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Rodney Stark
University of Washington

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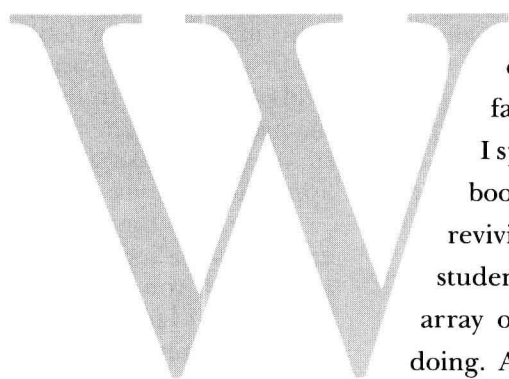
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rodney Stark grew up in Jamestown, North Dakota, and received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, where he held appointments as a research sociologist at the Survey Research Center and at the Center for the Study of Law and Society. Since 1971 he has been Professor of Sociology at the University of Washington. He is the author of twelve books and scores of scholarly articles on subjects as diverse as shoplifting, anti-Semitism, police riots, and suicide. However, the greater portion of his work has been on religion and especially on religious movements. His most recent book, with William Sims Bainbridge, is *A Theory of Religion*, published in 1987 by Peter Lang.



Preface

Writing is a solitary craft, and all writers rely on private dreams and even on fantasies to sustain them. During the years I spent writing the first edition of this textbook, I drew energy from dreams about reviving introductory sociology by offering students an exciting and effective look at the array of things that sociologists actually are doing. As I wrote, I often imagined students reading over my shoulder and having a good time. However, none of my secret fantasies compared with the actual response to the book by students and by my colleagues.

Within weeks of publication I began to receive the most extraordinary letters and cards—most of them from sociologists I had never met. They wrote not to complain about this or that but to express their pleasure with the book. Nothing in my professional or publishing experience had prepared me for this. Nor, frankly, had I realized how many truly dedicated people are teaching introductory sociology. Your letters made me proud to be a sociologist. Thank you.

I also have received a wholly unexpected amount of mail from students. The fact is, students almost never write to textbook authors. I can't explain why they have been writing to me. But it has been a treat.

I needed no fantasies to sustain me through this revision. As many of you used the book for a term or two, you began to send me carefully thought-out and well-documented suggestions. I must make specific mention of the valuable and unsolicited suggestions I received from Phillips Cutright, Donald Eyler, Gerhard Falk, Elton Jackson, Joan Krenzin, Reece McGee, Ephraim Mizruchi, Brian Powell, Ira L. Reiss, Alan J.

Shields, and Jackson Toby. Many others lent me much guidance through Wadsworth, and they are listed at the end of the preface. I had tried my best to make the first edition reflect the major, current contributions of real sociologists. For the second edition, many real sociologists made direct contributions to the content and presentation.

All of this has made the second edition more accurate and more lucid and has let me expand the “over-the-shoulder” approach that has turned out to be so popular with students. From the start I have tried to write a book that reveals sociology as a *human activity*—as something people *do*. Whenever possible I have selected a major work on an important topic, and by explaining *why* and *how* it was done, I have used it as a vehicle for displaying major theoretical and empirical accomplishments of the area.

Using this technique, I think I often have made a sociological theory come to life by letting students watch someone theorize—by showing Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, among others, as *people* with something on their minds that they were trying to *explain*. By the same token, research methods only become coherent when they are *put to use*. Hence I do not limit discussion of methods to a hermetically sealed chapter on the subject, but have tried to give students a vicarious methodological apprenticeship throughout the book. To the greatest extent possible, I have tried to place readers in a vantage point from which they can look over the shoulders of sociologists as they *do* sociology. Moreover, I have tried to show not only *what* sociologists do but also *why* we do it. I have not simply tried to show that sociology is important and interesting but that it can be a lot of fun as well.

Changes in the second edition

In the first edition, students didn’t actually get a chance to see someone doing sociology until late in the first chapter. As I revised the book, it seemed to me that it ought to begin with its strongest feature. So the very first paragraph puts stu-

dents in a position to look over the shoulders of the first “moral statisticians” as they invented the field of sociology. In the remainder of the book, the over-the-shoulder approach is expanded and sharpened to take advantage of its exceptional appeal to students.

