

R O B E R T H A G E D O R N

SOCIOLOGY



f i f t h e d i t i o n

R O B E R T H A G E D O R N

U N I V E R S I T Y O F V I C T O R I A

SOCIOLOGY

f i f t h e d i t i o n

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SOCIOLOGY

Preface

This book presents in clear and simple prose an overview of the discipline of sociology using the best data available. Its purpose is to describe how sociologists view the social world, to pose some questions about it, and to explore some of our understandings of it.

There is, however, a major problem in accomplishing this purpose. Sociology, like other physical and social sciences, is faced with growing specialization. As the amount of information in each area of sociology increases, it becomes impossible to know everything about all the areas. Increasingly, there is specialization even within single areas — formal organizations, the family, political sociology, for example. This means that no one person is an expert in “sociology.” Some idea of the diversity can be seen in the fact that more than 40 different courses are listed in guides to graduate departments of sociology. Along with these courses and sections there has been a tremendous increase in the number of journals related to subareas.

A simple solution to the problem of specialization is to use specialists to write the various chapters. This is the approach taken here. A question arises as to why such a solution is rarely used in writing introductory sociology textbooks. The answer lies in the problem of presenting writing that is always clear, interesting, and consistent in style. Our solution to this problem was twofold. First, all authors were asked to approach their subareas by using three main theoretical perspectives, which helped to tie the chapters together. Second, each chapter was carefully edited for style, clarity, and interest. Whether we have achieved our goals will be determined by you.

Consistent with these goals are the book’s organization and features. The text’s nineteen chapters are divided into five units. These units represent very general but distinct sociological categories that unite the individual chapters. The chapters present an overview of the major sociological areas. Many of these areas (for example, deviance and the family) can be studied in more detail in upper-division and graduate courses. In this sense, each chapter represents an introduction to an area of specialization in sociology.

This edition differs from previous editions in three important respects. To begin with, new authors have contributed chapters on population, social inequality, polity, and education. Second, the orientation of the book has changed significantly. Whereas previous editions focused solely on Canadian society, this edition takes a comparative approach. Comparisons are made not only between French Canada and English Canada, but also with the United States and, where possible, Mexico. The North American Free Trade Agreement makes the comparisons timely, but, more than that, comparing a developed and a developing country enables us to have a clearer picture of our own society as well as a better understanding of other societies. This approach takes us back to the beginning of sociology: the early sociologists Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Karl Marx employed comparative analysis as the self-evident way of doing sociological research. Third, a new chapter discusses the issue of whether or not sociology is a science and briefly describes current sociological “theories.” This chapter was written primarily for the instructor who wishes to pursue these topics.

Features of this book are designed to make learning and remembering easier. They include the use of cross-references between chapters to integrate important ideas and information; pictures to reinforce the written text; boldface type to identify important terms; and boxed readings to illustrate major points. At the end of each chapter you will find a summary of the major points, a glossary that simplifies looking up definitions, and an annotated list of further readings.

The instructor's manual contains a new test bank of objective questions constructed by Dr. Norman R. Okihiro, Mount St. Vincent University, as well as study questions, research projects, and, in many cases, suggestions for films to supplement the text. The test-bank questions are also available on disks for use on microcomputers.

lisher have devoted considerable time to the careful development of this book. We appreciate your recognition of this effort and accomplishment.

We want to hear what you think about *Sociology*, 5th ed. Please take a few minutes to fill in the stamped reply card at the back of the book. Your comments and suggestions will be valuable to us as we prepare new editions and other books.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Reginald W. Bibby

