call to action (“Supporting Indigenous Peoples”).

3. **A new ordering of “institutional” articles** presents the Economy and Work cluster first since, in most people’s minds, the economy is the most influential social institution. Next appear institutional articles focusing on politics, government, and the military; family; religion; education; and health and medicine.
4. **The third edition continues its emphasis on diversity.** In *Seeing Ourselves*, “diversity” means various points of view on important issues. Moreover, the new lineup contains even more selections from scholars (especially women, African Americans, and Latinos) whose contributions are often overlooked.

In all, the third edition of *Seeing Ourselves* better conveys sociology’s diversity of viewpoints and methodologies as it captures the fascinating complexity of the social world.

As in the past, we invite faculty and students to share their thoughts and reactions to this reader. Write to John Macionis at the Department of Anthropology-Sociology, Olof Palme House, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623 or to Nijole Benokraitis at the Department of Sociology, University of Baltimore, 1420 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201-5779. Internet addresses for electronic mail are MACIONIS@KENYON.EDU and EANBMANO@UBE.UB.UMD.EDU

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First, the relationship between writers and publishers is a distinctive mix of friendship, disciplinary collegiality, creative tension, and a common commitment to doing the best job possible. For her unwavering support from the outset, we wish to express our gratitude to Nancy Roberts, editor-in-chief at Prentice Hall. Robert Thoresen, senior sales representative for Prentice Hall, provided valuable suggestions as the plan for this book took form. Skillful editorial review was provided by Amy Marsh Macionis, who, along with Sharon Duchesne, carefully completed the time-consuming task of securing permission to reprint material.

A number of other colleagues offered comments on the plan for this reader and suggested material to be included: E. Keith Bramlett, University of North Carolina at Asheville; Polly A. Fassinger, Concordia College; Sam Marullo, Georgetown University; Harland Prechel, Texas A & M University; Anne Szopa, I. U. East; and Henry A. Walker, Cornell University.

Finally, John Macionis and Nijole Benokraitis dedicate this edition of *Seeing Ourselves* to the men, women, and children of Lithuania who are valiantly struggling to create for themselves a society with many of the virtues that too many of us take for granted. We salute our ancestors and relatives for their determination, courage, and unflagging spirit despite fifty years of oppression.



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- 55: Jane I. Smith, "Women and Islam" 325

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- 57: David A. Karp and William C. Yoels, "Why Don't College Students Participate?" 339

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**Cross-Cultural**

- 58: Nathan Caplan, Marcella H. Choy, and John K. Whitmore, "Academic Achievement in Southeast Asian Refugee Families" 348

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- 59: Talcott Parsons, "The Social Structure of Medicine" 355

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- 60: Gerald David Jaynes and Robin M. Williams, Jr., "The Health of Black America" 359

*A major study of the state of African Americans highlights some disturbing gaps between the health of black people and white people.*

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- 61: Loretta Tofani, "The AIDS Epidemic in Africa" 370

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### Classic

- 63: Louis Wirth, "Urbanism As a Way of Life" 381
- Wirth makes an insightful statement on the social patterns that accompany living in cities.*

### Contemporary

- 64: Joe R. Feagin and Robert Parker, "The Urban Real Estate Game: Traditional and Critical Perspectives" 387
- The major players in today's cities are the large business interests.*

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- 65: David Berreby, "The Global Population Crisis" 401
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- 67: Lester R. Brown, "The State of the World's Natural Environment" 411
- The deterioration of the world's natural environment results primarily from the ways people choose to live.*

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- 72: Emile Durkheim, "Anomy and Modern Life" 450

*Human beings require the moral regulation of society because, unlike members of other species, our aspirations are not limited by nature. Modern societies, Durkheim warns, are losing the capacity to rein in our desires, promoting the normlessness he terms anomy.*

**Classic**

- 73: Max Weber, "The Disenchantment of Modern Life" 455

*Whereas members of traditional societies explain their existence in terms of mystical forces, modern people assume they can rationally comprehend all reality. But science, claims Weber, provides no answer to questions of ultimate meaning.*

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- 74: Robert N. Bellah et al., "The Search for Meaning in Modern America" 457

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