There is no comparison between writing a first and second edition of a book. At each step in a first edition you confront a blank page and face the burden of putting something appropriate on it. When doing a second edition, you already have prose on all the pages. This offers the opportunity and the leisure to make what’s there better or to replace it with something more recent or more interesting. For example, in the case of Chapter 2, a very substantial revision was accomplished primarily by rearranging the material to make it more compelling. And when I reached Chapter 12, I could afford the time to revise the discussion of definitions of the family to take advantage of suggestions offered to me by Ira L. Reiss and to incorporate a new section based on recent studies of remarriage because I did not have to worry about creating a whole chapter on the family. It already existed. Indeed, because I had the first edition as a safety net, I could bring myself to discard a large part of Chapter 14, Politics and the State, and redo it along more effective lines.

Aside from these “normal” sorts of revisions, this edition has been changed in two more significant ways. The first is to increase the linkage between the book and demonstrations using *Sociology Showcase*, which remains available, free to all departments where the book is used. The second is to make it much more of a *comparative* book and, specifically, more of a *North American* and less of an *American* book.

Using *Sociology Showcase*™

In *Demonstrating Sociology*, the instructor’s resource book that accompanies this text, there is a complete explanation of the microcomputer software known as *Sociology Showcase*, which is designed to let faculty demonstrate sociological

research live, in front of their classes and even let students take part. *Showcase* didn't exist when I finished the first edition of the book; the need to utterly replace my lectures before the book appeared played a major role in the birth of *Showcase*. Those of you who are familiar with the material in the version of *Demonstrating Sociology* prepared for the first edition know that I was able to hook many sociological demonstrations to materials in the text. But in revising the book, I have been careful to create many effective springboards for *Showcase*. These are in no way intrusive; they do not require that *Showcase* be used. But they do make for more effective coordination of book and demonstration. A later section of this preface previews additional *Showcase* applications.

A comparative and North American book

Most of my life I have lived very close to the Canadian border and have visited Canada often. Over the past decade I have been honored by invitations to lecture at Canadian universities, have published in the *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, and have watched a lot of Canadian TV (especially football and hockey). Recently, I was appointed a member of the Canadian Studies Program at the University of Washington.

However, for the first edition I had neither the energy nor the vision to attempt to make it more of a North American and less of an American book. But, as I began to develop material for use with the *Sociology Showcase*, I soon discovered how powerful a teaching tool it was to jump back and forth across the border, replicating primary findings. To drive home the point that sociology is a science, not journalism, it is vital to show students that our work stands up from one era to another and from one society to another. Hence, in my own classroom, I soon learned that Canadian comparisons are of extraordinary utility for teaching sociology to students in the United States. Soon after I found the same to be true for Canadian students; they too profit from such comparisons. There are, of course, many differ-

ences between Canada and the United States, but they are not so great that our students become lost and confused as they sometimes do when we use examples from Asia or Latin America. On both sides of the border, students find it fascinating to compare such things as crime rates or church attendance. For this reason I have tried to work in a lot more of these comparisons and as far as possible to adequately represent Canadian contributions to sociology, many of which should be included in *any* textbook that is meant to be a general introduction to the field. An additional gain from a North American and comparative approach is that it becomes impossible to throw around the word *here* as though all readers live in the same place. Introductory sociology students everywhere can gain much from being deprived of such subliminal supports for their natural provincialism.

I do not pose as an expert on Canadian society or on Canadian sociology. My ability to provide good U.S.-Canadian comparisons or even to give adequate coverage to Canadian studies is uneven. I am very at-home with Canadian religion and with Canadian data and studies of crime and deviance. I am much less able to deal with linguistic and ethnic cleavages and conflicts. I am grateful to a number of Canadian colleagues who have tried hard to educate me, including Robert A. Silverman, who read every page of the revision, Raymond F. Currie, Reginald Bibby, and John Simpson. I also am indebted to my colleagues in Canadian Studies at the University of Washington. I hope the final product causes none of these scholars to regret having been so generous with their time and effort. I also must express my special debts to Barbara Hunter of Vancouver and to her daughter Valerie of Wadsworth Canada for believing that I could write a truly North American book.

Of course, in making these revisions I hoped I could create a textbook appropriate for Canadians. But if not a single copy of this edition is ever sold in Canada, I will not regret a minute I devoted to the task. My primary motive was to create a more effective introduction to sociology. To this end I also have included a wealth of international comparative material in general. This too helps students recognize the general-

ity for which sociological theory strives and provides additional interfaces with *Showcase* demonstrations.