University of Lethbridge

James E. Curtis

University of Waterloo

Leo Driedger

University of Manitoba

Patricia Fitzsimmons-LeCavalier

Carleton University

Jane Gaskell

University of British Columbia

Ellen M. Gee

Simon Fraser University

A.R. Gillis

University of Toronto

John Hagan

University of Toronto

Robert Hagedorn

University of Victoria

R. Alan Hedley

University of Victoria

Alfred A. Hunter

McMaster University

Ronald D. Lambert

University of Waterloo

Guy LeCavalier

Concordia University

Marlene Mackie

University of Calgary

Antonia Maioni

University of Ottawa

Victor W. Marshall

University of Toronto

Pierre Martin

Université de Montréal

Kevin McQuillan

University of Western Ontario

Charles C. Ragin

Northwestern University

Carolyn J. Rosenthal

University of Toronto

Terrence H. White

Brock University

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UNIT I

The Field of Sociology

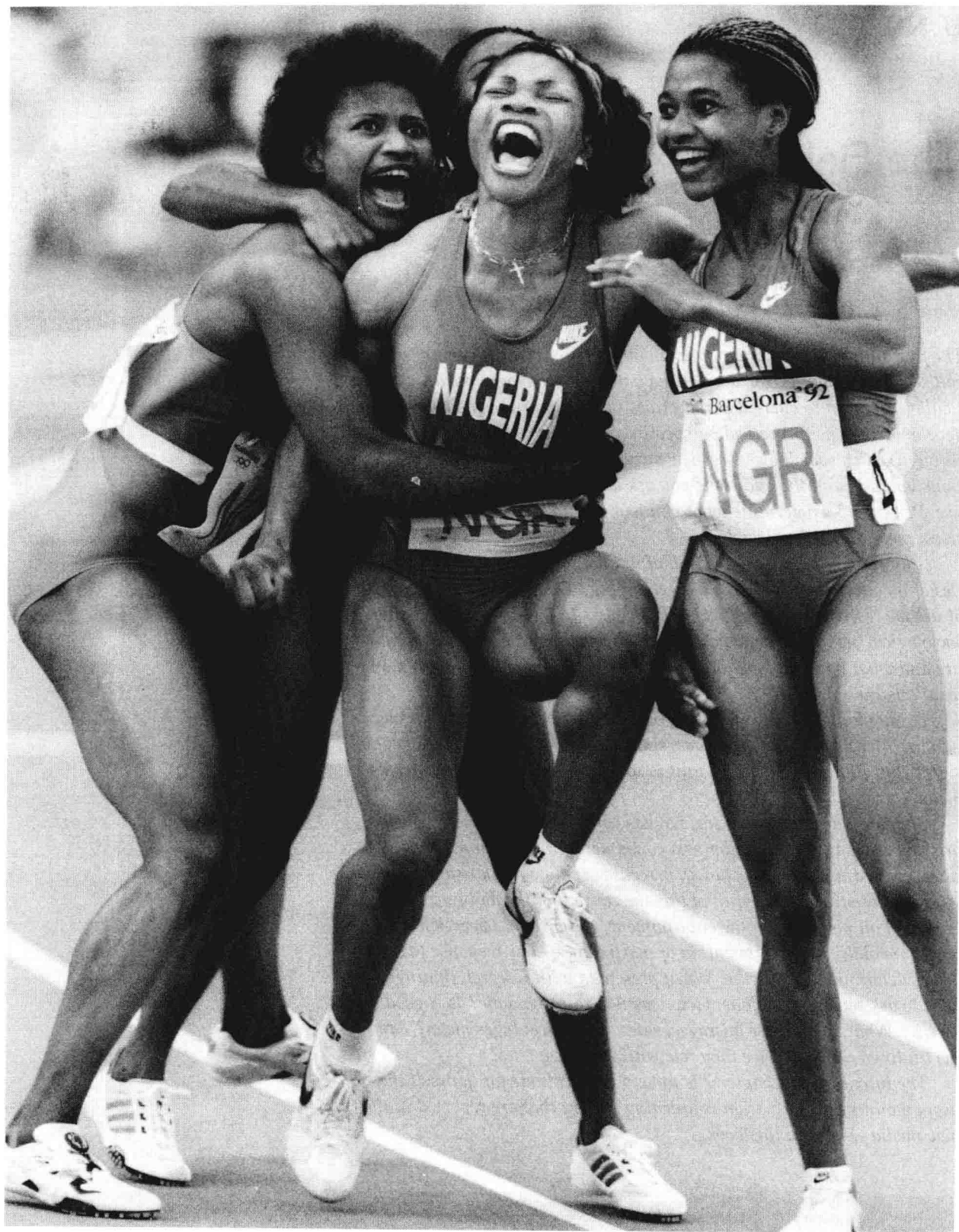
The first unit of this book provides an overview of what is generally called theory. Chapter 1 examines the nature of sociology, paying particular attention to current perspectives in sociology and their historical development. The theoretical perspectives of sociology are the lenses through which sociologists see. The answers you get depend on the questions you ask, and the questions you ask depend on the perspective you use. Perspectives determine what you look at and how you see it. Perspectives, therefore, define sociology.

Is a group of people a collection of individuals, or does it have properties of its own? Is society stable, or changing? Do we share basic values, or are we essentially in conflict? The answers to these questions define sociological perspectives, which in turn determine what you will measure and what you will look for, which then determine what you find and what answers you get.

Throughout this book you will read about surveys, participant observation, interviews, rates, averages, standard deviations, correlations, and significant findings. This first unit is concerned with what these terms mean.

Chapter 2 describes how sociologists conduct their research. The approach here is to see the reader as a consumer of information. Divorce rates, crime rates, life expectancy, percentage employed, average income — such statistics are the stuff of life, the content of the daily news. The impact of oil pipelines on the environment, the effect of television violence on children, the legalization of marijuana — our response to such issues determines our future. When presented with research findings, we need to ask several questions. How was this research done? Is it good research? What do all these averages, rates, and percentages mean? Are the findings rational? Are they relevant? Are they true?

The intention in Chapter 2 is to help you evaluate for yourself the vast amounts of information concerning society that are reported in the new media — and in this book.



CHAPTER 1

What Is Sociology?

ROBERT HAGEDORN

BEGINNING TO DEFINE SOCIOLOGY

Auguste Comte, 1798–1857

EARLY VIEWPOINTS

Emile Durkheim, 1858–1917

Max Weber, 1864–1920

Georg Simmel, 1858–1918

Some Implications of the Three Viewpoints

Karl Marx, 1818–1883

FOUR CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

Macrosociology

Microsociology

Right now you are probably asking yourself, What am I getting into? What is this book about? What is sociology?

To many people, sociology is the most exciting subject on earth, a fresh, lively, coherent, and valuable way of understanding people and the world in which we live. For some people, sociology is so compelling that they invest their entire professional careers in learning it, teaching it, and doing it. People trained in sociology work in a wide variety of jobs in which their knowledge and research influence many decisions that affect our everyday lives.

Sociology is a young science, only about a hundred years old. Like all youngsters, sociology ripples with energy, with promise, with insights, and with the sure sense that what it is doing is *important*.

Sociology is important because it deals with the stuff of everyday life, but in a new way. What we tend to see as almost boringly familiar — the smallest details of human interaction and the largest events on the evening news — take on new meaning and make more sense in light of the basic sociological insight that our behaviour is affected by social forces beyond our control. Not only do we, as individuals, influence society; society also influences us.

This may surprise you. In this country, individuals are important. So is individual effort. People work hard to get what they want — money, power, a better life for their children, a college education, a flashy car, a house of their own. But most of this individual effort takes place in social groups such as businesses, classrooms, and organizations. These social groups affect our behaviour and can significantly determine how