Student responses

The success of the first edition of *Sociology* has exploded a major misconception about introductory sociology: that real sociology is too hard for our students, especially students in community colleges, and that to draw good enrollments and keep down student dissatisfaction, we must use simple books.

Nonsense! I have heard from many teachers that since they began using this text their enrollments have gone up. The fact is that the students we teach are asked to grasp material as “difficult” as any we have to offer in many of their other classes, including other social sciences. Moreover, really “easy” books are often the hardest. It’s very hard to figure out the important point in a discussion that really isn’t trying to make a point. It’s also very hard to use a book that is very boring, no matter how simple its language.

I was convinced I could write a sophisticated book that students would understand. The responses of students at all kinds of schools vindicate my belief that they would be enthusiastic about sociology if they actually got a look at real sociologists doing real sociology.

Point of view and approach

Sociologists considering a textbook often ask what “kind” or “brand” of sociology it reflects. What are the author’s theoretical and methodological commitments? I find some difficulty framing a satisfactory answer to such questions, because I don’t think I have a brand. First of all, my fundamental commitment is to sociology as a social science. Hence, I want to know how societies work and why, not to document a perspective. Moreover, in constructing sociological theories I am a dedicated, even reckless, eclectic. Competing

theoretical sociologies persist, in part, not only because they tend to talk past one another but also because each can explain some aspect of social life better than the others can. Therefore, in my own theoretical writing I tend to take anything that seems to work from whatever school can provide it. The textbook does much the same, but with care to point out which elements are being drawn from which theoretical tradition.

I also have not written a book that favors either *micro* or *macro* sociology. Both levels of analysis are essential to any adequate sociology. Where appropriate, the chapters are structured to work from the micro to the macro level of analysis. And the book itself works from the most micro topics to the most macro.

Methodologically the text is equally eclectic. In my own research I have pursued virtually every known technique—participant observation, survey research, historical and comparative analysis, demography, human ecology, even experiments. My belief, made clear in the book, is that theories and hypotheses determine what methods are appropriate (within practical and moral limits). That is why there is not one chapter devoted to methods and one devoted to theory. Instead, Chapter 3 first introduces basic elements of micro theories and then demonstrates how such theories are tested through experiments and participant observation. Chapter 4 introduces social structure within the context of survey research methods. The chapter then assesses basic elements of major macro schools of sociological theory and concludes with an extended example of testing macro theories through comparative research using societies as the units of analysis. Throughout the book, the interplay of theory and research is not asserted, but *demonstrated*. No sooner do readers meet a theory than they see it being tested.

Countless publishers have stressed to me that introductory sociology textbooks, unlike texts in other fields, must *not* have an integrated structure. Since sociologists, I am told, have idiosyncratic, fixed notions about the order of chapters, books must easily permit students to read them in any order. That would be a poor way to use this book. The fact is that later chapters build on earlier ones. To do otherwise would have forced

me to eliminate some of sociology's major achievements or else to write a redundant book that repeats itself each time basic material is elaborated or built upon. Clearly, some jumping around is possible—the institutions chapters work well enough in any order (and could even be omitted without harming subsequent chapters), but the basic ordering of the major parts of the book is organic. Thus, for example, the chapter on socialization expands upon material already presented in the biology chapter. And the discussion of theories of intergroup relations included in Chapter 11 is basic to the examination of models of urban segregation taken up in Chapter 18. In my judgment textbooks can only be highly flexible at the risk of being superficial (imagine a chemistry book with chapters that could be read in any order).

Study aids

To assist readers, each chapter ends with a **complete review glossary** that includes concepts and principles. For example, the glossary for the population chapter includes not only concepts such as “birth cohort” or “crude birth rate” but also a succinct restatement of “Malthusian theory” and of “demographic transition theory.” The glossary is ordered in the same way as the chapter so it serves to summarize and review the chapter.

Boxed inserts of side material have become a standard feature of leading sociology texts. I decided against them. First of all, if the material is worth including it belongs in the body of the chapter. Placed in a box, the material breaks the narrative flow of the chapter and often gets skipped.

In six instances, however, I have included small essays—minichapters identified as **Special Topics**. I did this because I wanted to amplify and apply materials from several chapters to give them extra emphasis. For example, so much coverage is given to sex roles within various chapters that it did not make sense to devote a whole additional chapter to that topic. On the other hand, it is a topic that deserves special treatment and

that also provides a fine opportunity to apply many of the major points developed in the chapter on socialization. So sex-role socialization appears as Special Topic 2, taking up about a quarter the length of a regular chapter.

Anyone who reads all of the books and articles recommended for **further reading** at the end of each chapter will know a lot of sociology. To choose them I asked myself what I had read that was of broad interest and had helped me to write the chapter. Obviously I did not think anyone would rush out and read them all. But students attracted by a particular topic may find useful follow-up reading provided in these suggestions. I also have found these works useful in composing lectures.

Showcase applications

Demonstrating Sociology, the instructor's resource book distributed with the first edition, was a major departure from the materials offered with other sociology textbooks. It was a first attempt to provide sociologists with a set of classroom demonstrations of the sort that accompany textbooks in the natural sciences. Any chemist, for example, even one teaching in a rundown high school, can go to the front of the classroom and *do* chemistry. I want to make it possible for any sociologist to go to the front of the classroom and *do* sociology. When I wrote the demonstrations included with the first edition, I had a crude prototype of *Sociology Showcase* to work with. At that time it was not yet clear whether *Showcase* would become available for others to use. So the demonstrations were written to be used both with and without an in-class computer.

For this edition I was able to develop demonstrations knowing that *Showcase* is available to everyone. Moreover, I have had the benefit not only of several more years of experience in demonstrating sociology to my students but I also have been able to draw upon the experience of many others who have been using *Showcase* in their classes. In fact, to help us develop a really great set of demonstrations, Dan McMurray is editing a newsletter. This will let us all share new

demonstrations, exchange helpful techniques, distribute new variables, warn of errors in the data bases, and the like. Write:

Sociology Showcase Newsletter
316 Peck Hall
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Many other *Showcases* are also available: *North American Crime and Deviance Showcase*, *North American Family and Socialization Showcase*, and *Aspects of Social Change in Europe and Latin America Showcase*. Also available is *COMBO 1000*, a complete data analysis program that permits transfer of new data into a *Showcase*.

State Showcases now are available for nearly every state,* and in my own classes I have had considerable success with a *State Showcase* for Washington. This is a county-level mapping and analysis application that comes with the full *County and City Data Book for 1983* as the data base and with considerable space to add variables. I use it to replicate national (and even international) findings and to create student projects. For example, a group of students can be assigned to obtain average scores on standardized achievement tests for each county and then try to analyze why variations occur. *State Showcases* are available from Cognitive Development Company, Suite 141, 12345 Lake City Way, NE, Seattle, WA 98125. Also available are *Showcases* for individual cities, using neighborhoods as the units of analysis.

Student Showcase: A Computer-Based Introduction to Sociology has been created by Cognitive Development Company and Wadsworth Publishing Company for use in introductory sociology courses. The package consists of an extensive laboratory manual offering an array of student projects and exercises based on a version of *Showcase* parallel to the one provided to instructors using this textbook. However, in addition to ecological data sets, the student version of *Show-*

case also will permit analysis of large survey data sets; in fact, the program diskette includes an interesting set of variables from a recent *General Social Science Survey*. This package was developed partly to satisfy demand from schools where computers already are widely available to students but also to anticipate the rapid increase in schools requiring students to have their own computer.

Other supplements

As for the first edition, a Study Guide for students was prepared for this edition by Carol Mosher, of Jefferson Community College in Louisville, Kentucky. This Study Guide once again includes a diskette with five sociological simulations by William Sims Bainbridge of Harvard University. (Do not confuse the Study Guide with the *Student Showcase*.)

For the first edition, I wrote the Test Bank items because I wanted to provide better quality than typically is achieved by free-lance test writers. But for this edition I found I simply couldn't generate enough new items to satisfy the needs of those who teach many sections. Fortunately, David Treybig of Baldwin-Wallace College, a gifted teacher who cares as much about quality as I do, agreed to help me out. He revised items from the previous edition and wrote many new ones. He also wrote a lot of multiple-choice items to create a more diverse test bank for instructors.

Acknowledgments

This project would have been impossible without the efforts of many people. My debts to Lynne Roberts are existential. To William Katz and the Cognitive Development Company I owe the technology that is changing how introductory sociology is taught. Mary Ann Lamanna reviewed the manuscript in detail and provided many helpful suggestions. Joan Pendleton did a nice job of fixing lapses in my prose and an even nicer job of leaving well enough alone—an ability nearly

*Hawaii and Virginia are not available. Delaware is combined with Maryland, and Rhode Island is combined with Connecticut.

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